

Newsmax

In God We Trust vs E Pluribus Unum

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Both "In God We Trust" and "E Pluribus Unum" are firmly embedded in Americans' consciousness primarily because of their long, regular use on the nation's money. "E Pluribus Unum" has been an important part of American heraldry since before the ratification of the Constitution. It was incorporated into the Great Seal of the United States when that emblem was adopted in 1782 under the Articles of Confederation. Since 1796, it has been inscribed on most of the federal coinage and currency issued by Uncle Sam.

At no time, however, did it ever receive congressional recognition as the nation's official motto. That honor belongs instead to a phrase that is just as familiar, but holds much more personal meaning for most Americans: "In God We Trust."

"E Pluribus Unum" appealed to the Founding Fathers because it conveyed in a short, simple statement the way the 13 original colonies came together to form a single nation. Its English translation is "Out of many, one." But while the words are meaningful in explaining the nation's origin, they lack the emotional impact of the phrase "In God We Trust," which expresses Americans' deep, abiding faith that a higher power has guided the ship of state on its several-century journey through human history's often stormy seas.

On July 30, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed legislation establishing "In God We Trust" as the nation's official motto. Sentiment favoring adoption of this motto had been building since the end of World War II, a conflict that — like the Civil War — caused many Americans to turn to a higher power for guidance, solace and hope. A year earlier, in 1955, Congress had approved the insertion of the words "under God" into the Pledge of Allegiance and mandated use of "In God We Trust" on all U.S. paper money.

Anyone who missed these well-publicized developments got a reminder on July 30, 2006 — the 50th anniversary of the original legislation — when President George W. Bush issued a proclamation reaffirming the status of "In God We Trust" as America's national motto and declaring anew its worthiness for that designation.

Yet, in the face of all this incontrovertible evidence, some federal officials have continued to maintain that "E Pluribus Unum" is the nation's official motto. Consider these examples, all from the 21st century:

- During construction of the Capitol Visitors Center, a three-level, 580,000-square-foot "waiting room" for tourists beneath the U.S. Capitol, a plaque was placed declaring "E Pluribus Unum" to be the official U.S. motto. The plaque has been replaced by one that correctly identifies "In God We Trust" as the national motto. But as of this spring, "E Pluribus Unum" was still being repeated throughout the introduction film shown to visitors taking the Capitol Tour, and "In God We Trust" reportedly wasn't mentioned in the film.

- "Coins for You — Old and New," a U.S. Treasury publication described as "A Starting Guide for Young Collectors," tells fledgling hobbyists that "many coin legends were written in Latin, formerly the international language of educated people. That's why one of our national mottoes, 'E Pluribus Unum,'

is Latin." There is just one official national motto. It isn't "E Pluribus Unum." And it's readily understandable even to young Americans with little formal education — for it's written in English: "In God We Trust."

- Perhaps most alarmingly, President Obama showed similar ignorance about "In God We Trust" — and lack of appreciation for how meaningful it is for many Americans — in 2011, when he incorrectly identified "E Pluribus Unum" as the national motto, then dismissed congressional critics when they passed a resolution setting the record straight. The resolution was sponsored by Rep. Randy Forbes, R-Va. It supported and encouraged the display of the words "In God We Trust" in all public schools and government buildings.

Obama said the time devoted to drafting and passing the resolution could have been better spent hammering out a job creation bill.

President John Adams said, "It is religion and morality alone, which can establish the principles upon which freedom can securely stand."

As President Reagan warned, "If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under."

Mr. President, when all is said and done, one fact remains crystal clear: Out of all the potential selections for the nation's official motto, including "E Pluribus Unum," Congress chose only one: "In God We Trust."

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