

# NEW SCHOOL RELIGION LAW IN NORTH CAROLINA

In mid-June, North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory signed into law a bill that protects the religious liberty rights of teachers, school personnel, and students. It passed 106-9 in the House, and by a margin of 48-1 in the Senate. Religious freedom, including voluntary student-led prayer, is now secured.

Unfortunately, radical secularists continue to violate the spirit and the letter of the law, necessitating stronger rights for religious expression in the schools. Indeed, what triggered the North Carolina bill was the decision of a teacher in an elementary school who told a student to remove a reference to God in a poem for a Veteran's Day event.

The bill would have passed even sooner, but it was delayed by a debate over whether teachers can "adopt a respectful posture" during a student led prayer. It is not a good sign that we have to question whether a teacher can respectfully bow his head at a student-organized religious event. It's a sure bet that if an objecting teacher raised his middle finger in protest, the ACLU would defend him on free speech grounds.

Militant secularists are determined to scrub the schools and society clean of the public expression of religion. Their opposition to the free exercise of religion, and their twisted interpretation of the plain meaning of the so-called establishment clause, puts them in the historical camp with tyrants. The Framers would not recognize what they have done to the First Amendment.

Recently, a stellar high school student from Brawley Union High School in Brawley, California was told he could not exercise his constitutional right to speak about his faith at

graduation; he did so anyway. This should never be allowed to happen again. When students making obscene speeches in public are defended on First Amendment grounds, and students electing to speak about God are denied, it calls for a new law.

This bill is the kind of legislation that is needed in every state. We contacted the governors in the other 49 states asking them to adopt the North Carolina law as a model in their own state. We also sent them a copy of the law that Governor McCrory signed.