

PLEDGE CASE HITS THE COURT

On March 24, the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the Pledge of Allegiance case. The Catholic League, together with the Thomas More Law Center, filed an *amicus curiae* brief in support of the Elk Grove Unified School District that seeks to uphold the recitation of the Pledge in the schools. Challenging the school district is Michael Newdow; he objects to the words “under God” in the Pledge.

“It cannot seriously be maintained,” we said in a news release, “that the words ‘under God’ in the Pledge of Allegiance constitute the establishment of a religion.” We made the point that there is a dramatic difference between the collective acknowledgment of our religious heritage and the formal establishment of a religion. We added that Newdow is “a devout atheist” who cannot understand the difference.

Just as it makes sense not to force students to say the Pledge, it makes sense not to prevent those who choose to recite it from doing so. As our brief states, “This Court should take the opportunity to affirm once and for all that a voluntary nonsectarian invocation of God in public, especially in the public schools, does not violate the Establishment Clause, and is in fact Constitutionally consistent with our nation’s history and religious heritage.”

Ultimately, what is at stake is the right of Americans to celebrate their religious heritage on public property without fear of state reprisal. A decision will soon be rendered.