

SUPREME COURT TO HEAR PLEDGE CASE

On March 24, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the Pledge of Allegiance case. The Catholic League, together with the Thomas More Law Center, has 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.

Catholic League president William Donohue commented today on the case that is before the Supreme Court:

“It cannot seriously be maintained that the words ‘under God’ in the Pledge of Allegiance constitute the establishment of a religion. Surely there is a dramatic difference between the collective acknowledgment of our religious heritage and the formal establishment of a religion. While it is not surprising that Mr. Newdow cannot understand the difference—he is a devout atheist—the American people have every right to expect that the high court can make such a distinction.

“Just as it makes sense not to force students to say the Pledge, it makes sense not to deny 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.’ Indeed, if the high court were to censor the words ‘under God’ from the Pledge, it would send an unmistakably hostile message to the 94 percent of Americans who believe in God. That the Bill of Rights secures rights for minorities is true, but it is also true that the majority does not lose its rights simply because it is the

majority.

“Ultimately, what is at stake is the right of Americans to celebrate their religious heritage on public property without fear of state reprisal.”