

House Resolution 1142

By: Representatives Mills of the 21<sup>st</sup>, Westmoreland of the 104<sup>th</sup>, Richardson of the 26<sup>th</sup>, Jackson of the 112<sup>th</sup>, Coan of the 82<sup>nd</sup> and others

#### A RESOLUTION

1 Urging the Congress of the United States to pass a constitutional amendment to the  
2 Constitution of the United States to allow for voluntary school prayer and the protection of  
3 public religious speech; and for other purposes.

4 WHEREAS, our country was founded on the precepts of freedom, liberty, diversity, and the  
5 right of the people to acknowledge God according to the dictates of conscience; and

6 WHEREAS, from the very beginning of our nation to the founding of our first national  
7 government in 1774, and from the Continental Congress to the Constitutional Convention  
8 and the years after the establishment of our Constitution, voluntary prayer has been a  
9 unifying and consoling force; and

10 WHEREAS, statements of belief in a Supreme Power and the virtue of seeking guidance,  
11 strength, and protection from that Power are prevalent throughout our national history and  
12 appear in our national documents as well as in virtually every state constitution; and

13 WHEREAS, the framers of the Constitution, recognizing free exercise of religion as an  
14 inalienable right, secured its protection with the First Amendment of the Constitution of the  
15 United States; and

16 WHEREAS, every session of Congress (and of many other legislative and public bodies  
17 across the nation) begins with the comfort and encouragement of voluntary prayer; and

18 WHEREAS, our government has a constitutional obligation to protect religious freedom; and

19 WHEREAS, one of the purposes of education is to prepare students to be good citizens; and

20 WHEREAS, appreciation and respect not only for the beliefs and traditions of others but also  
21 for the longstanding beliefs and traditions of the nation form a part of good citizenship; and

1 WHEREAS, voluntary student prayer formed a part of American public schools from their  
2 origination in 1642 for over 300 years afterward until the U.S. Supreme Court in a 1962  
3 ruling it said was "without precedent," struck down what it described as "voluntary,  
4 non-denominational school prayer"; and

5 WHEREAS, in 1985 the Supreme Court even struck down voluntary, silent student prayers;  
6 and

7 WHEREAS, an increasing number of recent religion-hostile court decisions now prohibit the  
8 overwhelming majority of Americans from participating in the very same religious  
9 expressions their parents, grandparents, and generations before them enjoyed; and

10 WHEREAS, an increasing and ever-widening hostility against voluntary prayer and public  
11 religious speech has produced a public atmosphere of fear, intimidation, and confusion about  
12 school prayer and religious speech; and

13 WHEREAS, an overwhelming majority of Americans now favor giving specific protections  
14 to these traditional religious expressions as indicated by recent polls showing that 78 percent  
15 favor a constitutional amendment restoring voluntary school prayer and 74 percent favor  
16 protecting displays of the Ten Commandments.

17 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF  
18 GEORGIA that the United States Congress is urged to pass a "School Prayer Amendment"  
19 to the Constitution reinstating protection for voluntary school prayer and other public  
20 religious speech.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
22 and directed to transmit an appropriate copy of this resolution to each member of the United  
23 States Congress representing the State of Georgia.