
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1728 Session of
2013

INTRODUCED BY SACCONI, READSHAW, REESE, STERN, KAUFFMAN, BLOOM,
HAGGERTY, MIRANDA, JAMES, ENGLISH, V. BROWN, METCALFE, BAKER,
SANKEY, TALLMAN, BENNINGHOFF, SONNEY, MARSHALL, SAYLOR,
SWANGER, CALTAGIRONE, MALONEY, ROCK, GROVE, HAHN AND
MICOZZIE, OCTOBER 1, 2013

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, OCTOBER 1, 2013

AN ACT

1 Providing for the display of the national motto "In God We
2 Trust" in classrooms and other areas in public school
3 buildings.

4 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
5 hereby enacts as follows:

6 Section 1. Short title.

7 This act shall be known and may be cited as the National
8 Motto Display Act.

9 Section 2. Legislative findings and declarations.

10 The General Assembly finds and declares as follows:

11 (1) The motto "In God We Trust" is part of the history
12 and heritage of the United States. On April 22, 2014, we will
13 celebrate the 150th anniversary of our national motto "In God
14 We Trust" on our coins. Although this phrase was not
15 officially established as our national motto until a law was
16 passed by the 84th Congress and approved by President
17 Eisenhower, it was first introduced to the nation by Francis

1 Scott Key in 1814 as words that would be included in our
2 national anthem.

3 (2) It was a Pennsylvanian however, that installed those
4 words on our coins. James Pollock from Milton, Pennsylvania,
5 became our 13th governor serving from 1855 to 1858. He was
6 known as "The Great Christian Governor." Prior to Pollock's
7 term as Governor and as one of the original trustees when The
8 Pennsylvania State University became a charter, he served as
9 a member of the Congress of the United States and became
10 friends with then congressman, Abraham Lincoln. When Lincoln
11 became president, he appointed Pollock director of the United
12 States Mint.

13 (3) Pollock suggested the motto "In God We Trust" be
14 featured on all United States currency. This practice first
15 occurred in April of 1864 when Congress approved the use of
16 the motto on United States two-cent pieces. Since then, the
17 motto has been inscribed on most denominations of coins in an
18 uninterrupted period of time extending from the present back
19 to 1916.

20 (4) In 1956, the Congress of the United States adopted
21 the motto "In God We Trust" as the national motto. It is
22 currently codified at 36 U.S.C. § 302 (relating to national
23 motto). Since 1957, the United States Bureau of Engraving and
24 Printing has gradually incorporated the motto in the design
25 on the reverse of all paper currency.

26 (5) On July 24, 2000, the United States House of
27 Representatives, along with the concurrence of the Senate,
28 unanimously resolved to encourage the display of the national
29 motto of the United States in public buildings throughout the
30 nation.

1 (6) To increase student understanding of and familiarity
2 with American historical documents, historically important
3 excerpts from or copies of the documents should be
4 prominently displayed in public school buildings.

5 (7) The Federal 5th, 9th and 10th Circuit Courts have
6 ruled that displaying the national motto passes
7 constitutional muster so long as the purpose of the display
8 is to advance or endorse the national motto rather than a
9 particular religious belief or practice.

10 Section 3. Display of motto.

11 (a) Board of directors.--The board of directors of every
12 school district in this Commonwealth shall display the motto "In
13 God We Trust," which is declared in 36 U.S.C. § 302 (relating to
14 national motto) to be the national motto of the United States,
15 in each school building.

16 (b) Form.--The display of the motto "In God We Trust" may
17 take the form of, but is not limited to, a mounted plaque or may
18 include artwork as a result of a student contest that will be
19 prominently displayed in each school building.

20 Section 20. Effective date.

21 This act shall take effect in 60 days.