



INTERCESSORS FOR AMERICA THE INFORMER

A biblical, prophetic look at current events for those who have a heart to pray for our nation.

On Watch in Washington

January 4, 2012

IRAN WARNS U.S. CARRIER IN PERSIAN GULF

[Iran's army chief on Tuesday warned an American aircraft carrier not to return to the Persian Gulf](#) in Tehran's latest tough rhetoric over the strategic waterway.

Gen. Ataollah Salehi spoke as a 10-day Iranian naval exercise ended near the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Gulf. "Iran will not repeat its warning ... the enemy's carrier has been moved to the Sea of Oman because of our drill. I recommend and emphasize to the American carrier not to return to the Persian Gulf," Salehi told IRNA.

"I advise, recommend and warn them (the Americans) over the return of this carrier to the Persian Gulf because we are not in the habit of warning more than once," the semi-official Fars news agency quoted Salehi as saying.

Salehi did not name the aircraft carrier or give details of the action Iran might take if it returned. However, last week a spokeswoman for the U.S. 5th Fleet said the USS John C. Stennis had left the Gulf.

Iran completed 10 days of naval exercises in the Gulf on Monday, and said during the drills that if foreign powers imposed sanctions on its crude exports it could shut the Strait of Hormuz, through which 40 percent of the world's traded oil is shipped.

Iran said on Monday it had successfully test-fired two long-range missiles during its naval drill, flexing its military muscle in the face of mounting Western pressure over its controversial nuclear program.

Iran also said it had no intention of closing the Strait of Hormuz but had carried out "mock" exercises on shutting the strategic waterway.

Iran announces a nuclear fuel breakthrough and test-fires a new surface-to-air missile in the Gulf on Sunday. NBC's Kate Snow reports.

Tehran denies Western accusations that it is secretly trying to build atomic bombs, saying it needs nuclear technology to generate electricity.

A leading Iranian lawmaker said Sunday the maneuvers [served as practice](#) for closing the strait if the West enacts sanctions blocking Iranian oil sales. Top Iranian officials made the same threat last week.

The United States and Israel have not ruled out military action against Iran if diplomacy fails to resolve the Islamic state's nuclear row with the West.

The United States [will continue to deploy its warships in the Gulf](#), a defense spokesman said on Tuesday after Iran threatened to take action if the U.S. Navy moves an aircraft carrier into the Gulf.

"These are regularly scheduled movements and in accordance with our long-standing commitments to the security and stability of the region and in support of ongoing operations," Commander Bill Speaks said in an emailed response to Reuters questions. The U.S. Fifth Fleet, which is based in Bahrain, said it would not allow shipping to be disrupted in the strait. (Contributors: [Associated Press](#), [MSNBC](#)), [Reuters](#))

Pray that U.S. leadership will seek the wisdom of the Lord in dealing with the ongoing and growing concern with Iran's military goals. Pray for the Lord's hand of protection over our men and women serving on these Navy vessels.

"The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my savior; thou saved me from violence. I will call on the LORD, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies." (2 Samuel 22:3-4)

VOTER ID ISSUE IN SOUTH CAROLINA

On Dec. 23, U.S. Federal Assistant Attorney General Thomas E. Perez sent a letter ordering South Carolina to stop enforcing its photo ID law. Mr. Perez, who heads the Civil Rights Division that booted charges against the New Black Panther Party for intimidating voters in Philadelphia in 2008, said South Carolina's law would disenfranchise thousands of minority voters.

South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson rejected Mr. Perez's math and explained on [Fox News](#) why the law is necessary. The state Department of Motor Vehicles audited a state Election Commission report that said 239,333 people were registered to vote, but had no photo ID. The DMV found that 37,000 were deceased, more than 90,000 had moved to other states, and others had names not matched to IDs. That left only 27,000 people registered without a photo ID, but who could vote by signing an affidavit as to their identity.

Mr. Wilson told me by phone Thursday that he would file a challenge to the order in federal district court in January. Asked whether he felt South Carolina was being singled out, he declined to speculate on motives. However, citing the National Labor Relations Board's order to invalidate the voter-approved union card check amendment, the NLRB's order to stop a new Boeing Co. plant, and the Justice Department's suit to halt the state's immigration law, he said, "There certainly is a pattern of the federal government overreaching into South Carolina."

Leading Democrats loudly equate recently enacted photo ID legislation as updated versions of Jim Crow laws that once robbed people of their constitutional right to vote simply because of their race. But photo ID laws and other voter integrity measures cover everyone. Like other states, South Carolina provides photo IDs if a person cannot afford one.

The U.S. Constitution empowers the states to enact voting procedures with minimal input from the national government, such as setting the voting age and election days for federal offices. The 15th and 19th amendments ensure that no one is denied the right to vote based on race or sex.

In 1965, Congress passed the Voting Rights Act, which authorizes the U.S. attorney general or a three-judge panel of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia to review changes to voting procedures or redistricting in nine states (Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Texas and Virginia), some counties in California, Florida, New York, North Carolina and South Dakota, and some townships in Michigan and New Hampshire.

Congress did so to counter clearly established patterns of voter intimidation of blacks. Now, the Justice Department, which, under Attorney General Eric H. Holder Jr. could be renamed the Retribution Department, looks the other way depending on the race of the parties involved.

In 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Indiana's 2005 photo ID law.

But, as American Civil Rights Union attorney Peter Ferrara noted in the group's friend- of-the-court brief:

"No one has been denied the right to vote by the Indiana Voter ID Law. The record clearly establishes without challenge that 99 percent of the Voting Age Population in Indiana already has the required ID, in the form of driver's licenses, passports, or other identification. Of the remaining 1 percent, senior citizens and the disabled are automatically eligible to vote by absentee ballot, and such absentee voting is exempt from the Voter ID Law."

Does that sound "severe" to you? As Mr. Ferrara notes, "the slight burden of additional paperwork for a fraction of 1 percent, to show who they are and thereby prove their eligibility to vote, cannot come close to outweighing the interests of all legitimate legal voters in maintaining their effective vote."

A bipartisan Commission on Federal Election Reform in 2005 chaired by former President Jimmy Carter and former U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker III found no evidence that requiring photo IDs would suppress the minority vote. The panel recommended a national photo ID system and a campaign to register voters.

In a 2008 column, Mr. Carter and Mr. Baker cited a study by American University's Center for Democracy and Election Management that echoed the election commission. Among other things, researchers found that in three states - Indiana, Mississippi and Maryland - about 1.2 percent of registered voters had no photo ID.

Since the GOP took a majority of governorships and legislatures in 2010 and continued enacting voting safeguards, you can feel the panic in Democratic strongholds.

The Obama administration is playing the same race card that Democrats have played for decades. But this is not about race; it's about whether legitimately cast votes will be wiped out by illegally cast votes. (Contributor: [The Washington Times](#), [Fox News](#))

Pray that our voting laws will be protected from overbearing forces that would attempt to undermine the voice of the people through their right to vote. Pray that our legislators will treasure the fair institution of voting in democratic society.

"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in ONE WORD, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." (Galatians 5:13-15)

ANTI-CHRISTIAN ATTACKS: NIGERIA DECLARES STATE OF EMERGENCY

Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan has declared a state of emergency in response to mounting concerns about attacks by an Islamist militant group, Boko Haram, (especially attacks against the Christian population). Northern parts of Africa's most populous nation are vulnerable, and several borders remained closed Sunday, January 1, as part of what officials called a "temporary security measure."

Boko Haram, which means 'Western education is a sin' in the Hausa language, claimed responsibility for Christmas Day bombings at several churches and other attacks that left at least 40 people dead.

The group says it wants to impose Sharia, or Muslim law, across the country.

Adding to the government's concerns were reports that ethnic violence between Ezza and Ezilo groups erupted in the eastern state of Ebonyi, killing at least 50 people on Saturday, December 31. News reports said the violence began over farmland disputes, apparently unrelated to Boko Haram.

Nigerian Christians mourned their dead Monday, December 26, after at least 35 people died in a Christmas Day bombing at a Catholic Church and at least four others in similar blasts.

Hundreds of mourners attended the memorial service in the attacked St. Theresa Church in the town of Madalla, near capital Abuja, surrounded by armed soldiers and bloodstained walls, witnesses said.

The Mountain of Fire and Miracles Church volatile in the religiously mixed town of Jos, the capital of Nigeria's central Plateau state, and another church in Gadaka town in the northern Yobe state, were among other targets of attacks on Christmas Day.

In a statement, President Jonathan, a Christian, said he puts measures in place to restore order in the troubled nation, especially in the north where most anti-Christian attacks happened.

"The crisis has assumed a terrorist dimension by attacking institutions of government, including the United Nations building and places of worship becoming targets of terrorist attacks," he said. "While the search for a lasting solution is ongoing, it has become imperative to take decisive measures necessary to restore normalcy in the country, especially within the affected communities," the president added.

"Consequently, I have in the exercise of the powers conferred on me by the provisions of 305, of subsection one of the constitution, declared a state of emergency."

Jonathan also stepped up security by creating a counter-terrorism force and closing borders with Cameroon, Chad, and Niger, after he was criticized for not doing enough to protect Christians.

"The temporary closure of our borders in the affected areas is only an interim measure designed to address the current security challenges and will be resumed as soon as normalcy is restored," said the president.

The country of 150 million is about evenly divided between Moslems, who mostly live in the north, and Christians who dominate in the south. Hundreds of Nigerians, including many Christians, have died this year in bomb blasts and shootings blamed on Boko Haram, many of them Christians. (Contributor: [Worthy News](#))

Pray for the protection of the Christian population in Nigeria. Pray the leaders of Nigeria will find a solution to dealing with this terrorist subversion. Pray that other countries will lift the banner for support and protection of those Christians who are being threatened by these militant Moslem factions.

"I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety." (Psalm 4:8)

"Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot

against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.” (Psalm 91:9-13)

EGYPTIAN BROTHERHOOD VOWS NOT TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL

The Muslim Brotherhood, the overwhelming victor in the first round of elections for the Egyptian Parliament, has [announced it will not recognize Israel](#) and intends to bring the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty to a referendum. It will not recognize Israel “under any circumstance,” the party’s deputy leader Dr. Rashad Bayoumi told Arabic daily al-Hayat in an interview published on Sunday.

In recent Egyptian elections the Brotherhood’s Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) won 36.3 percent of the list vote, while the ultra-conservative Salafi al-Nour Party took 28.8%.

When asked whether it is a requirement for the government in Egypt to recognize Israel, Bayoumi responded by saying: “This is not an option, whatever the circumstances, we do not recognize Israel at all. It’s an occupying criminal enemy.”

Rashad Bayoumi, Muslim Brotherhood’s second-in-command, tells London-based Al-Hayat, ["No Muslim Brotherhood members will engage in any contact or normalization with Israel."](#)

Bayoumi went on to say that the Moslem Brotherhood would take legal procedures towards canceling the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel that was signed in 1979.

Bayoumi’s comments are not the first time Egyptian officials have expressed contradicting views on relations with Israel.

Just last month, the spokesman of Egypt’s ultraconservative Islamist party told Israeli Army Radio in unprecedented remarks that the group is not opposed to the country’s historic peace treaty with Israel.

"We are not opposed to the agreement, and we are saying that Egypt is committed to the agreements that previous Egyptian governments have signed," Yousseri Hamad said, noting that if Egyptians want changes to the treaty, ["the place for that is the negotiation table."](#)

“The Brotherhood respects international conventions, but we will take legal action against the peace treaty with the Zionist entity,” he told the paper.

At the beginning of December, Egypt’s two leading Islamist parties won about two-thirds of votes for party lists in the second round of polling for a parliament that will help draft a new constitution after decades of autocratic rule.

The vote, staged over six weeks, is the first free election Egypt has held after the 30-year rule of president Hosni Mubarak, who routinely rigged polls before he was overthrown by a popular uprising in February.

The West long looked to Mubarak and other strongmen in the region to help combat Islamist militants, and has watched warily as Islamist parties have topped votes in Tunisia, Morocco and now Egypt.

The Egyptian Parliament’s prime job will be appointing a 100-man assembly to write a new constitution which will define the president’s powers and parliament’s clout in the new Egypt.

He noted that the Brotherhood is seeking international legitimacy, particularly among Western countries such as the United States, and any move to cancel the peace treaty with Israel could represent a

strategic chance too great for the movement to take upon itself. This likely explains why the Brotherhood is discussing a referendum, he said. (Contributors: [Haaretz](#), [Jerusalem Post](#), [Israel Hayom](#))

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. Pray that the leaders of Israel will stand strong against any ploy of world leaders to call upon them to compromise and surrender the sovereign land with which the Lord has blessed them with, especially the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem” Psalm 122:6

THE IMMIGRATION RUSH

A recent probe reveals that feds are pressuring immigration agents to rush immigrant visas – even if fraud is feared, reports an exclusive by [The Daily](#).

Higher-ups within U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services are pressuring rank-and-file officers to rubber-stamp immigrants’ visa applications, sometimes against the officers’ will, according to a Homeland Security report and internal documents exclusively obtained by The Daily.

Congressional members announced Tuesday that it will investigate these allegations.

A 40-page report, drafted by the Office of Inspector General in September but not publicly released, details the immense pressure immigration service officers are under to approve visa applications quickly, sometimes while overlooking concerns about fraud, eligibility or security.

One-quarter of the 254 officers surveyed said they have been pressured to approve questionable cases, sometimes “against their will.”

The report does not call out any particular officials and indicates that the agency has had a problem with valuing quantity over quality since at least the 1980s.

But high-ranking USCIS officials said the pressure has heightened after the Obama administration appointed Alejandro Mayorkas as director in August 2009 during an effort to pass comprehensive immigration reform, bringing with him a mantra of “get to yes.”

The Daily has exclusively obtained a Homeland Security Office of Inspector General draft report on fraud detection issues within the agency’s immigration arm. The inspector general interviewed 147 managers and staff at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, or USCIS, and received 256 responses to an online survey. Here are some of the findings in the report.

“63 of 254 Immigration Services Officers (24.8%) responded that they have been pressured to approve questionable applications.”

“Several USCIS employees informed us that officers have been required to approve specific cases against their will.”

“Another 35 ISOs (13.9%) had serious concerns that employees who focus on fraud or ineligibility were evaluated unfairly.”

“Cases are sometimes taken away from us and given to officers who the supervisor knows will approve the case ... Another survey respondent was threatened with a formal reprimand if a case was not approved as the supervisor required.”

“... data confirm that USCIS was more likely to grant O visa status [for aliens who have extraordinary ability in science, arts, business, or athletics] incorrectly than to deny a legitimate position.”

Source for the Daily exclusive: *Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, “The Effects of USCIS Adjudication Procedures and Policies on Fraud Detection by Immigration Service Officers,” September 2011.* (Contributor: [The Examiner](#), [The Daily](#))

Pray that the U.S. Government officials will honor the time tested traditions and laws regarding the safeguard of U.S. citizens and industry by carefully qualifying those who seek entrance to the U.S. on visas. Pray there will be full disclosure of illegal practices by government officials being paid to protect its nation.

“A nation without God's guidance is a nation without order. Happy are those who keep God's law!”
(Proverbs 29:18)

A PENNSYLVANIA MIRACLE STORY

From his high chair in their Franklin Park home, Ryan Marquiss watched his mother make breakfast and help his sister, Natalie, 7, get ready for school. He finished eating his toast and lifted his hands triumphantly.

His sister, Ainsley, 5, rushed over to kiss his cheek, making him giggle. He pulled his T-shirt over his head, exposing his chest. His heart, formed outside his chest cavity and covered only by a thin layer of skin, beat visibly.

Ainsley cupped her hand over the pulsating heart, and Ryan, 2, squealed with delight as she tried to push it into his chest.

This is the boy doctors said would surely die.

From the moment they detected abnormalities during Leighann Marquiss' 12-week sonogram, they told her and her husband, Henry, the baby had no chance. Ryan's deformed heart was growing outside his body, they said. The baby would suffer heart failure and die in the womb within weeks.

No baby with Ryan's combination of defects had survived, they said.

They told the couple not to expect a miracle, and urged them to abort. No, said Leighann and Henry, if the baby is going to die, we'll let it die naturally.

"He's just a normal boy," Leighann said, watching the morning scene in her kitchen nearly three years later. "He falls down and scrapes his knees. He says, 'Mommy, mommy, mommy.' He plays with his sisters.

"Of course, sometimes I tell them to stop touching his heart. What other mom says that?"

Ryan Marquiss' story of survival, following his risky birth at Children's National Medical Center in Washington, combines a family's faith and love with uncharted medical expertise. Doctors involved with his birth and care say that because he lived, they've begun to look differently at their approach to babies with his rare combination of heart defects.

His costly treatment coincided with national debate over health care costs, but the family's insurer, Aetna, offered no resistance, hospital officials said. The family's coverage plan and proximity to a hospital with specialists helped, as did the hospital's "gold standard" rating that caused Aetna to trust its doctors to make wise decisions, officials said.

Leighann and Henry, both 34, began dating in high school at Heritage Academy in Hagerstown, Md., where their graduating class totaled 15 students. Until August, when he took a job with The PNC Financial Services Group Inc. in Pittsburgh, they lived in Reston, Va.

Dr. Mary Donofrio was the first doctor to give them hope.

Donofrio, director of the Fetal Heart Program at Children's National, believed she could help Ryan -- even though at 22 weeks into Leighann's pregnancy, the baby had lived longer than anyone expected.

The medical term for his unprotected, vulnerable heart: ectopia cordis. If he did not die in the womb, the birthing process could be fatal, Donofrio explained. If he survived birth, his exposed heart likely would become infected and kill him. Even if infection did not happen, his heart had one working ventricle and he would require open-heart surgery to rewire the blood flow through it.

"I told the family right from the start, there is no statistic I can quote them," she said. "Ryan is uncharted territory. If he survived, it was a miracle.

So however you want to assign a statistical chance of survival, based on that, that was what we were working with."

Yet, she promised to do everything she could to save him.

Leighann's spirits rose. Initially, after hearing about her baby's condition, she prayed to miscarry. But during one such prayer, she felt that God spoke to her, telling her to trust that the baby would be OK. She vowed to love and care for the child as long as she had him.

God has a plan for Ryan, Leighann told herself, and Dr. Donofrio is part of that plan.

"I realized that the expertise that's here enables us to pull off miracles," Donofrio said. "I certainly would not have offered if I thought there was no hope. I knew ... that if I could coordinate the multiple teams to work together, Ryan did stand a chance."

In the months leading up to Ryan's birth, Donofrio and the specialists she assembled planned for possible outcomes. They sat in a conference room for hours, brainstorming potential complications and crafting solutions. For a normal cesarean section, five or six medical personnel attend the birth; for Ryan, more than 30 specialists would be involved, including anesthesiologists, plastic surgeons, general surgeons, cardiac surgeons and nurses.

The medical team's work cost more than \$4.5 million, according to hospital officials and receipts Leighann and Henry kept. Aetna paid most of that amount.

On the scheduled day of Ryan's birth, many doctors still doubted they could save him.

"We were scared," Donofrio said. "We didn't know what was going to happen, and the emotions were very high. There were so many people in the (delivery) room that it was overwhelming -- for the family, but also for us as a medical team."

Leighann was terrified. On Feb. 19, 2009, when they wheeled her into the room filled with masked faces, beeping machines and medical tools laid out on white sheets, she panicked.

"I really liked Ryan being in my stomach because I knew he could live in there," she said. "At one point, I said, 'I can't do this. I'm not kidding. Get me off this table.' "

Henry sat by his wife's side, holding her hand. They did not choose a name for the baby, whose name tag on his hospital bassinet read: Baby Boy Marquiss.

"It was hard to commit," Henry said. "I mean, you love him; that's your kid. ... But you know he's going to die."

Doctors who took the baby from Leighann's abdomen rushed him to a warming table away from the parents and waited for signs of life that did not come.

"Most babies let out a cry and expand their lungs and clear out the water that's in the lungs," Donofrio said. "They begin breathing right away; you can see air moving in and out. Ryan was making no attempts to breathe and he was beyond blue. He was purple, almost black. That's how hypoxic, or without oxygen, he was initially."

Dr. Richard Levy, a cardiac anesthesiologist and resuscitation expert, placed an oxygen mask over his face to push air into his lungs. When they began working, he inserted a breathing tube and hooked Ryan up to a ventilator.

A second problem emerged: Ryan was born with an omphalocele, an abdominal defect that pre-birth imaging did not detect. The medical team had to scuttle its plan to insert an IV line into his umbilical vessel because, as a result of the omphalocele, there were no umbilical vessels to tap.

Dr. Nina Deutsch, a pediatric cardiac anesthesiologist, placed an IV in his hand. Ryan's condition stabilized as crucial medications began to flow.

When he finally cried -- "like a little, weak kitten," Leighann recalled -- she broke into tears.

As expected, Ryan's heart was outside his body. Unexpectedly, however, a thin, translucent membrane covered the hole in his chest.

Donofrio had warned his parents that infection posed a serious risk to an exposed heart, but the membrane was a shield. Ryan would not yet need surgery to cover the heart, and the plastic surgeons were dismissed.

"It was God's way of saying, 'I've covered it,'" Leighann said. "It eliminated the problem of heart infection right away and allowed them to focus on the right ventricle not functioning."

This was his first break.

Over the following two years, he would endure 13 major operations and procedures, including open-heart surgery and multiple heart catheterizations.

"Without divine intervention, this baby had no chance," Leighann said. "Over and over, they told us that my baby would not live past 20 weeks, that I should just terminate now. ... Maybe now they'll stop saying that to other mothers." (SOURCE: [Fox News](#))

Give thanks to the Lord for the love that this family has for their son. Thank the Lord for their faith to press forward with the challenge that they faced in making their decision to not abort their son. Ask the Lord to continue to bless them and their journey of faith together.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11)

PRAYER FOCUS ON THIS WEEKS CONGRESSIONAL ISSUES

Supporting legislative prayer at the Supreme Court of the United States

Members of the Prayer Caucus signed an [amicus curiae brief](#) submitted to the Supreme Court of the United States by the Family Research Council, asking the Court to reverse a decision by the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals in [Joyner v. Forsyth County](#), which held that the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners’ prayer policy was unconstitutional because the prayers too often mentioned “Jesus.” The county’s prayer policy was based on a model policy used by other city and county councils throughout the country that has been upheld by four other federal courts since 2009. However, the Fourth Circuit held that in order to be constitutional, such prayers must not be “too sectarian.” The *amicus curiae* brief asks the Supreme Court to take up the case and overturn the Fourth Circuit’s decision, in hopes that the Court will bring the ruling into alignment with decisions of other federal courts and our nation’s historic legacy of permitting such prayer.

Working to protect the symbols and traditions of Christmas

Members of the Prayer Caucus are supporting [H.Res.489](#), introduced by Rep. Doug Lamborn, which expresses the sense of the House of Representatives that the symbols and traditions of Christmas should be protected for use by those that celebrate Christmas. Each year during the Christmas season, there are increasing efforts to remove religious symbols and references from the holiday. H.Res.489 emphasizes that the First Amendment does not require bans on religious references to Christmas, and supports the use of these symbols by those who celebrate Christmas.

Urging Vanderbilt University to protect religious student groups

Congressman Randy Forbes, Co-Chairman of the Congressional Prayer Caucus, led 22 Members of Congress in sending a [letter](#) to Chancellor Nicholas Zeppos of Vanderbilt University, urging him to ensure that the school’s nondiscrimination policy is not being interpreted in a manner that discriminates against religious student groups. Several religious student organizations at Vanderbilt University, including the Christian Legal Society and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, were placed on “provisional status” for requiring their student leaders to share the groups’ religious beliefs.

Advocating for the inclusion of prayer in the tenth anniversary commemoration of the September 11th attacks

Congressman Forbes, Founder and Co-Chairman of the Congressional Prayer Caucus, sent a [letter](#) to New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg urging him to include prayer in the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the September 11th attacks. Congressman Mike McIntyre, Co-Chairman of the Congressional Prayer Caucus, lead 31 Members of Congress in sending a [letter](#) to Mayor Bloomberg echoing the call for the inclusion of prayer.

Working to reaffirm our national motto, “In God We Trust”

Congressman Forbes, Chairman of the Congressional Prayer Caucus, introduced [H.Con.Res.13](#) to reaffirm our national motto “In God We Trust,” and to encourage its display in public buildings, public schools, and other government institutions. The legislation was passed favorably out of the House

Judiciary Committee on March 17, 2011, and is awaiting a vote by the full House of Representatives.

Fighting attempts to remove “Under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance

Members of the Congressional Prayer Caucus lead in sending a [letter](#) to NBC, expressing concern over the network’s omissions of “under God” from the Pledge of Allegiance twice in a video montage aired during coverage of the U.S. Open. In [response](#) to the letter sent by 108 Members of Congress, the network reprimanded the employees responsible for the omissions and implemented safeguards to prevent similar instances in the future.

Opposing efforts to remove a memorial cross honoring military veterans

In January 2011, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that a cross displayed at the Mount Soledad Veterans Memorial in San Diego, California was unconstitutional. Members of the Prayer Caucus signed on to an *amicus curiae* brief submitted to the Ninth Circuit in *Jewish War Veterans of the United States v. City of San Diego*, asking the full court to reconsider the case, and asserting that the cross’s presence at the veterans memorial is constitutional.

Urging religious freedom protections for service members

The repeal of the “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” policy in the military raised concerns that service members whose consciences or religious beliefs conflicted with homosexual behavior would face discrimination and disapproval. Members of the Prayer Caucus sent a [letter](#) to President Obama, urging that specific religious freedom and conscience protections be adopted during implementation of the repeal to formally assure all Americans that our citizens need not leave their faith at home when they volunteer to serve.

Affirming America’s rich spiritual heritage

Co-chairmen of the Congressional Prayer Caucus, Congressman Forbes and Congressman McIntyre, reintroduced legislation to recognize our nation’s religious history. [H.Res.253](#), America’s Spiritual Heritage Resolution, affirms the rich spiritual and diverse religious history of our nation’s founding and subsequent history, and designates the first week in May as America’s Spiritual Heritage Week.

Working to decrease frivolous lawsuits challenging public expressions of religion

Members of the Prayer Caucus are supporting [H.R.2023](#), introduced by Congressman Dan Burton, which would ensure that the legal system is not used to extort money from state and local governments through frivolous lawsuits against public expressions of religion. H.R. 2023 would not prevent parties from filing lawsuits alleging Establishment Clause violations, but it would require each side to pay its own attorneys’ fees. The bill would limit the remedies available to the suing party, so the only relief available would be that the state or local government would be required to stop its public expression of religion, if the court deems it unconstitutional. The result would be a decrease in frivolous lawsuits and the assurance that state and local governments are not intimidated into halting constitutional public expressions of religion.

Supporting the addition of the D-day Prayer to the World War Two Memorial

Members of the Prayer Caucus are supporting [H.R.2070](#), the World War II Memorial Prayer Act, introduced by Congressman Bill Johnson. H.R. 2070 directs the Secretary of the Interior to add President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s D-Day Prayer to the National World War II Memorial in Washington, DC. President Roosevelt delivered the prayer to the nation on June 6, 1944, the day that American troops stormed the beaches of Normandy, France.

Recognizing the significant impact of the Ten Commandments on America’s development

Members of the Prayer Caucus are supporting [H.Res.211](#), introduced by Congressman Louie Gohmert, which recognizes the significant contribution that the Ten Commandments have made in shaping
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America's principles, institutions, and national character. The bill supports designating the first weekend in May as "Ten Commandments Weekend."

(Source: [Congressional Prayer Caucus Web Site](#))