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Americans Trust God

POSTED BY **TOM MCFEELY**
Friday, December 05, 2008 9:51 AM

Some heartening news from the culture wars front: 82% of more than 9 million respondents to an [online poll](#) support keeping "In God We Trust" on U.S. currency.

And while the poll is not scientific, there's no reason to think it has been conducted with an intention to skew the results it in favor of faith. The poll is being conducted by MSNBC, which is unlikely to be accused of harboring biases in favor of religion in general or Christianity in particular.

The MSNBC poll was triggered by the launching in 2005 of a lawsuit by atheist [Michael Newdow](#) seeking to have the "In God We Trust" motto removed from U.S. currency on the grounds it is allegedly unconstitutional. A federal judge rejected the lawsuit in 2006.



(Richard B. Levine)

A lawsuit Newdow launched earlier alleging that it was unconstitutional for students in public schools to recite the phrase "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance was initially upheld in lower courts but was later rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court on the grounds that Newdow did not have legal standing to file the suit. [This website](#) provides some background on the legal arguments presented by both sides regarding that issue.

President-elect Barack Obama opposed efforts to remove "under God" from the Pledge of Allegiance in a [June 2006 speech](#) about religion and politics.

"A sense of proportion should also guide those who police the boundaries between church and state," Obama said. "Not every mention of God in public is a breach to the wall of separation — context matters. It is doubtful that children reciting the Pledge of Allegiance feel oppressed or brainwashed as a consequence of muttering the phrase 'under God.' I didn't."

— Tom McFeely

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