

IN THE SENATE

SENATE RESOLUTION NO. 107

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A SENATE RESOLUTION

1 STATING FINDINGS OF THE SENATE AND SUPPORTING THE OBSERVATION OF AN OFFICIAL
2 TIME OF PRAYER EACH DAY OF THE REGULAR SESSION OF THE IDAHO LEGISLATURE.
3

4 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Idaho:

5 WHEREAS, one of America's longest ongoing constitutional traditions is
6 to begin sessions of legislative and deliberative bodies with an official
7 time of prayer; and

8 WHEREAS, traditions from the nation's infancy to the current day have
9 consistently reaffirmed this beloved and cherished practice; and

10 WHEREAS, when the Founding Fathers originally convened the First Con-
11 tinental Congress in September 1774, prayer was offered and John Adams re-
12 ported, "I never saw a greater effect upon an audience...It has had an excel-
13 lent effect upon everybody here"; and

14 WHEREAS, in September 1787 when the Founding Fathers gathered to write
15 the United States Constitution, elder statesman Benjamin Franklin moved
16 that, "prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our
17 deliberations, be held in this assembly every morning before we proceed to
18 business"; and

19 WHEREAS, delegate Edmund Randolph further proposed that a sermon be
20 preached at the request of the Convention and that prayer be used in the Con-
21 vention every morning; and

22 WHEREAS, the Constitutional Convention gathered at the Calvinist Re-
23 formed Church in Philadelphia, and the Rev. William Rogers prayed a special
24 prayer over the delegates; and

25 WHEREAS, in April 1789, the United States House of Representatives and
26 the United States Senate assembled for the first time and among their offi-
27 cial activities was to "go up to the house of God and in a solemn manner com-
28 mit the new government, with its important train of consequences, to the holy
29 protection and blessing of the Most High" in a gathering that was "designed
30 wholly for prayer"; and

31 WHEREAS, President George Washington opened and closed his first inau-
32 gural address with prayer; and

33 WHEREAS, the first United States Congress procured chaplains to ensure
34 daily prayers were offered in both chambers; and

35 WHEREAS, when the first United States Congress finished drafting the
36 Bill of Rights, President George Washington called for a time of prayer, af-
37 firming that "it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of
38 Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to
39 implore His protection and favor"; and

40 WHEREAS, the American practice of engaging in official times of prayer
41 was so strongly supported and widely practiced that by 1815 at least 1,400
42 official prayer proclamations had been issued by civil governments with

1 thousands more since then in this centuries-old tradition that continues to
2 the present day; and

3 WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Marsh v. Chambers*,
4 affirmed that "The practice of opening sessions of Congress with prayer has
5 continued without interruption for almost 200 years...and a similar prac-
6 tice has been followed...[in] many other states" and that "the practice of
7 opening legislative sessions with prayer has become part of the fabric of our
8 society"; and

9 WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Zorach v. Clauson*,
10 similarly affirmed that "We are a religious people whose institutions pre-
11 suppose a Supreme Being" and that "when the State encourages religious in-
12 struction or cooperates with religious authorities by adjusting the sched-
13 ule of public events to sectarian needs, it follows the best of our tradi-
14 tions"; and

15 WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States recently reaffirmed
16 that "retaining established religiously expressive monuments, symbols, and
17 practices...gives rise to a strong presumption of constitutionality"; and

18 WHEREAS, President Abraham Lincoln urged citizens "to recognize the
19 sublime truths announced in the Holy Scriptures and proven by all history
20 that those nations only are blessed whose God is the Lord"; and

21 WHEREAS, President George Washington, in his farewell address, consid-
22 ered the most significant presidential address in American history, urged
23 Americans to remember that "political prosperity" is ever preceded by "reli-
24 gion and morality"; and

25 WHEREAS, the Idaho Senate observes an official time of prayer each day
26 during the Second Order of Business on the Senate floor.

27 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Senate, assembled
28 in the First Regular Session of the Sixty-eighth Idaho Legislature, that the
29 Idaho Senate supports following this American tradition by observing an of-
30 ficial time of prayer each day of the Regular Session of the Idaho Legisla-
31 ture.