



West Wing connections

Policies in Focus

- America Responds to Terrorism
- Homeland Security
- Economy & Budget
- Education Reform
- Medicare
- Social Security
- More Issues
- En Español

News

- Current News
- Press Briefings
- Proclamations
- Nominations
- Executive Orders
- Radio Addresses
- Discurso Radial (en Español)

News by Date

- June 2002
- May 2002
- April 2002
- March 2002
- February 2002
- January 2002
- December 2001
- November 2001
- October 2001
- September 2001
- August 2001
- July 2001
- June 2001
- May 2001
- April 2001
- March 2001
- February 2001
- January 2001

Appointments

- Application

Photos



- Photo Essays

Federal Facts

- Federal Statistics

West Wing

- History

[Home](#) > [News & Policies](#) > [June 2002](#)

[Printer-Friendly Version](#)

[Email Updates](#)
More information

search

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
June 26, 2002

White House Reaction to Circuit Court Ruling

REMARKS BY THE PRESS SECRETARY ON COURT DECISION

The Metropolitan Center

Calgary, Canada

2:37 P.M. (Local)

MR. FLEISCHER: You have a question about the court case?

Q The President's reaction?

MR. FLEISCHER: The President was informed at the G-8 Summit about the San Francisco court decision pertaining to the flag. The President's reaction was that this ruling is ridiculous.

The Supreme Court, itself, begins each of its sessions with the phrase, "God save the United States and this honorable court." The Declaration of Independence refers to God or to the Creator four different times. Congress begins each session of the Congress each day with a prayer. And of course, our currency says, "In God We Trust."

The view of the White House is that this was a wrong decision, and the Department of Justice is now evaluating how to seek redress.

Q The National Republican Congressional Committee is urging all Republican House members to tell school districts to ignore this decision. Does the President support that?

MR. FLEISCHER: Well, of course, this decision is a decision of a circuit court, which has an impact in the area of the circuit court; it is not a national decision. And I think that people very naturally are going to react strongly opposed to this.

It's notable, yesterday when the President was in Arizona comforting the families who lost their homes in the fire, the thing he said that brought the most warmth and hope to those people gathered in that high school was "have faith in God Almighty." That, more than anything, brought a reaction from people who were looking for help. And I think this decision will not sit well with the American people. Certainly, it does not sit well with the President of the United States.

Q But does he support this call by the National Republican Congressional Committee to tell school districts, even in California and Oregon and in the 9th Circuit, to ignore the law?

MR. FLEISCHER: Terry, I don't think it comes down to what anybody is telling people. People are going to feel very strongly about this themselves and take the actions that they're going to take. I think most Americans have faith in God and they're going to express it in the Pledge, every day, that they can.

Thank you.

END 2:40 P.M. (Local)

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[History & Tours](#) | [Kids](#) | [Your Government](#) | [Appointments](#) | [Contact](#) | [Text only](#)

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