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Inglis was correct to vote against a bill that would have limited court protections

U.S. Rep. Bob Inglis wants to keep the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance, but he isn't willing to sacrifice the constitutional system of checks and balances to protect the phrase.

That's why Inglis was the lone Republican on the House Judiciary Committee to vote against the Pledge Protection Act last week.

Lawmakers are acting to protect the language of the pledge because a federal appeals court in California ruled that the words "under God" represented an unconstitutional establishment of religion.

Inglis disagrees. He says the phrase "under God" does not pose constitutional problems, but he isn't willing to go as far to protect the phrase as his GOP colleagues are.

The Pledge Protection Act would utilize a provision of the Constitution that allows Congress to restrict the jurisdiction of federal courts. This provision is usually used to set regulatory standards such as which lawsuits are heard in state courts and which are heard in federal courts.

The Pledge Protection Act would take matters involving the pledge and its constitutional implications away from the court. That would disable the court from forcing the words "under God" out of the pledge.

But it would also mean that the issue would be left to state courts. Anyone who did not like the opinion of the state court -- on any side of the issue -- could not appeal the constitutional question to the federal courts, including the Supreme Court.

It would also set a terrible precedent. Future members of Congress, upset about any court ruling that upheld constitutional protections, could simply pass a law removing court jurisdiction and abridge any fundamental right they chose.

Our liberty will not be secure if Congress is able to pass laws that allow it to restrict freedom of speech or religion or any cherished right.

Inglis is more willing to trust the Supreme Court to do the right thing on the wording of the Pledge of Allegiance than he is to trust Congress with the power to remove court protection from the Bill of

Rights.

He made the correct decision.

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