



FACT SHEET ***Doe v. Acton-Boxborough Regional School District***

ABOUT Doe v. Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Atheist parents and students are seeking to stop recitation of the Pledge in public schools--even though no student is required to recite it--because the atheist students claim to be “offended” by simply hearing the words “under God.” Alliance Defending Freedom and Massachusetts Family Institute filed a joint friend-of-the-court brief in the case, and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District expressly incorporated most of the brief’s arguments into its defense of the law that makes the Pledge part of public school practice within the commonwealth. A Massachusetts court ruled in favor of the school district and concluded that the phrase “under God” in the Pledge serves as a clear “acknowledgment of the Founding Fathers political philosophy, and the historical and religious traditions of the United States.” The atheist parents and students then appealed the decision.

CURRENT STATUS OF Doe v. Acton-Boxborough Regional School District AS OF 9/3/2013

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court will hear oral arguments in the case on Sept. 4, 2013, at 9 a.m. EDT.

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

- Whether mere offense at hearing religious language constitutes a violation of the Massachusetts Constitution and the laws of the commonwealth.
- Whether all religious references, no matter how grounded in American history, must be prohibited from the public square simply because someone could be offended by hearing them.

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ABOUT Alliance Defending Freedom

Alliance Defending Freedom is an alliance-building, non-profit legal organization that advocates for the right of people to freely live out their faith.

ABOUT Andrew Beckwith

Andrew Beckwith is an Alliance Defending Freedom allied attorney and executive vice president of Massachusetts Family Institute. A graduate of Gordon College and the University of Minnesota Law School, Andrew is a judge advocate in the United States Marine Corps Reserve where he holds the rank of major. He has also served as an immigration trial attorney for the Boston office of the Department of Homeland Security.

ABOUT Jeremy Tedesco

Jeremy Tedesco serves as senior legal counsel with Alliance Defending Freedom at its headquarters in Scottsdale, Ariz., where he currently leads litigation efforts to protect the rights of Christian students, faculty, and staff at public schools across the nation. In 2004, he earned his J.D. from the Regent University School of Law. Tedesco is admitted to the State Bar of Arizona; the Supreme and District Court of Arizona; the District Court of Colorado; the U.S. Courts of Appeal for the 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 9th Circuits; and the U.S. Supreme Court.