

# Maintaining secular public schools

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A fine line rests between religious expression and the endorsement of religion. The First Amendment protects the individual's freedom of religion; however, there stands a great wall between the church and the state and should remain that way. Publicly displaying the ten commandments and distributing the bible in public schools are activities that were ruled by the Supreme Court as violating the first amendment. These actions endorse religion, whereas the act of simply wearing a cross is a religious expression. Instances of student-led prayer in public school have been rightfully challenged. In the case *Sante Fe Independent School District v. Doe*, two students took action against their high school for conducting a Christian prayer before every football game.

The Supreme Court ruled that school-sponsored prayer did indeed violate the first amendment. Removing religion from public schools reduces the likelihood of defying the first amendment. An exception must be made to subjects regarding religions, such as theology, in order to foster a greater understanding of religion and its impact on society. Some may argue that without a Christian environment, there is a lack of ethics. By removing religious elements from public education, they believe that children are lost from god and heaven.

I attended a Catholic school for nine years and currently attend a public school, and I have noticed there is no stark difference between public and private school settings. Contrary to some people's beliefs, public school isn't a breeding ground of loose morals. Both are equal in student and teacher morality. The absence of a god does not equate the absence of values. The

secular environment of public schools allows students of different religious backgrounds to feel accepted.

It is imperative that every American's constitutional rights are respected. In order to adhere to these liberties, do not endorse religion in public schools.