

THE SCHOOL PRAYER AMENDMENT - DRAFT

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc., is a long-standing supporter of the strict separation of church and state and is deeply committed to the American ideal of religious liberty. For that reason, Hadassah strongly opposes the School Prayer Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This amendment is a proposed Constitutional amendment that would restore prayer in public schools. The School Prayer Amendment is almost identical to the so-called Religious Freedom Amendment that was defeated by the U.S. House of Representatives in 1998 and which was also opposed by Hadassah.

The School Prayer Amendment, commonly referred to as the Istook Amendment after its sponsor, Rep. Ernest Istook (R-OK), would dramatically break down the wall separating church and state. It would permit government-sponsored prayer in public schools and allow religious symbols to be posted in public schools, courtrooms and other public institutions.

Hadassah, the largest Jewish membership organization in the country, continues to be concerned about the ramifications of this legislation, and efforts to break down the wall separating church and state, both for the Jewish community and for other religious and non-religious groups throughout the nation.

Therefore, Hadassah reaffirms its opposition to this and other proposed legislation that threatens the protections provided by the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.