

Clinton Replaces ‘In God We Trust’ With ‘E Pluribus Unum’

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Religious conservatives are not happy.

In her historic acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention Thursday night, Hillary Clinton said:

America is once again at a moment of reckoning. Powerful forces are threatening to pull us apart. Bonds of trust and respect are fraying.

And just as with our founders, there are no guarantees. It truly is up to us. We have to decide whether we all will work together so we all can rise together.

Our country’s motto is ‘E Pluribus Unum’: out of many, we are one. Will we stay true to that motto?

Many religious conservatives were outraged by Clinton’s remarks. They were offended that Clinton had referred to “E Pluribus Unum” as our national motto, instead of “In God We Trust.”

In fact, religious conservatives have a point. “E Pluribus Unum” is not the official motto, the official motto is “In God We Trust.” But it wasn’t always that way.

“E Pluribus Unum” was considered the de facto motto of the United States until 1956 when the United States Congress passed an act (H. J. Resolution 396), adopting “In God We Trust” as the official motto.

The change to “In God We Trust” was motivated by fear of the Soviet Union and “godless communism” during the height of the Cold War and the “red scare” of the 1950’s. The change was a mistake that violated the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution and betrayed the secular values upon which the U.S. was founded, as well as the explicit intentions of the founding fathers.

In fact, “E Pluribus Unum” was the original motto proposed and established by founding fathers John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, and Thomas Jefferson in 1776.

Writing for the conservative website RedState, Matthew Clark complains about Hillary’s use of “E Pluribus Unum,” and her omission of “In God We Trust,” at one point noting: “angry atheists have long tried to strip our National Motto and remove its meaning.”

While Clinton is no atheist, her use of “E Pluribus Unum” in her acceptance speech was a refreshing and welcome touch. Also worth noting, in 2010 President Obama similarly said: “In the United States, our motto is E Pluribus Unum — out of many, one.”

At that time some angry members of congress asked Obama to issue a public correction for saying the country’s motto was “E Pluribus Unum” instead of “In God We Trust.” Obama refused.

Currently there is an effort to have the national motto changed to “E Pluribus Unum.” ...

Bottom line: Clinton’s use of the original, strictly secular national motto, was a refreshing note, and a much needed, if only symbolic, call to unity. “In God We Trust” is divisive and discriminatory; it does not belong on the nation’s currency, and should not be the national motto. Instead, the national motto should be returned to “E Pluribus Unum” out of respect for historical precedent, the founding fathers, and the secular values upon which this nation was founded.

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