

10 A RESOLUTION CONCERNING
20 PRAYER BEFORE ATTENDANCE IS TAKEN IN THE MARYLAND STATE
30 SENATE

40 WHEREAS: The current rules of the Maryland State Senate require attendance to be taken, Senators to
50 record their presence, and remain in attendance during the invocation; and,

60 WHEREAS: There were several incidents at the beginning of the 2003 Legislative Session of the
70 Maryland General Assembly in which prayer-givers deviated from the rule that prayers
80 be ecumenical; and,

90 WHEREAS: On January 15, 2003, Senator Larry Haines led the Senate invocation, ending his prayer
100 with "... In Jesus' name I pray," which broke with the tradition of refraining from
110 religion-specific comments in Senate invocations; and,

120 WHEREAS: Such non-ecumenical prayers have placed Senators of different faiths in uncomfortable
130 situations, as indicated in floor statements by Senators Leonard H. Teitelbaum and
140 Senator Delores G. Kelley; and,

150 WHEREAS: Following three breaches of the ecumenical prayer standard within one week in January
160 of 2003, Jim Howe of the National Conference for Community and Justice stated "I don't
170 think it serves any religion to put people in the position of feeling like they are excluded";
180 and,

190 WHEREAS: The constitutionality of requiring Senators to be present for a religious prayer has been
200 brought under scrutiny by Senator Sharon Grosfeld; and,

210 WHEREAS: Current practice in the Maryland House of Delegates consists of an invocation held
220 before the roll call when Delegates have to register their attendance, which gives
230 members a choice whether or not to be present for religious prayers; and,

240 WHEREAS: According to Brenda Erickson of the National Conference of State Legislatures, about
250 half of the nation's legislatures hold prayer before a roll call and about half after
260 everyone has registered their attendance; and,

270 THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: That the Maryland Student Legislature urges the Maryland State Senate
280 to alter its daily procedures, having the invocation given before attendance is taken,
290 giving Senators a choice in participating in a religious prayer; and,

300 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That this action be taken to avoid placing Senators of various faiths in
310 an uncomfortable position of participating in a prayer inconsistent with their religious
320 beliefs.

330 MANDATES: Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller, Jr.
340 Senate President Pro Tem Ida G. Ruben
350 Senator Sharon Grosfeld
360 Senator Leonard H. Teitelbaum
370 Senator Delores G. Kelley
380 Senate Majority Leader Nathaniel J. McFadden
390 Senate Minority Leader J. Lowell Stoltzfus

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