

## **'God' omitted from flag certificate**

### **U.S. Rep. Turner helps family fix omission.**

By [Joanne Huist Smith](#)

Sunday, September 30, 2007

DAYTON — — The inscription on the certificate accompanying the flag that had flown over the United States Capitol was supposed to be a personal message from 17-year-old Andrew Larochelle to his grandfather, a veteran and a devout Catholic.

Andrew requested the certificate say, "This flag was flown in honor of Marcel Larochelle, my grandfather, for his dedication and love of God, Country and family."

But, the Acting Architect of the Capitol, Stephen T. Ayers, censored "God" from the request.

The flag request was made through the office of U.S. Rep. Mike Turner, R-Centerville, who on Saturday gave the family another certificate, written just as they requested.



## **U.S. Capitol: 'God' a No-Go on Flag Certificates**

Published October 11, 2007

*FOX News' Major Garrett contributed to this report.*

WASHINGTON — When 17-year-old Andrew Larochelle of Dayton, Ohio, crafted a plan to send his grandfather the gift of a flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol.

The flag flew on Sept. 11, Marcel Larochelle's birthday. But when Andrew finally received the flag in the mail on Sept. 30, "God" was taken out of his note.

The family contacted Rep. Michael Turner, R-Ohio, who had sought to fulfill the flag request. Turner requested an explanation for the omission from the Architect of the Capitol. Turner said he was told that AoC rules do not allow religious expressions on flag certificates.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has defended the omission made by acting Architect Stephen T. Ayers, and said she has no plans to change the existing rules.

# THE PLAIN DEALER

## Pelosi defends absence of 'God' on flag memento

Thursday, October 11, 2007  
**Sabrina Eaton**  
Plain Dealer Bureau

Washington- House Speaker Nancy Pelosi defended the Architect of the Capitol's refusal to permit use of the word "God" on official certificates enclosed with flags flown over the U.S. Capitol.

Dayton-area GOP Rep. Michael Turner and more than 100 of his Republican colleagues sent a letter to Pelosi last week after an Eagle Scout in his district asked that a flag flown over the U.S. Capitol with a certificate inscribed with the message: "In honor of my grandfather Marcel Larochelle, and his dedication and love of God, country, and family."

Outraged upon learning that the acting Architect of the Capitol, Stephen T. Ayers, won't allow religious expressions on flag certificates, Turner sent a protest letter to Pelosi.

She said the official policy is to send a certificate that lists nothing beyond the date the flag flew over the Capitol and the name of its recipient.

"It's not about being anti-religion," Pelosi said, noting that each day in the Capitol starts with a prayer. "It is just about what the architect thought was appropriate for him to proclaim in a certificate."

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## NEW HAMPSHIRE UNION LEADER

### A Scout vs. Congress: Bringing a victory for faith

October 12, 2007

FOR FOUR YEARS the architect of the U.S. Capitol has censored letters from constituents by removing political and religious messages. That outrageous policy was halted by a 17-year-old Ohio Boy Scout.

Andrew Larochelle of Dayton, Ohio, whose grandfather Marcel is an Army veteran from Manchester, wanted to [give] his grandfather a flag that had been flown over the Capitol. He wrote this message to go on the certificate: "In honor of my

grandfather Marcel Larochelle, and his dedication and love of God, country, and family."

Well, Stephen Ayers, acting architect of the Capitol, removed "God" from the message.

Larochelle contacted his representative, Rep. Michael Turner, R-Ohio, who got more than 100 members of Congress to petition House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to change the rule. Amazingly, Pelosi at first refused. But as the campaign got national attention, she relented.



## Flag certificate rules changed to allow faith expressions

Posted 10/11/2007 3:57 PM |

WASHINGTON (AP) — The acting architect of the Capitol, Stephen Ayers, said Thursday he was revising guidelines on Capitol flag certificates because it was "beyond the scope of this agency's responsibilities to censor messages from members of Congress."

Last week Rep. Michael Turner, R-Ohio, protested upon learning that the Architect's office had removed the word "God" from the certificate of authenticity accompanying a flag 17-year-old Andrew Larochelle of Dayton wanted to give his grandfather.

But the Architect excised "God" from the inscription, saying it violated a policy, set in 2003, banning religious and political expressions on the certificates.

Turner said in an interview that he was asking the Architect's office to reissue the certificate for Andrew with the original wording.

Turner said that he was going ahead with proposed legislation, with more than 60 co-sponsors, that would permanently allow the acknowledgment of God in certificates accompanying Capitol flags.

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## The Washington Post

### 'God' Back on Flag Documents

By JIM ABRAMS

The Associated Press

Thursday, October 11, 2007; 7:46 PM

WASHINGTON -- A 17-year-old Eagle Scout has helped remove a ban on the word "God" in certificates that accompany flags.

Last week [Rep. Michael Turner](#), R-Ohio, protested upon learning that the Architect's office had removed the word "God" from the certificate of authenticity accompanying a flag.

The acting Architect of the Capitol, Stephen Ayers, said Thursday he was revising guidelines on Capitol flag certificates.

Turner said that he was going ahead with proposed legislation that would permanently allow the acknowledgment of God in certificates accompanying Capitol flags. Turner's bill is H.R. 3779.

[Sen. Jim DeMint](#), R-S.C., is sponsoring an identical "Andrew LaRochelle God, Family, and Country Act of 2007" in the Senate.

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## God is Back on U.S. Flag Certificates

Tuesday , October 16, 2007

By L.A. Holmes

**FOX NEWS**  
WASHINGTON —

God is here to stay, say members of Congress who on Tuesday presented a 17-year-old Eagle Scout with a corrected version of a certificate that accompanied a flag that he purchased to fly over the U.S. Capitol.

"God should never have been censored," said Ohio Republican Rep. Michael Turner, who represents LaRochelle and processed his flag request.

Turner and others are now intent on passing new legislation protecting the use of religious expressions on certificates. Now with more than 90 co-sponsors, "The Andrew LaRochelle God, Family and Country Act of 2007" is a bipartisan move to prohibit future architects of the Capitol from censoring personal messages in flag.

Until last week, acting Architect Stephen Ayers had been enforcing the 1970s omission policy that had been largely ignored by his office until his arrival. The architect is a presidential appointee whose authority is overseen by the House Administration Committee.

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