



**ATTORNEY GENERAL STEVE MARSHALL URGES U.S. SUPREME COURT TO
PROTECT PRAYER AT PUBLIC MEETINGS**

(MONTGOMERY) – Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall joined a coalition of 22 states Wednesday in urging the U.S. Supreme Court to protect the practice of lawmaker-led prayer at public meetings.

“Lawmaker-led prayer is woven into the fabric of American society dating back to the founding of our Republic,” observed Attorney General Steve Marshall. “Public prayer is both constitutional and a common practice throughout our country. Today more than 35 states and countless local governments permit lawmakers to offer prayer. I share Justice Scalia’s perspective that “to deprive our society of (this) important unifying mechanism...is as senseless in policy as it is unsupported by law.”

The 22-state coalition filed an amicus brief Wednesday calling on the U.S. Supreme Court to hear arguments in the case of *Lund vs. Rowan County* (North Carolina) and confirm the constitutionality of public prayer led by lawmakers. Such a decision would clear up confusion among the lower federal courts and strike down a recent ruling in the Fourth Circuit that the Rowan County Board of Commissioners’ practice of opening its public meetings with a commissioner-led prayer violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

The brief notes that state legislatures, including in Alabama, have opened public sessions with lawmaker-led prayer for much of this country’s history. “Both of Alabama’s legislative chambers have allowed members to offer prayers for more than one hundred years. A member of the House of Representatives, for instance, gave the invocation in the state Senate in 1873. And during the 1875 legislative session, Mr. Nelson and Mr. Wilson, members of the House of Representatives, opened House sessions with prayers.”

Alabama filed its brief in support of free expression of faith along with West Virginia, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and Wisconsin, along with the Governor of Kentucky.

A copy of the brief is available [here](#).

--30--

