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Supreme Court to decide Pledge case

Court takes on church-state fight over Pledge of Allegiance

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court said Tuesday it will decide whether the Pledge of Allegiance recited by generations of American schoolchildren is an unconstitutional blending of church and state.

The case sets up an emotional showdown over God in the public schools and in public life. It will settle whether the phrase "one nation under God" will remain a part of the patriotic oath as it is recited in most classrooms.

The court will hear the case sometime next year.

The justices agreed to hear an appeal involving a California atheist whose 9-year-old daughter, like most elementary school children, hears the Pledge of Allegiance recited daily.

A national uproar followed a federal appeals court ruling last year that the reference to God made the pledge unconstitutional in public schools. That ruling, if allowed to stand, would strip the reference from the version of the pledge recited by about 9.6 million schoolchildren in California and other western states.

The First Amendment guarantees that government will not "establish" religion, wording that has come to mean a general ban on overt government sponsorship of religion in public schools and elsewhere.

The Supreme Court has already said that schoolchildren cannot be required to recite the oath that begins, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America."

The court has also repeatedly barred school-sponsored prayer from classrooms, playing fields

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The Associated Press
Kindergartners at Mayfair Elementary in Fresno, Calif., recite the Pledge of Allegiance on June 27, 2002.

University extends payment due date

BY MAGGIE DUNPHY
Staff writer

Students have a little room to breathe now when paying their bills this semester: The University extended payment due dates for student bills because of mailing delays.

Roger Pohlmann, director of Student Accounts and Cashiers, said the next billing statements should be sent out by the end of this week. Bills are usually sent the second or third day of each month and are due 16 business days later. However, the second payment will now be due Oct. 31 to maintain the 16-business-day margin. The third bill will be sent Nov. 13 and its due date will be Nov. 26.

"The important thing to remem-

ber is that we've tried to give students sufficient time to pay their bills so they don't have any problems or delays," Pohlmann said.

Pohlmann said the University made the extension for two reasons.

"One, we were billing late, and two, we didn't give enough time to get the bills in from when people received the bills," he said.

The committee extended the rest of the semester's due dates after it made the first extension to give students more time to pay the fees, Pohlmann said.

"It's a good thing for me because my financial aid hasn't hit yet since I didn't get my forms turned in on time," said Grace Havis, freshman in education.

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Senate to vote on late-term abortion ban

Illinois senators expected to split state vote

BY JEFF FIJOL
Staff writer

Local groups and politicians disagree over a bill the U.S. Senate plans to vote on prohibiting late-term or partial-birth abortions.

In a late-term or partial-birth abortion, the doctor partially delivers the fetus from the birth canal. It is then "killed" and removed, according to the version of the bill available on a U.S. government Web site.

Representatives for Sen. Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) and Sen. Peter Fitzgerald (R-Ill.) said Durbin would likely vote against the bill and Fitzgerald for it.

Laura Miller, spokeswoman for Fitzgerald, said the senator was a co-sponsor of the upcoming bill and had long been a proponent of such legislation. She said Fitzgerald was a co-sponsor of the Unborn Victims of Violence Act

and the Born Alive Infant Protection Act, which extend protective rights to unborn children and those born outside the womb.

Durbin spokesman Joe Shoemaker said the senator would "likely oppose" the bill as it was written. Shoemaker said Durbin proposed an amendment to the bill allowing doctors to perform late-term abortion procedures if the mother's health was endangered. The amendment was struck down.

"Senator Durbin wants the ability to handle this thing on a case-by-case basis," Shoemaker said.

He added that Durbin had been one of the more outspoken members of the pro-choice camp since being elected to the Senate.

U.S. Rep. Tim Johnson (R-15) was one of 218 House Republicans to vote for the bill. Spokesman Matt Bisbee said Johnson's vote was true to his

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China launches its first manned space mission

Country becomes third space-faring nation

GOBI DESERT, China (AP) — China launched its first manned space mission on Wednesday, sending an astronaut hurtling into orbit and becoming the third country in history to do so — four decades after the Soviet Union and the United States.

With a column of smoke, the Shenzhou 5 craft cut across a bright, azure northwest China sky at exactly 9 a.m. (9 p.m. EDT). The official Xinhua News Agency immediately confirmed the launch and said the astronaut was Yang Liwei, 38.

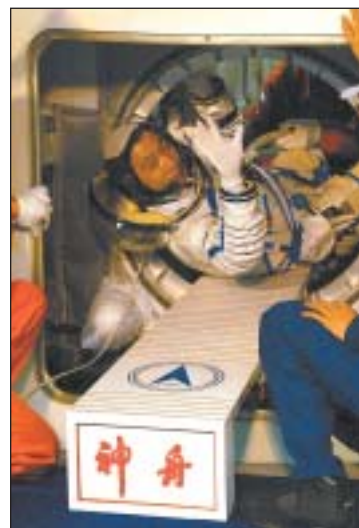
"China's first manned spacecraft, the Shenzhou 5, blasted off," Xinhua said. State television cut into its programming to announce the launch, though no footage was shown.

Minutes later, a CCTV announcer said that Shenzhou 5 and Yang had "entered orbit at 9:10." (9:10 p.m. EDT)

It was the culmination of a decade of efforts by China's military-linked manned space program — and a patriotism-drenched moment for a communist government more concerned than ever about its profile on the world stage.

Security was tight around the remote Gobi Desert base, some 175 miles northeast of Jiuquan.

On Wednesday morning, the only road to the launch site was crowded with traffic, including military vehicles and civilian tour buses. But private cars were turned back and phone calls to the base were blocked.



The Associated Press

First Chinese astronaut Yang Liwei waves when boarding China's first manned spacecraft Shenzhou 5 before its blasting off at Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China's Gansu Province on Wednesday. China launched its first manned space mission on Wednesday, sending an astronaut hurtling toward orbit and becoming the third country in Earth's history to do so, four decades after the Soviet Union and the United States.

China kept details of the event secret, saying in advance only that the launch would take place between Wednesday and Friday and that the astronaut would orbit the Earth 14 times. Yang was identified as a lieutenant colonel.

The Shenzhou 5 launch came after four test launches of unmanned capsules that orbited the Earth for nearly a week before

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DESTINY MAY HAVE TO WAIT ANOTHER DAY



DAN LUCAS The Daily Illini

Above: White Sox fans Louis Reeves (facing) and Sharone Mitchell hug while watching the 8th inning of Tuesday night's Cubs' game at Murphy's Pub. "We came when they lost the lead. We really, really hate the Cubs," Reeves said. The Cubs fell to the Marlins 8-3. Game seven of the series is tomorrow at Wrigley Field.



Left: Adam Chrzanowski, 20, of Alsip, Ill., center, Jake Horbach, 20, of Alsip, Ill., Chris Gaulin, 19, of Orland Park, Ill., and Mark Carlson, 20, of Midlothian, Ill., cheer on the Cubs behind Wrigley field Tuesday night. "We love our Cubbies!" said Horbach. The Marlins defeated the Cubs 8-3.

SHIRA WEISSMAN The Daily Illini

Car explodes near Turkish embassy in Iraq

Two injured in bombing; Anger widespread at Turkey's plans to deploy troops in country

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) — A suicide bomber detonated a car packed with explosives near the Turkish Embassy on Tuesday, wounding at least two people, the U.S. military said. The attack came amid widespread Iraqi anger over Turkish plans to deploy troops in the country.

It was the latest in a string of bombings to shake the Iraqi capital. Two days ago, a car bomb targeted the Baghdad Hotel, home to U.S. officials and members of the Iraqi Governing Council. At least eight people including the bomber were killed.

In Tuesday's attack, the car tried to approach the embassy in the mid-afternoon and suddenly exploded, witnesses said.

A concrete security barrier close to the embassy absorbed most of the blast and prevented further damage and injuries, U.S. officials said. A U.S. military spokesman said the explosion occurred about 500 yards from the embassy.

"Two embassy staff members were injured,"

Col. Peter Mansoor of the 1st Armored Division said two embassy staffers were injured, one Turkish and one Iraqi, and the vehicle's driver was killed.

U.S. troops and Iraqi police sealed off the area and prevented journalists from approaching the building.

"I was in a building across the street. I rushed over and saw that a car had exploded in front of the embassy," said Ahmed Hashem, 30, a graduate student at Mustansiriyah University. "One person is dead. I know that because I helped carrying him into the ambulance."

Turkish TV stations showed footage of a group of youths dancing and waving their shirts, apparently in support for the attack.

The private Turkish television station CNN-Turk said protesters chanted pro-Saddam Hussein slogans and slogans against the planned deployment of Turkish troops in Iraq. The station said about 10 protesters were detained.

In Ankara, a Turkish Foreign Ministry spokesman condemned

More Iraqis are killed or wounded by these explosions than American forces. ... The only thing they have offered to the people of Iraq is more death and destruction.

PETER MANSOOR
colonel, 1st Armored Division

the attack and said the incident shows "how grave the security situation in Iraq is" and "how strong the need is for everyone to immediately contribute to ensure security and stability in the country."

Turkey's parliament has approved a government request to send peacekeeping troops to Iraq, a move hailed by the United States, which is seeking more international forces to help ease the burden on U.S. soldiers. The Turks would be the first major contingent from a Muslim country.

But Iraq's Governing Council and the country's Kurdish minority have expressed sharp opposition to the presence of troops from Turkey, Iraq's neighbor. Many Iraqis fear

Turkey seeks to dominate or grab territory in their country or that the deployment will cause friction with Kurds in northern Iraq.

On Tuesday, radical Shiite Muslim cleric Muqtada al-Sadr said there would be no difference between Turkish soldiers and members of the U.S.-led force, which he wants to leave the country.

Tuesday's blast was at least the eighth suicide or vehicle bombing since early August. The blasts — most of them in Baghdad, targeting facilities of the U.S. administration or of Iraqis and other nations helping the occupation — have killed scores of people, and U.S. and Iraqi authorities have yet to determine who is behind them.