



STATE OF ARKANSAS  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Mike Huckabee  
Governor

October 8, 2001

Dear Superintendents:

In light of the tragic events on September 11, many students have been left with understandable fears and concerns. I have encouraged Arkansans across the state to turn to their faith and pray. I am encouraging students to do the same.

It has been brought to my attention that there may be some concern among school officials about the legality of students praying at school. I'm sending this letter to encourage you to fully examine court decisions regarding school prayer. The courts have not banned a student's right to pray at school. In fact, the U.S. Supreme Court has been clear that students do not shed their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse door. Among those rights are free speech and freedom of religion. Schools cannot restrict a student's speech nor prohibit a student from practicing his or her religion unless that speech or those religious practices disrupt the school's discipline procedures or educational process.

I am extremely proud of the way I've seen students responding and reaching out to others who are hurting. Many schools are raising money to send to the New York and Washington relief efforts. Other schools are holding special events to pay respect and honor to those who sacrificed so much. Our students want to do something to help. Many of them are grieving along with those who experienced the tragedy first-hand. I believe our schools should address the emotional well being of our students. Please discuss with your faculty and staff appropriate outlets for students to express their concerns and grief.

Thank you for the efforts many of you have already made to address these concerns. I have issued a proclamation declaring October as Student Religious Liberty Month. I have also asked the Department of Education to assist you with a document citing some of the court cases surrounding the issue of school prayer. You should find both documents attached.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mike Huckabee".

Mike Huckabee