Mr. Chairman, I oppose the ``Pledge Protection Act'' because of its potential ramification for the judicial process. This legislation seeks to prohibit all federal courts, including the Supreme Court, from hearing any case that challenges the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance.

This legislation is a response to recent challenges in the 9th Circuit Court involving the statement ``under God.'' While I do not agree with the court's decision, we are heading down a slippery slope when we authorize Congress to use its power over the courts to limit jurisdiction of constitutional challenges.

This seemingly bipartisan legislation is another attack on our principles of civil liberties and equal protection, just as we saw on yesterday's vote on the ``Marriage Protection Act,'' to please the most extreme of the Republican base. It is not worth undermining our system of checks and balances.

Yesterday, the state's domestic laws; today, the Pledge of Allegiance; tomorrow.....?