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June 21, 2011

Mike Davis  
Executive Director  
United States Golf Association  
77 Liberty Corner Road  
Far Hills, N.J. 07931

Dear Mr. Davis:

Like millions of Americans who passionately enjoy both playing and watching the game of golf, I tuned in to watch the U.S. Open on Sunday as I took some time to relax with my family on Father's Day. While all spectators were treated to a remarkable performance by an exciting and gifted young golfer, Sunday's final round was unfortunately overshadowed and cheapened by something that had nothing at all to do with golf, but had everything to do with the network that the USGA partnered with to broadcast the event.

As I'm certain by now you are well aware, NBC's decision to air an intro video that featured the Pledge of Allegiance, but which glaringly omitted the words "under God", was met with dismay by millions of viewers, myself included. NBC was of course under no obligation to air any portion of the Pledge of Allegiance at all, but its decision to do so while omitting those two words—whether intentionally or unintentionally, was deplorable. I cannot and will not speculate as to whether or not the omission was intentional, but what's clear is that it did not go unnoticed.

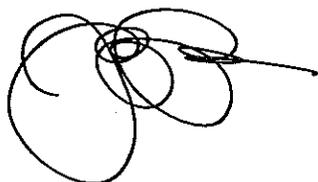
At a time when our nation faces so many difficult challenges, from a sluggish economy within our borders, to seemingly endless international conflicts overseas, an issue like this may seem trivial to some, but to many of us it isn't. As we work each day to pull our country out of the mud of economic malaise, and as our servicemen and women fight each day to protect the liberties that we hold dear, our collective struggle as Americans is about something far greater than each individual obstacle we face—it's about strengthening and preserving a nation that has shined for centuries as the world's greatest symbol of the rights and freedoms bestowed upon all humans by our creator. The hope that America symbolizes to the world is a hope born from the idea of inalienable, God-given freedom. And when we silence the name of God, we dim the light of freedom that defines us. That is why this matters.

Among the many freedoms that we cherish as Americans, the right to practice religion freely—and the right not to practice at all, has in part defined the greatness of our country since its birth. God, religion and tolerance toward both are deeply entwined in our nation's history in a manner and to a magnitude

that is uniquely American. So I do not write today in an effort to push God or religion upon those who choose another path, I write today out of concern for what appears to have been either an intentional or grossly negligent act of silencing the name of God—and thus silencing much of who we are and what we stand for as Americans.

Although I was pleased to see that NBC has apologized for its role in this unfortunate incident, as an avid fan of the sport and as an American, I would ask that the USGA consider reviewing its relationship with NBC in advance of any future events. Should the USGA decide to partner with NBC again in the future, I would hope that the USGA remain mindful of its role in controlling creative content and work to ensure that an incident as troubling as this one is not repeated in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**Congressman Jim Renacci**  
**16<sup>th</sup> District of Ohio**