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### June 8, 2009: Netroots Nation National Convention in Pittsburgh in August

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Title: Netroots Nation National Convention in Pittsburgh in August

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6/8/2009--Netroots Nation has recently announced that one of the panels at this year's convention will concern the relationship of Church and state: A New Progressive Vision for Church and State: How I Learned to Accept "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance and Stop Losing Elections. Here is the description of the session: The progressive vision of a total separation of religion from politics has been discredited. President Obama welcomed both believers and nonbelievers into his campaign and inauguration. Despite growing secularization, a secular progressive majority is still impossible. A new approach is needed and would have two parts. It would admit that there is no political wall of separation. Thus, voters must be allowed, without criticism, to propose policies based on religious belief. The other side, however, is that when government speaks and acts, messages must be universal. The burden is on religious believers, therefore, to explain public references such as "under God" or Ten Commandments monuments in universal terms. For example, the word God can refer to the ceaseless creativity of the universe and the objective validity of human rights. Promoting and accepting religious images as universal would help heal culture-war divisions and promote the formation of a broad-based progressive coalition. I will be leading the session with mostly critical voices from the progressive movement to critique. Details on date and time will follow, but the convention is August 13-15.