



# The Pledge Of Allegiance & "Under GOD"

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## History of The Pledge of Allegiance

- Was originally the "Pledge to the Flag"
- On September 8, 1892 "The Youth's Companion" magazine published the 22 word Pledge for school children to use during the month of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Columbus discovery of America.
- "The Pledge to the Flag was the earliest version of what we now know as the Pledge of Allegiance.
- It is not known for sure who wrote the Pledge but it was known to be one of two men Francis Bellamy or James Upham. It was published anonymously & not copyrighted.
- Upham was a employee of the magazine that first published the pledge and Bellamy was the organizer of the Columbus day activities.

## History of the Pledge of Allegiance

- The pledge was re-written several times.
- After Columbus day celebration the Pledge to the Flag became a popular daily routine in America's public schools, but gained little attention elsewhere for almost 25 years.
- During World War II The Pledge gained popularity among adults due to patriotism.
- On June 22, 1942 the United States Congress included the Pledge to the Flag in the United States Flag Code (Title 36).
- In 1943 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that school children could not be forced to recite the Pledge as part of their daily routine.
- In 1945 the Pledge to the Flag received it's Official title "The Pledge Of Allegiance".

## What it means to say the Pledge.

- **When you Pledge Allegiance to the United States Flag you,**
  - **Promise your loyalty to the Flag itself.**
  - **Promise your loyalty to your own and the other 49 states.**
  - **Promise your loyalty to the Government that unites us all, Recognizing that we are one Nation under God, That we can not or should not be divided or alone, And understanding the right to Liberty and Justice belongs to ALL of us.**

## Establishment Clause of the First Amendment

- **"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion".**
- **Together with the Free Exercise these two clauses make up what are called the "religion clauses"**
- **The first approach is called the "separation" or "no aid" interpretation, while the second approach is called the "non-preferential" or "accommodation" interpretation. The accommodation interpretation prohibits Congress from preferring one religion over another, but does not prohibit the government's entry into religious domain to make accommodations in order to achieve the purposes of the Free Exercise Clause.**

## Arguments for saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

- The Pledge does not violate the Religion Clauses.
  - The Pledge and its “under God” language represents a well-established patriotic exercise with roots in the nation’s founding.
  - School’s pledge policies which “required teachers to lead willing students on reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, which includes the words “under God”, does not violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.”
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- Therefore, it is not wrong to have the Pledge recited in school.

## Arguments against saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

- The public school system is a government regulated and funded institution.
- Students attending these schools are citizens of the United States.
- The Pledge’s reference to one nation “Under God violates school children’s right to be “free from a coercive requirement to affirm God.
- The Pledge violates the separation of church and state.
- Due to the Pledge containing the phrase “Under God” it’s a religious oath.

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Therefore the recitation of The Pledge of Allegiance violates the students rights to freedom of religion and violates the separation of church and state policy.

## Question

- If one out of thirty students chooses not to say the Pledge should the Pledge still be recited in the class?
- Would that one student who did not recite the Pledge be retaliated against?

## Arguments for saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

- "The phrase 'under God' [in the Pledge] is in no sense a prayer, nor an endorsement of any religion."
  - The Pledge is neither an explicit religious exercise nor a formal religious exercise.
  - The Pledge is a patriotic observance and an oath to the Nation and "not to any particular God, faith, or church.
  - Students may abstain from pledging their allegiance and are thus not coerced to do so by the government.
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- Therefore it is not morally or religiously wrong to say the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **Arguments against saying the Pledge of Allegiance.**

- **The US constitution is the highest law in the United States made to protect its people and their rights.**
- **The Constitution applies equally to everyone, regardless of age, color, race, religion, or any other factor.**
- **Children attending public schools are US citizens.**
- **It is written in the Constitution that student's rights' can be violated if violating benefits them or their safety.**
- **Saying the Pledge daily doesn't benefit their education or improve safety concerns.**

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**Therefore there is no reason to violate students' rights by forcing them to say the Pledge daily regardless of their religious affiliations.**

## **Questions**

- **Is it appropriate for teachers to lead students in the Pledge of Allegiance during school even if the students are not forced to participate?**

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