

What The Pledge Means

“An amendment that protects the pledge from being challenged goes against the very ideals it espouses-liberty.”

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The original Pledge of Allegiance, written in 1892 by Francis Bellamy, omits reference not only to God (added in 1954) but also, to the United States (added in 1923). The words “under God” were added in 1954 to clearly separate us from what were considered godless communist countries.

Original Pledge:

I pledge allegiance to my flag and the republic for which it stands, one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Current Pledge:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

What exactly does it mean to pledge allegiance to a flag or more precisely, a country which includes people, culture, government, resources, etc?

"I pledge allegiance"

(I promise to be true or follow and obey and never to renounce, desert, or betray)

"to the flag"

(to the symbol of our country)

"of the United States of America"

(each state that has joined to make our country)

"and to the Republic"

(a country where the people choose others to make laws for them—a government for the people, by the people)

"for which it stands,"

(the flag symbolizes the country)

"one Nation"

(a single country)

"under God,"

(I acknowledge the dependence of our people and our Government upon a supernatural being)

"indivisible,"

(the country cannot be split into parts—recalls the Civil War and the triumph of federal union over states' rights)

"with liberty and justice"

(a balance between equality and individual freedom)

"for all."
(for each person in the country)

In other words the pledge says:

I promise to follow and obey the laws of the land, to never renounce, desert, or betray the Republic of the United States of America which cannot be split into parts. I acknowledge that the people and government are dependent upon a supernatural being and I will strive to ensure equality and freedom for all citizens.

Problems with the pledge:

It should be noted that if our founding fathers had pledged such allegiance to England than they could not have rightfully declared Independence and in fact their act was one of treason. Yet this act of treason led to the formation of America. Is it wise to demand allegiance to anything? Everything should be available to be questioned and challenged and changed if reason dictates.

Adherents of the myriad different religions have different notions of the word "God." Different denominations among the same religion have different notions of "God" and even individuals within a common denomination have different understandings of what "God" means. Tens of millions of American citizens do not believe any supernatural beings even exist. From the Restore the Pledge website: *"There are millions of Americans who believe in God but do not believe they are "under" God. Some find God within their own hearts while others believe they are part of --not under-- a divine power or sacred universe. Still others do not believe in God at all. The religious beliefs of these Americans are violated by our government, in schools, in public meetings, or anywhere the Pledge is recited." The words "under God" promote a specific religious belief and are in violation of the First Amendment - "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion..."*

According to the Supreme Court's own rulings, it doesn't matter that students are allowed to refrain from saying the pledge; a 2000 high court opinion held that voluntary, student-led prayers at school football games are unconstitutionally "coercive," because they force students into an unacceptable position of either proclaiming religious beliefs they don't share or publicly protesting. Ironically, the pledge calls for justice for all and yet it is unjust to put a citizen of any age and especially a child in such a position.

Any national pledge should be secular in nature so as to unite rather than divide. It should promote justice for ALL.

To pass an amendment that protects the pledge from being challenged goes against the very ideals it espouses-liberty and justice for all.