

FROM THE NATIONAL CENTRAL CHAIR OF THE AMERICANISM PROGRAM

NATIONAL PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE DAY



National Pledge of Allegiance Day is celebrated on December 28 to commemorate the adoption of the Pledge of Allegiance into the United States Flag Code by Congress in 1945. The Pledge of Allegiance, originally written by Francis Bellamy in 1892, has undergone several changes, including the addition of the words "under God" in 1954 during the Cold War. The day serves as a reminder of the patriotic values and principles that the Pledge represents, such as liberty, justice, and unity. It also highlights the historical significance of the Pledge in American culture and its role in fostering national unity and patriotism.

For many of us, the Pledge of Allegiance was something we knew by heart and recited each morning in school. With our right hands over our hearts and our eyes cast upward at the flag on the wall, we were taught to show our patriotism.

The first iteration of a patriotic Pledge of Allegiance was penned in 1885 by Civil war veteran Colonel George Balch, but it shares almost no similarities to the Pledge of Allegiance many of us learned in grade school! It wasn't until 1892 that Francis Bellamy, an editor at the children's magazine "The Youth's Companion", was asked to write a patriotic verse to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Columbus touching down on the continent that the official original version of the Pledge was written.

Bellamy, who was both a former Baptist minister and a Christian socialist, was inspired by the French concepts of "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity" while writing the Pledge. What he came up with is like what is recited in schools today, excluding the phrase "under God" – but we'll get around to explaining that.

Continue - Over the late 1800s and early 1900s, the pledge was widely adopted in schools, and Balch's Pledge was dropped. Small tweaks were made in the text, but the meaning remained unchanged. For example, today we say, "I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America," which wasn't always the case! The National Flag Conference added the phrase "of the United States of America" 1923 and 1924.

Congress formally adopted the Pledge in 1942, declaring that it should be recited with one's right hand over one's heart.

One of the more significant changes occurred in 1954 when President Eisenhower asked Congress to add the controversial phrase "under God" to the text. This was an effort to differentiate the American way in communist times. There has also been great debate over whether schools should require children to recite the pledge – even before the religious addition. One 1940 ruling, which compelled children to say the pledge, was quickly overturned by a 1943 ruling. There were significant challenges to the mandatory pledge in the 1930s and 1940s as they found it to be a form of idolatry and went against their religious beliefs.

In 2004, there was a ruling that children did not have to stand for the pledge. This followed a 2002 Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals case in which an atheist, whose daughter would soon start school, argued that the pledge was an unconstitutional endorsement of monotheism. Between 2006 and 2015, there have been over 5 significant court cases challenging- or somehow related to the phrase "under God" – the most recent 2015 ruling stated that the phrase did not violate any atheist rights. (research google)

HOW TO OBSERVE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE DAY

1. Learning history
2. Recite the Pledge of Allegiance
3. Celebrate Pledge of Allegiance Day
4. Post #Pledge of Allegiance Day on social media

WHY PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE DAY IS IMPORTANT

1. It's patriotic

There's no better way to reaffirm your love for your country than taking the Pledge of Allegiance. The Pledge is meant to make Americans proud of our land and people, so celebrating Pledge of Allegiance day is truly patriotic!

2. It's a part of our history

The Pledge of Allegiance had a difficult journey in history to arrive where it is today. Researching the Pledge's metamorphosis throughout distinct eras of history gives insight into America's background — it's worth a bit of reading.

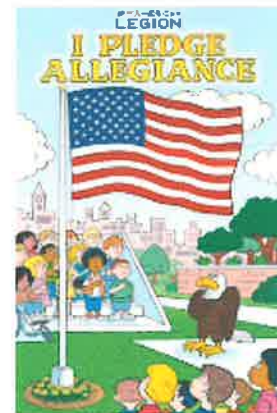
3. It honors people who serve the country

From government officials to military members, many people who selflessly serve our nation feel honored to hear people reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. It's a way to thank them for their sacrifices!

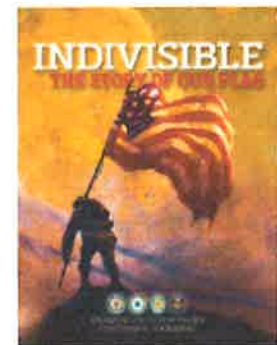


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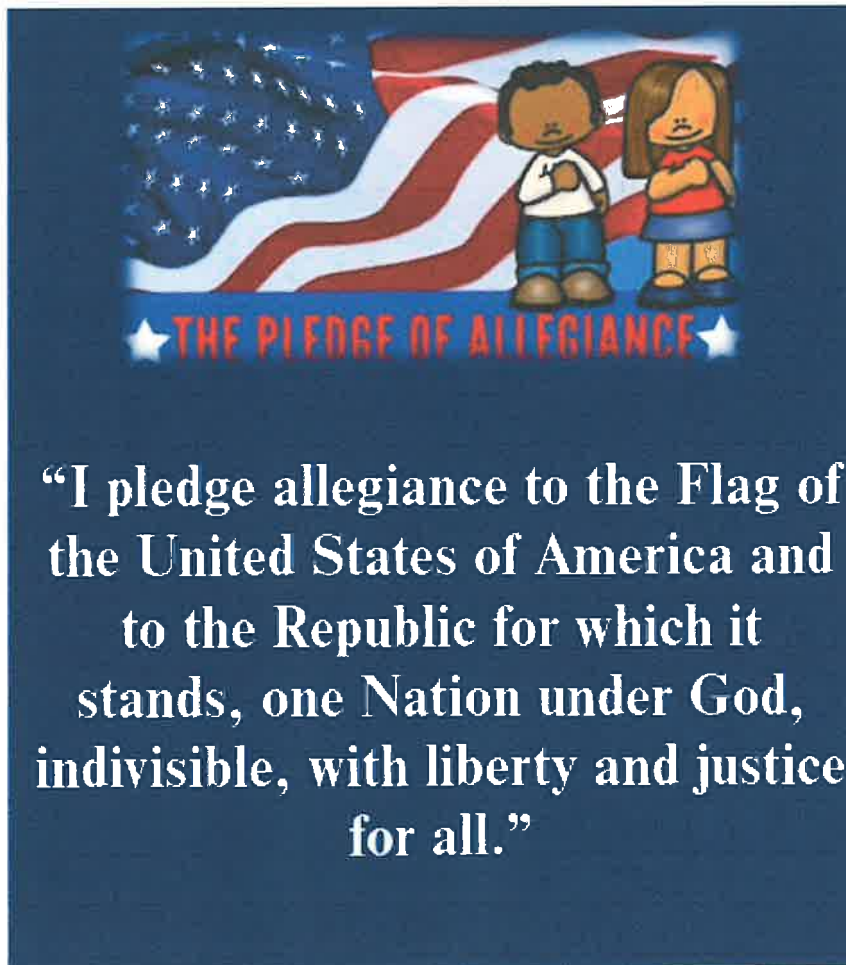
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“I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”