

## The Pledge of Allegiance

**“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.”**

Historic Timeline:

On September 7, 1892, the Pledge was written by Francis Bellamy as part of an advertising campaign for flags that were to be sold to schools in honor of the 400-year anniversary of Columbus’s arrival in the Americas.

On October 12, 1892, the Pledge was first used officially in schools across the nation in observance of Columbus Day and was seen as a way to unify the nation after the Civil War.

In 1940, the Supreme Court ruled that students could be compelled to recite the Pledge.

In 1943, the Supreme Court reversed its decision and ruled that the pledge should be voluntary because compelling it would violate a person’s First Amendment right to free speech.

On April 22, 1951 the Knights of Columbus, which is a Catholic fraternal organization, adopted a private resolution to include the words “under God” in their own recitation of the Pledge. They had taken the phrase from President Abraham Lincoln’s *Gettysberg Address*.

On August 21, 1952 the Knights of Columbus proposed to both the legislative and the executive branches of the United States government that the phrase be officially added to the national Pledge. Shortly thereafter it was.

On Flag Day, June 14, 1954, President Eisenhower signed into law a bill officially adding to the Pledge the words “under God.”

In August of 1954, President Eisenhower reportedly said to the Knights of Columbus in recognition of their having originally proposed the addition:

"We are particularly thankful to you for your part in the movement to have the words “under God” added to our Pledge of Allegiance. These words will remind Americans that despite our great physical strength we must remain humble. They will help us to keep constantly in our minds and hearts the spiritual and moral principles, which alone give dignity to man and upon which our way of life is founded. For the contribution which your organization has made to this cause, we must be genuinely grateful."

Since 1954 there have been many legal challenges to this addition. Critics say that these words violate a person’s First Amendment right to freedom of religion. Several cases are pending in courts across the nation.

According to Title 4 Chapter 1 of the U.S. Code, the customary way to recite the Pledge is as follows:

“...by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart. When not in uniform men should remove any non-religious headdress with their right hand and hold it at the left shoulder, the hand being over the heart. Persons in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and render the military salute.”

Sources:

<http://www.cnn.com/2003/LAW/10/14/scotus.pledge.of.allegiance/index.html>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pledge\\_of\\_Allegiance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pledge_of_Allegiance)

<http://www.kofc.org>

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