



# *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.**

**The Pledge of Allegiance**



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The Pledge of Allegiance is a formal promise of loyalty to the United States. It is recited by students at the opening of each school day throughout the country. This custom used to be mandatory and students could be expelled for not participating. In 1943, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that mandatory pledges were unconstitutional and, therefore, students could refuse to recite the pledge.

The history of the Pledge of Allegiance is unusual. Although the pledge appeared in the magazine "Youth's Companion" in 1892, its author was not known until 1939. Reverend Francis Bellamy, who worked for the magazine at that time, is credited with writing the pledge. Reverend Bellamy was vice president of the Society of Christian Socialists. Reciting the pledge became a popular custom after World War 1, during the fear of communism in the United States. In the 1920's, the Ku Klux Klan led a crusade to have the pledge recited daily at all schools. Jehovah's Witnesses, a small religious sect, refused to allow their children to recite the pledge. Prior to World War II, displays of patriotism became an important issue in the U.S. Because of their position against reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, a church of Jehovah's Witnesses was bombed and demonstrations occurred against this religious sect.

Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance continued to be a symbol of national loyalty. During the Bush-Dukakis 1988 presidential race, Governor Dukakis' veto of a mandatory pledge law in Massachusetts became a national campaign issue. Vice President Bush used this veto as a campaign strategy to depict Dukakis as unpatriotic and un-American.

Although a few words have been changed over time, the pledge is still recited daily in schools throughout the United States, with most students participating or standing with respect. The pledge symbolizes a commitment to patriotism and reinforces unity among Americans.