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Monday, August 15, 2022 - 04:30 pm

BISMARCK, N.D. – Gov. Doug Burgum today released the following statement regarding the Pledge of Allegiance in public schools and at meetings of elected governing bodies in North Dakota.

“America is the land of opportunity. And students in every public school in North Dakota, along with elected governing bodies and those who attend their meetings, should have the opportunity to recite the Pledge of Allegiance and express support for the American ideals upon which our country was founded,” Burgum said. “To that end, our administration is creating a framework for legislation to guarantee that the opportunity exists to recite the Pledge of Allegiance, as other states have done. We look forward to working with lawmakers to bring a proposal to the 68th Legislative Assembly in January. As North Dakotans and Americans, we believe strongly in the value of this traditional and powerful affirmation that we are one nation, united under one flag, with liberty and justice for all, aspiring toward a more perfect union and acknowledging that such noble work never ends.”

State Sen. Scott Meyer of Grand Forks and state Reps. Pat Heinert of Bismarck and Todd Porter of Mandan have agreed to collaborate with the Governor’s Office to craft the legislation.

“The Pledge of Allegiance is one of the strongest and most unifying statements that we have as Americans,” Meyer said. “During this time of civil discourse, it is a guiding light.”

“The saying of the Pledge of Allegiance is important for our boards and commissions prior to public meetings as they are elected and are there to serve the people,” Heinert said.

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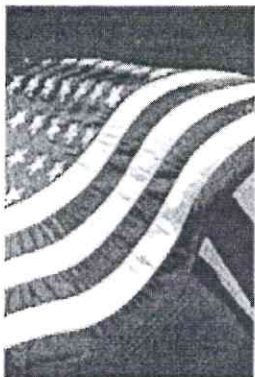


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The Pledge Of Allegiance And How It Has Changed

Citizen Activism, Entrepreneurs & Inventors, Only in the USA, Taking a Stand / By Kate Kelly



As the Pledge of Allegiance became more widely accepted after its introduction in 1892, various groups weighed in on the wording. There have been alterations from the original wording penned by Francis Bellamy (1855-1931):

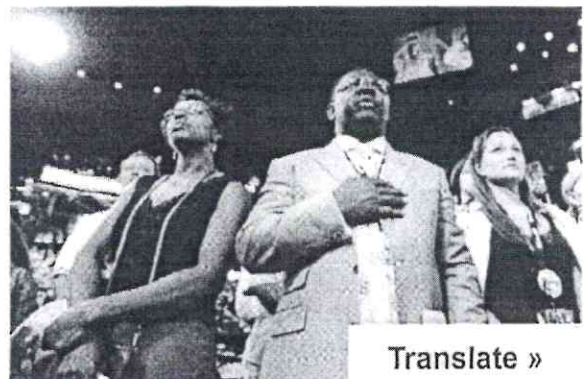
"I pledge allegiance to my Flag and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

One change was spearheaded by the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution. In 1923 the groups pushed for "my flag" to be replaced by "the Flag of the United States of America." The organizations felt that with so many immigrants coming to the country that it was important for newcomers to affirm their loyalty to the U.S.

In 1954 Congress added the words "under God," to the pledge. This

campaign was led by the Knights of Columbus, the world's largest Catholic fraternal organization.

The addition of "under God" has led to numerous court challenges from people who cite the Constitution's First Amendment specifying that Congress shall not make any laws pertaining to establishment of religion. Many believe that a pledge of patriotism should not be tied to

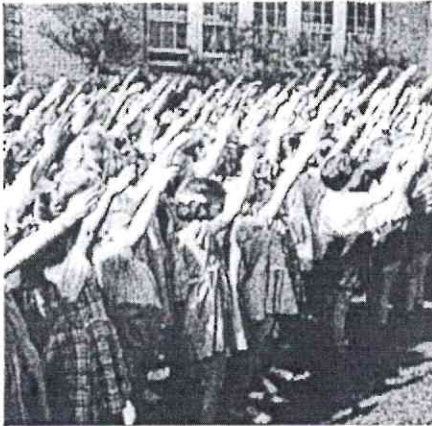


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a belief in God. Thus far the legal challenges have been unsuccessful.

Getty Images

Changes in the Way We Recognize the Flag (the Salute)



Today when we say the Pledge of Allegiance, we have learned to place our right hand over our heart as we recite the words. The original salute was very different. It was called a military salute, and it consisted of the right arm extended upward, with the palm down slightly. This was the form schoolchildren and members of the public were taught to use when they said the Pledge from 1892 on.

Today, of course, that is the arm gesture that we associate with "Heil Hitler." It began being used officially in Nazi Germany in 1933 when the Nazis passed a law that stated that all employees of the state were to be saluted in that way and violators would be punished.

This stirred a big reaction among Americans though it took almost

ten years to pass a new law. In December of 1942 Congress passed an amendment that specified that the pledge "should be rendered by standing at attention facing the flag with the right hand over the heart."



New citizens. Getty Images

Is the Pledge of Allegiance Still Widely Used?

Today most states provide time for schools to say the pledge, though it is still at the discretion of the local school board and/or the individual teacher. Five states do not have this provision (Hawaii, Iowa, Oklahoma, Vermont, and Wyoming).

To read about how the Pledge of Allegiance came into existence, read "Writing the Pledge of Allegiance."

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