

HB 1172

Since 1892 when the pledge was first recited in American schools it has undergone minor changes with the last and most controversial change happened on June 14, 1954.

Shortly after the end of WWII, Communism was spreading into Russia, China and Korea, and Cuba to name a few. Most Americans at that time viewed communism as a god-less form of government. The Knights of Columbus and other religious groups began petitioning congress to add the phrase under God to the pledge. Their argument was two-fold, 1. They believed that by adding the phrase would give students a deeper understanding of patriotism and 2. would provide a bulwark against Communism. In February 1954 Eisenhower heard a sermon by Reverend George Docherty that had a profound impact on the President. The Reverend argued that to omit the words "under God" in the pledge is to omit the definitive factor in the American way of life. He stated the an atheistic American is a contradiction in terms because if you deny the Christian ethic, you fall short of the American way of life. This Christian ethic has it's genesis at the Continental Congress of 1774, when at the urging of Benjamin Franklin, they would start each session with a prayer and the traditional as continued to this very day. The first prayer was on September 7, 1774. At the request of President Eisenhower Congress created legislation that would add the phrase "under God" to the Pledge and on

June 14th (Flag Day) Eisenhower signed the legislation into law. Two years later Eisenhower added the phrase "In God we Trust" to our currency and made it the Official motto of the United States. Since that change in 1954 there have been numerous lawsuits filed against it. Probably the most notable ones were filed by Michael Newdow, an atheist beginning in 1998 the suit was dismissed, in 2000 the suit was dismissed in 2005 in 2010 The US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals denied the suit finding that the pledge does not present a government endorsement of religion. In The Massachusetts Supreme Court ruled that reciting the Pledge of Allegiance is a patriotic, rather than a religious, exercise, saying the words "under God" does not discriminate against atheists.

The ND Veterans Legislative Council supports this bill and requests a do Pass