

## THE NEW TEXAS PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Learning Objectives: Students will:

1. Learn the wording of the new Texas Pledge of Allegiance
2. Understand the history of changes to the US Pledge of Allegiance as well as the Texas Pledge of Allegiance
3. Use critical thinking skills to analyze the addition of “under God” to the Texas pledge.

TEKS: SS 3.11C, 17A, 4.16C, 21A, 5.17C, 24A; LA 3.5A, Figure 19F, 4- figure 19F, 5.11E, Figure 19 F

Materials Needed: copies of US and Texas Pledge of Allegiance, Texas House Bill 1034 (Attachment 1), History of US Pledge (Attachment 2), History of Texas Pledge (Attachment 3)

Vocabulary: pledge, allegiance, republic, liberty, justice, indivisible

Teaching Strategy:

1. Students will recite both the US and TX Pledges of Allegiance. (The US Pledge should always be said first when both are recited.)
2. Ask students to notice the likenesses and differences between the two.
3. Show students the recently enacted Texas law that adds “under God” to the Texas Pledge of Allegiance. (Attachment 1)
4. Ask for student response. Why would the Texas legislature think this was a good idea? Why would some people be opposed to it?
5. Divide the class into two groups, one representing the U.S. pledge (15 students) and the other representing the Texas pledge (7 students).
6. Each group will be given facts about the history of the pledge they were assigned, and will be prepared at the end of class to tell the other group about it.
7. Attached are 15 facts about the U.S. pledge and 7 facts about the Texas pledge, which may be reviewed and illustrated.
8. Each group will divide the facts up, make sure they are in the correct order, and draw an illustration, poster or symbol with which to report their fact to the class.
9. When all students are ready, each group will report about their pledge to the rest of the class in chronological order. Use the posters or illustrations to create a timeline for each pledge.

G/T Extension:

Students will research and debate the pros and cons of religious words such as “under God” or “in God we trust” as part of our pledges and currency.

Senate Bill 83 (August, 2003)

Senate Bill 83 says that Texas public school students are required to say the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Texas Flag. Then there is to be a minute of silence for prayer, reflection, or meditation.

Parents can opt out of having their children recite the pledges by notifying their school's principal in writing. Students who do not recite the pledges are expected not to distract or interfere with others during the pledges and the minute of silence.

House Bill 1034 (June, 2007)

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 3100.101, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 3100.101. PLEDGE. The pledge of allegiance to the state flag is: **“Honor the Texas flag; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one state under God, one and indivisible.”**

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2007.

## History of the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance

Francis Bellamy wrote the first Pledge of Allegiance in August, 1892.

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

The first pledge was published in the September 8, 1892 edition of *The Youth's Companion*, a popular magazine of the time.

The first time the pledge was used was for special flag raising ceremonies in public schools everywhere commemorating Columbus Day in October of 1892.

In 1923 and 1924 the National Flag Conference, under the leadership of the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution, changed the Pledge's words, 'my Flag,' to 'the Flag of the United States of America.'

It still was an "unofficial" pledge until June 22, 1942 when the United States Congress included the Pledge to the Flag in the United States Flag Code (Title 36).

One year after receiving the official sanction in 1942, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that school children could not be forced to recite the Pledge as part of their daily routine (1943).

In 1945 the Pledge to the Flag received its official title as "The Pledge of Allegiance."

In 1954, Congress, added the words, 'under God,' to the Pledge. The Pledge was now both a patriotic oath and a public prayer.

President Eisenhower said at the time (1954): "*From this day forward, the millions of our schoolchildren will daily proclaim in every city and town, every village and rural schoolhouse, the dedication of our nation and our people to the Almighty.*"

In 1955, with Ike's support, Congress added the words "In God We Trust" on all paper money. In 1956 it made the same four words the nation's official motto, replacing "*E Pluribus Unum.*"

In the case of *Engel v. Vitale* (1962), the Supreme Court ruled it unconstitutional for public schools to allow prayer, even though the students were allowed abstain from the exercise.

Originally, the pledge was said with the right hand in the so-called "Bellamy Salute," with the right hand resting first outward from the chest, then the arm extending out from the body. Once Hitler came to power in Europe, some Americans were concerned that this position of the arm and hand resembled the Nazi or Fascist salute. In 1942 Congress also established the current practice of rendering the pledge with the right hand over the heart.

Today, only half of the 50 states have laws that require kids to recite the Pledge.

## History of the Texas Pledge of Allegiance

In 1933 the legislature passed a law establishing rules for the proper display of the flag and providing for a pledge to the flag: "Honor the Texas Flag of 1836; I pledge allegiance to thee, Texas, one and indivisible."

The pledge erroneously referred to the 1836 national flag, known as David G. Burnet's flag, instead of the Lone Star Flag. Senator Searcy Bracewell introduced a bill to correct this error in 1951, but the legislature did not delete the words "of 1836" until 1965. (Handbook of Texas Online)

The first official flag, the "National Standard of Texas," was passed by the Congress of the republic and approved by President Sam Houston on December 10, 1836. It consisted of an azure ground with a large golden star central. This flag, known as David G. Burnet's flag, served as the national flag until January 25, 1839,

The Lone Star Flag was adopted by the Texas Congress in 1839: "[T]he national flag of Texas shall consist of a blue perpendicular stripe of the width of one third of the whole length of the flag, with a white star of five points in the centre thereof, and two horizontal stripes of equal breadth, the upper stripe white, the lower red, of the length of two thirds of the whole length of the flag."

The 1933 description of the flag was extremely detailed and included precise instructions for the design and location of the Lone Star. The colors of the stripes, blood red, azure blue, and white, were said to impart the "lessons of the Flag: bravery, loyalty, and purity."

The pledge was again amended by House Bill 1034 during the 80th Legislature with the addition of "one state under God." The revised wording became effective on June 15, 2007.

### Reciting the Pledge

If the pledge to the state flag is recited, each person who is present and:

- (1) not in uniform should: (A) face the state flag and stand at attention with the person's right hand over the heart; (B) if wearing a head covering that is easy to remove, remove that head covering with the right hand and hold it at the person's left shoulder, with the person's hand over the heart; and (C) recite the pledge; or
- (2) in uniform should remain silent, face the flag, and make the military salute.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 1420, Sec. 7.001, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.