

Aloha!

Welcome to my August and September newsletter which is quite lengthy but interesting. Before I start, here are our monthly changes: We have two videos from The Daily Signal; both are informative and patriotic. Shortly after I posted July's website updates, a #lefttheleft tab was created, and a new video from Tiana Elisara was included.

I am also very proud to announce that HFRW was just given permission to link to the Hawaii Firearms Coalition's ("HIFICO") website! HIFICO is the group trying to protect our 2nd Amendment rights, and it has a major presence at our legislature. I am all fired up regarding this joyous news!

Again, I need to thank Teddy Fletcher from RaneWorks for assisting with our updates.



The Evolution of the Pledge of Allegiance and Its Legal Challenges

Since joining the Hawaii Republican Party a little over 3 years ago, it has been a déjà vu experience reciting the Pledge of Allegiance at the various Republican Party meetings I have attended, because it is comforting to know that American tradition and patriotism I grew up with still exists!

1892: "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Francis Bellamy (1855-1931), a resident from New York, graduated from the University of Rochester, followed in his father's footsteps and became a Baptist minister, preaching in Boston and New York; however, in 1891, he pursued another profession, and became an employee in the promotions department of the *Youth's Companion*, a magazine with over 500,000 subscribers that was owned by one of his congregants, Daniel Ford.

In honor of the 400th Anniversary of the landing of Christopher Columbus in the New World, Mr. Bellamy embarked on a nation-wide patriotic program for schools that would coincide with the Columbian Exposition in October 1892. Having lobbied Congress successfully for a resolution endorsing the school ceremony, he was also crucial in convincing President Benjamin Harrison to declare Columbus Day a holiday.

One of the key components of the school program was to have a salute to the flag with children reciting it in unison, and Mr. Bellamy was designated to be the author of the pledge which he believed should be one of allegiance.

As Bellamy sat down at his desk, the opening words—"I pledge allegiance to my flag"—tumbled onto paper. Then, after two hours of "arduous mental labor," as he described it, he produced a succinct and rhythmic tribute very close to the one we know today...¹

*1923 and 1924: I pledge allegiance to **the flag of the United States of America** for which it stands, one nation indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

A National Flag Conference presided by the American Legion and the Daughters of the American Revolution was held in 1923. At the conference, the phrase "to the flag of the United States" was added on to ensure immigrant children were clear which flag they were saluting. The following year, in 1924, the same organizations added in two words: of America.

The Infamous Salute

As part of Bellamy's protocol for the pledge, there was to be a military salute which everyone was to do while reciting:

At a signal from the Principal the pupils, in ordered ranks, hands to the side, face the Flag. Another signal is given; every pupil gives the flag the military salute — right hand lifted, palm downward, to a line with the forehead and close to it. Standing thus, all repeat together, slowly, "I pledge allegiance to my Flag and the Republic for which it stands; one Nation indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all." At the words, "to my Flag," the right hand is extended gracefully, palm upward, toward the Flag, and remains in this gesture till the end of the affirmation; whereupon all hands immediately drop to the side.²

This salute, which resembled too much like the Nazi's "seig heil" during World War II was changed, and on December 1942, a new law was enacted dictating the proper form and manner when reciting the Pledge of Allegiance:

The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag: "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.", should be rendered 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. Members of the Armed Forces not in uniform and veterans may render the military salute in the manner provided for persons in uniform."³

¹ Jeffrey Owen Jones, Smithsonian Magazine, November 2003.

² "The Companion's Guide" 1892, found on the ushistory.org website.

³ 4 U.S. Code § 4. Pledge of Allegiance to the flag; manner of delivery.

1954: *I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America, one nation, **under God**, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.*

After a two-year campaign to implement “under God” at top-level Knights of Columbus (a Roman Catholic fraternal organization) meetings, in 1952 and 1953, resolutions were adopted by the organization. However, the resolution adopted in 1953 was sent to the President, Vice President, and all members of Congress. The resolution was received warmly, and subsequent resolutions were introduced. Congressman Louis C. Rabaut of Michigan introduced a resolution, and it was adopted by both Houses of Congress. On Flag Day, June 14, 1954, the resolution was signed by President Eisenhower.

One of the main reasons Congress included “under God” was to dispute the Soviet Union’s philosophy that rights came from the State and could be taken away.

Congress also wanted to (1) reinforce that basic human rights are beyond the scope of the State, and (2) reaffirm tradition that dated back to the formation of our country. For instance:

1. [Washington’s General Orders to his troops](#) (July 2, 1776): “The fate of unborn Millions will now depend, **under God**, on the Courage and Conduct of this army.
2. [The Declaration of Independence](#) (July 4, 1776): “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are **endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights**, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.
3. [Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address](#) (November 19, 1863): “this nation, **under God**, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”⁴

Legal Challenges

There have been numerous legal challenges to reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. Some descriptions of decisions made include:

- On June 14, 2004, the [Supreme Court](#) rejected a challenge to the Pledge, holding that the plaintiff, atheist activist Dr. Michael Newdow, did not have proper standing to challenge the Pledge.
- On March 11, 2010, a second challenge from Dr. Newdow in [California](#) was rebuffed by the federal appeals court for the 9th Circuit, which held “that the Pledge of Allegiance does not violate the Establishment Clause because Congress’ ostensible and predominant purpose was to inspire patriotism.”

⁴ Sections 1, 2, and 3 are from the website: <https://www.becketlaw.org/case/pledge-allegiance-cases/>

- On November 12, 2010, a third challenge by Dr. Newdow, this time in [New Hampshire](#), was flatly rejected by the federal appeals court for the 1st Circuit because “both the choice to engage in the recitation of the Pledge and the choice not to do so are entirely voluntary.”
- On May 9, 2014, [Massachusetts](#)’ highest state court unanimously rejected the American Humanist Association’s attack on the Pledge, finding that “the pledge, notwithstanding its reference to God, is a fundamentally patriotic exercise, not a religious one.”
- And on February 4, 2015, a [New Jersey](#) teenager and her family successfully protected the right of all her fellow students to continue reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in its entirety from the American Humanist Association’s latest effort to take “under God” out of the Pledge.⁵

I also reviewed an article located on the National Constitution Center’s web page that was written on June 14, 2019 by Mr. Scott Bomboy entitled, “The History of Legal Challenges to the Pledge of Allegiance” and could find no further legal cases after 2015. With that in mind and with conservative judges being placed throughout the country by President Trump, in my opinion, “under God” in our Pledge of Allegiance is protected from being eliminated.

One nation under God. Simply sublime. Utterly perfect.



I am excited about representing Hawaii at the National Federation of Republican Women’s Biennial Conference in September. After, I will be visiting my daughter and her family in Tennessee. For those who haven’t been to the Volunteer State, it is magnificent with its v.a.s.t. farmlands and beautiful rolling hills. The Great Smoky Mountains, the most visited national park in the US, encompasses parts of Tennessee and North Carolina. It is monumental covering over 800 square miles! (By contrast, Oahu is 597 square miles.) When I visited the Smokies some years ago, it reinforced my deep love for natural splendor. Tennessee is also a Republican state!

Until my next message, God bless you and your ohana; stay safe, and, get out and enjoy the outdoors. Hawaii’s beaches and trails are spectacular this time of the year!

My fondest regards,

Donna P. Van Osdol

President, Hawaii Federation of Republican Women

⁵ Bullet points are from <https://www.becketlaw.org/case/pledge-allegiance-cases/>