

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TIMELINE

1892

The Pledge of Allegiance was written by Francis Bellamy to commemorate the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the Americas.

June 14, 1923

On Flag Day, at the National Flag Conference held in Washington, DC, several changes were made to the Pledge of Allegiance. The phrase "my Flag" was changed to "the Flag of the United States of America" to make it more inclusive.

June 3, 1940

The Supreme Court case *Minersville School District v. Gobitis* had arisen when the Gobitis family, who were Jehovah's Witnesses, refused to allow their children to salute the flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance due to religious objections. On this day, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the school district, stating that the required flag salute and recitation of the Pledge is constitutional.

June 22, 1942

Shortly after the United States became engaged in World War II, Congress adopted the U.S. Flag Code, and the Pledge of Allegiance became the official national pledge. It became required in public schools across the country. By that time, students in 31 states were required to say the Pledge.

June 14, 1943

The Supreme Court case *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette* overturned the previous decision in *Minersville School District v. Gobitis*. The Barnett sisters, who were also Jehovah's Witnesses, had refused to salute the flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance on religious grounds. The Court ruled that forcing students to engage in such patriotic rituals violates the First Amendment's Free Speech Clause and infringes on the freedom of religion.

June 14, 1954

The phrase "under God" was added by Congress to the Pledge of Allegiance as a response to the Cold War and to distinguish the United States from the officially atheistic Soviet Union.

June 25, 1962

The Supreme Court case *Engel v. Vitale* challenged the recitation of a state-composed prayer, including the Pledge of Allegiance, in public schools on the grounds of it violating the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. On this date, the Court ruled that state-mandated prayer, including the Pledge, in public schools is unconstitutional.

June 14, 2004

The Supreme Court case *Elk Grove Unified School District v. Newdow* addressed whether the inclusion of "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance is constitutional. The Court decided that Michael Newdow, the plaintiff, lacked standing to bring the case, avoiding a definitive ruling on the constitutionality of the phrase.

Overall, the Pledge of Allegiance has been involved in important court cases, such as *Minersville School District v. Gobitis* and *West Virginia State Board of Education v. Barnette*, which have shaped the understanding of freedom of speech and religion in relation to patriotic rituals in public schools. The addition of "under God" in 1954 has remained a subject of debate and constitutional interpretation.

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