

Op/Ed

Should the Constitution remove "under God" from the Pledge?

Fundamentally, this argument is not about church versus state but about following the law... Francis Bellamy wrote the original Pledge of Allegiance as a secular oath with no mention to God or any religion.

Left



Right



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Jennifer Menster
Pilot copy editor

It's a hot topic in politics.

By June, the Supreme Court must make a decision whether or not Congress acted unconstitutionally when adding the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance in 1954.

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the words were a violation of the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. The case came to court because a California father feels that his daughter should not be forced to say "under God" every morning in school.

And she shouldn't have to say "under God" if she doesn't believe in God. Or if a child believes in Allah they shouldn't have to say it.

In fact, what if Congress wanted to put "under Allah" in the pledge? People would be in uproar. So why is it so wrong that a few people are upset with "under God?" Either have everything or nothing at all.

It is understandable that the majority of U.S. citizens are Christians or believe in the Christian God. But one cannot block out other's belief in Islam, Buddhism or even atheism. By adding "under God" in the Pledge, the government is forcing the Christian God on the country, which is a violation of the First Amendment's Establishment Clause and separation of church and state.

Some argue that it doesn't specify the Christian God. Well, if that is the case, then lower case "god" and add a 's' to it—making it "gods."

Conservatives have been quoted as saying that the appeals court judges' decision is the "latest example of liberal court run amok" and that the decision is in "defiance of tradition, precedent, and common sense."

Well, those conservatives should go back to grade school politics. The law of the United States is not based on tradition and common sense. It is based on the laws that were set by our founding fathers in the constitution, which in its first amendment establishes the separation of church and state. Fundamentally, this argument is not about church versus state but about following the law.

If conservatives want to argue tradition then they should do their homework. If they want tradition then they shouldn't want the words "under God" even in the Pledge.

When Francis Bellamy wrote the pledge in 1892 the words "under God" weren't even in the pledge. He wrote it to promote patriotism. The government added "under God" in 1954 to advance religion at a time when the nation was at battle with atheistic communism.

In fact, while President Eisenhower was signing the bill he was quoted as saying, "From this day forward, the millions of our schoolchildren will daily proclaim... the dedication of our Nation and our people to the Almighty."

Now come on. It's obvious that the government is pushing God on people. Bellamy wrote the Pledge of Allegiance as a secular oath with no mention to God or any religion. As far as anyone knows, there were no complaints about the original pledge being too secular or liberal. It was written for patriotism to the United States, not God or Allah. The government should not be allowed under the law of the land to take away the pledge's original meaning and force the belief in God on U.S. residents. This is not an atheist versus Christian matter. This is about doing what is right under the law of the United States of America.

Jacob Conley
Pilot Staff

Change is sometimes a good thing. I know this may seem like a strange statement for a conservative to make, but sometimes change is needed. Take the Pledge of Allegiance for example, something most people know by heart. What some people may not know is that the Pledge did not always appear in its current form. Up until the 1950's the Pledge did not contain the words "under God". The Eisenhower administration made the change, adding the phrase to the line, "One nation indivisible."

Today, there is a movement to once again remove the phrase from the Pledge. The supporters of this movement claim the "under God" violates the separation of church and state. Aside from the fact that the principle of church and state has been misunderstood and misapplied, I have a problem with this argument on several levels. The first problem is that you cannot segregate God or His name to the churches. An atheist may argue that they are offended by or don't believe in the name of God. Everywhere you go, however, you hear the name of God, whether it be used in vain or otherwise. For example, almost every movie has the phrase "Oh My God!" or some similar phrase in it. If an atheist or anyone else wanted to be truly separated from the name of God then they would have to lock themselves away and never venture to the outside world and that is just not a logical course of action. Some people argue that they don't mind having God in everyday life they just don't want Him to be to be a part of gov-

ernment. In that case these people would not be able to spend any money because the motto "In God We Trust" is emblazoned on our national currency. Therefore, the name of God has become such an integrated part of our society that it is almost impossible to separate yourself from it.

Secondly, it does not make any sense to me, how anyone can be offended by such a generic and watered down term as "under God." I could understand a few people being upset if the pledge said "under Jesus" but it doesn't. The "God" it's referring to is left up to the individual's religious preference. To the Muslim God refers to Muhammad, to the Buddhist, God represents Buddha and so on. The term is even gender inclusive, thus appeasing the feminist who thinks God is a female.

As for the word "under", some people have a problem with its connotations of submission and obedience. These same people, however, are under police authority and they have to obey law. Even the President is held accountable by Congress. The police, president, and congress are fallible. If these people who support the removal have to submit to men who admittedly make mistakes, shouldn't they be happy that the leaders and the nation herself is under a perfect God?

Eisenhower realized that America was subject to a higher power and that's why he added the phrase "under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance. I just hope future generations will be able to quote the pledge and come to the same realization as Eisenhower.