



Vermont School Bans Saying Pledge of Allegiance, Parents Say

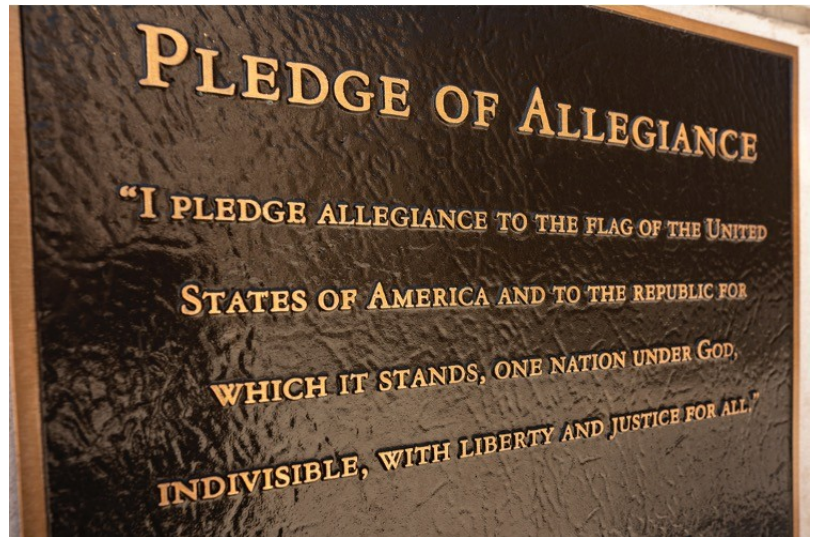
There was a time, not long ago, when reciting the Pledge of Allegiance was standard in schools — and uncontroversial. Then it became an issue — and optional. Now it's not even an option at one Vermont school, say local parents.

As commentator Todd Starnes [reports](#):

A number of moms and dads staged a protest at Shaftsbury Elementary School demanding to know why the pledge had been given the shaft. In response, the school district summoned the police.

...“I think it's complete disrespect as an American to not want to say the Pledge of Allegiance,” Navy veteran Victor Harwood told the Bennington Banner. “I was brought up to respect the flag. I put my life on the line, like a bunch of these other folks, and they wrote a check too ... up to and including their lives. And if people don't respect the flag, they're not respecting us at all.”

“It seems like this was a decision that should have been a discussion first,” parent Michael Gardner told the Vermont Digger. “In my mind, this isn't really any different than banning books.”



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Actually, it's far different from “banning books” — especially since, and the allusion is to our controversies, no books are banned. The works in question are all available at various booksellers. The issue is a matter of *what books should be present in schools*.

Everyone Does It

Everybody draws lines, too. Virtually no one, for example, would want snuff material or books advocating genocide in schools. As for the Left, it has been very effective at eliminating works it doesn't like, such as *Huckleberry Finn*. (Don't forget Dr. Seuss, either.)



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So, in reality, this isn't about "banning books"; that's a propagandistic talking point. It's about trying to control and shape curricula. When the Left does this, though, it's called being "progressive." When conservatives do it, they call it "book banning." The goal?

To neutralize traditionalist activity in the educational sphere. To clear the battlefield of opposition, so that the barbarians inside the gate can march into even more territory, unopposed. The result?

We've traded Huck Finn for [Howard Zinn](#).

Didn't Nancy Pelosi [Tell Students Years Ago, "Be Disruptors"?](#)

Returning to the Vermont story, a school official did damage control. As [vtdigger15 informs](#):

In a statement, James Culkeen, Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union superintendent, said that for several years, individual school principals "have been empowered to decide if the Pledge of Allegiance would be recited in the individual buildings."

The district itself had not banned the pledge, he said, and in the schools where the pledge is recited, students and staff have the choice not to say it.

"On its face, the 'opt-out' choice seems reasonable. But as we've learned, when students do so, it highlights differences between our kids. It disrupts the community and excludes kids who just want to be a part of their classrooms," Culkeen said.

But as Starnes asks, "Who in the world would think that reciting the Pledge of Allegiance would 'disrupt' a community?" The answer is, the same people who'd claim the following are not disruptive:

- Having sexual devolutionary ("LGBTQ") propaganda in schools.
- Allowing a boy to attend class "as a girl" and forcing other children to use his "pronouns."
- Telling students that America was founded on slavery.
- Discrediting the Founding Fathers in schoolchildren's eyes. Note: Four in 10 Gen Z'ers now believe the Founders are better described as "villains" than heroes.

What's really occurring here is a battle in the culture war. Whose sense of virtue will prevail in the schools and society at large? And, of course, claiming your opponent's prescriptions are "disruptive" can be a tactic in this conflict. It is again a way of clearing the battlefield.

Progressivism's Deadly Progression

We see in the Vermont story, too, the fruits of this legerdemain. As stated earlier, we transitioned from reciting the Pledge uniformly, to people taking exception to it and the allowing of opt-outs to, now, an effort to prohibit its recitation uniformly. And so it is in many things:

- Homosexual activists at first said they just wanted tolerance: the elimination of anti-sodomy laws and societal stigmas. And they then were tolerated. Then they demanded acceptance and "marriage," and they got both. Then they began persecuting bakers, florists, and other businessmen who wouldn't participate in celebrating their events.
- In the 1940s and '50s, boys sometimes carried long guns on NYC subways (yes, really) because they had riflery clubs at school. Then this became unacceptable, though children could still bring toy guns to school. Now even this may be disallowed, with boys having been punished [for drawing pictures](#) of firearms or [pointing a finger](#) like a gun and saying "Bang, bang!"
- Activists said at one time that they just wanted "equality." Then they demanded preferences and



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quotas (affirmative action). Now, as with New York's [misnamed Equal Rights Amendment](#), they want to make discrimination against "privileged" groups a constitutional right. Maybe this is why, decades ago already, late radio host Rush Limbaugh described their agenda as get-even-with-'em-ism.

Sins of Omission

This social decay has occurred not just because of dark hearts, but also apathetic ones. And thus must we be more than conservative, as philosopher G.K. Chesterton once observed.

"All conservatism is based upon the idea that if you leave things alone you leave them as they are," he explained. "But you do not. If you leave a thing alone you leave it to a torrent of change. If you leave a white post alone it will soon be a black post. If you particularly want it to be white you must be always painting it again; that is, you must be always having a revolution."

As with an abandoned car or house, cultural frameworks left to themselves move toward disorder; maintenance is imperative. And is conservatism up to this challenge? Conservatism is about conserving. But merely conserving the status quo means preserving not just the good, but also yesterday's errors. (Or, as some people call them, "progressive triumphs.")

We instead must understand that Truth (objective by definition) exists and be its staunch guardians. For actuating it in society, in its totality, is the ultimate goal. Oh, we may at times have to accept political compromise, but that compromise should never inform our thinking. We can accept the thin gruel legislatively, for the time being. But if this becomes our new conception of a life-sustaining, balanced meal, we've been snookered by the cultural-devolutionary spirit.

The moral of this story? Tolerance is the last rallying cry of those destined for defeat.



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