

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE ALTERNATIVES

Note: *The City Council is not required to recite the Pledge of Allegiance or any other alternative to the Pledge of Allegiance. The City Council may simply call the roll and proceed directly to the rest of the agenda.*

If the City Council wishes to consider alternatives to the Pledge of Allegiance, the following alternatives are provided for discussion.

TheHumanist.com Reader Competition

In October of 2014, TheHumanist.com held a contest, inviting readers to submit their ideas for rewriting the Pledge of Allegiance. Below are the [winning entry](#), and [six others](#) that received honorable mention:

Winner:

I pledge support to the Constitution of the United States of America, and shall uphold the rights and freedoms stated within it for all its citizens.

I will understand, follow, and ever work towards full equality and justice for everyone, without regard to race, gender, or personal beliefs.

I will respect myself.

I will respect others.

I will respect this world, and all other things that live upon it.

I will always seek knowledge and truth, and shall use it to benefit the world I live in.

I will remember my rights and responsibilities, and always try to live honorably and well, in this country and wherever I may go.

Honorable mentions:

- I pledge to be a good person, to be kind to others and to identify and appreciate the best qualities of my country. I pledge to be loyal to the idea that all Americans are entitled to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I pledge respect for the laws of society and a willingness to help change any that do not measure up to the nation's goals of equal opportunity, justice and due process for all. I pledge to safeguard the absolute separation of church and state at all levels of government. I pledge to take responsibility for my health and the quality of my life by living a healthy lifestyle on a foundation of reason, exuberance, athleticism and liberty. I pledge to always ask what I can do for my country and what together we can do for the freedom of humankind.*
- I pledge to honor the rights of all humanity without bias toward race or age or social standing or gender or sexual identity. I pledge myself to compassion for others and non-violence toward fellow creatures. I pledge to work for equal rights and general welfare of citizens of the United States of the world.*

- *I pledge allegiance to the Constitution of the United States of America, symbolized by the Flag, and to the rights and responsibilities it demands. I will be an informed and active citizen, defending those rights, and meeting those responsibilities, to ensure liberty and justice for all.*
- *I pledge allegiance to the founding Ideals of the United States of America: that all people are created equal, that we each possess the right to life, to liberty and to the pursuit of happiness; that our government derives its power from our joint consent, freely given; and that it is the right and duty of all citizens of the United States to petition, to confront, and even to rise up against our government, should it seek to unjustly suppress these rights. I acknowledge that we, as a nation and as individuals, have not always fully embraced these Ideals for all members of our nation, and I personally commit to furthering the implementation of these Ideals to which we aspire.*
- *I pledge allegiance to the idea that all are created equal. And to the planet on which we stand, one nation, indivisible. With liberty and justice for all.*
- *I pledge allegiance to my neighbors and my community, at home and throughout the world. I pledge to exercise common sense and reason, and to treat others with the respect and courtesy I wish to receive in turn. I will not turn a blind eye to injustice or bigotry. I recognize that I am an important part of a global community, and I will consider the repercussions of my actions beyond my own walls. Those who wish to have my allegiance will show their allegiance in return. At no time will I follow a direction I know to violate the principles of my pledge.*

A suggestion was received that a song could be sung rather than reciting the Pledge, and choosing a verse or two of “This Land is Your Land” was proposed as one option:

This Land Is Your Land

Words and Music by Woody Guthrie

This land is your land, this land is my land
 From California to the New York island;
 From the red wood forest to the Gulf Stream waters
 This land was made for you and me.

As I was walking that ribbon of highway,
 I saw above me that endless skyway:
 I saw below me that golden valley:
 This land was made for you and me.

I've roamed and rambled and I followed my footsteps
 To the sparkling sands of her diamond deserts;
 And all around me a voice was sounding:
 This land was made for you and me.

When the sun came shining, and I was strolling,
And the wheat fields waving and the dust clouds rolling,
As the fog was lifting a voice was chanting:
This land was made for you and me.

As I went walking I saw a sign there
And on the sign it said "No Trespassing."
But on the other side it didn't say nothing,
That side was made for you and me.

In the shadow of the steeple I saw my people,
By the relief office I seen my people;
As they stood there hungry, I stood there asking
Is this land made for you and me?

Nobody living can ever stop me,
As I go walking that freedom highway;
Nobody living can ever make me turn back
This land was made for you and me.

Preamble to the U.S. Constitution

A possible option is to recite the preamble to the Constitution of the United States. The idea is to renew one's commitment to the nation's founding principles.

"***We the People*** of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.

Quote from a Poet or Writer - Examples

"After you have exhausted what there is in business, politics, conviviality, and so on - have found that none of these finally satisfy, or permanently wear - what remains? Nature remains." - Walt Whitman

"May we think of freedom, not as the right to do as we please, but as the opportunity to do what is right." - Walt Whitman

“It's the beauty within us that makes it possible for us to recognize the beauty around us. The question is not what you look at but what you see.” – Henry David Thoreau

“Every individual has a place to fill in the world and is important in some respect whether he chooses to be so or not.” – Nathaniel Hawthorne

Another option could be that the Mayor, or each Council Member on a rotating basis, could read a quote of their choosing.

The Original Pledge of Allegiance, 1892

I pledge allegiance to my Flag, and the Republic for which it stands: one Nation indivisible, With Liberty and Justice for all.

- The original words of the Pledge of Allegiance, 1892

Variations on the Pledge

In 2005, the Washington Post solicited people from diverse professions, geography and backgrounds to revise or even rewrite the Pledge of Allegiance:

I pledge fidelity to the democratic principles of the United States of America, based on the freedoms of thought and expression without arrogance or self-righteousness and with tolerance and respect for all.

- Robert Olin Butler, novelist

I pledge allegiance to the United States of America and to the principles for which it stands: respect for all human beings, security of human rights, care for the earth's flora, fauna and resources, and fair allocation of personal and fiscal responsibilities.

- Joyce Appleby, historian

I pledge, not to pledge, but to work to ensure that America lives up to its ideals of liberty, equality, and opportunity so that we can really become a beacon of possibility for all. And that by our efforts we can become a more inclusive nation that is comfortable with ambiguity and our evolving role in a changing global society.

- Lonnie G. Bunch, director, National Museum of African American History and Culture

I pledge allegiance to the fairness for which this country stands, to its generous sympathy for the plight of its own and others around the world, one nation, sometimes divided, but always committed to respect and decency for all.

- Joseph Epstein, writer

I pledge allegiance to my fellow citizens, with whom I will work to uphold our freedoms, fulfill our responsibilities to one another, and maintain our place as a responsible nation in the community of nations.

- Kwame Anthony Appiah, professor of philosophy

I pledge to honor the common hopes of all Americans and imagine a world of equals, living many decent ways, with liberty and opportunity for all.

- the editors, the Boston Review

I pledge allegiance to the United States of America, to its people and to the ideals which they aspire to and have fought for: democracy, equality, liberty, and justice for all.

- Minxin Pei, senior fellow, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace