

Pledge of Allegiance

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Dear Bahá'í Friend:

The Office of Public Information acknowledges receipt of your query regarding responding to the press about the Pledge of Allegiance. Having been out of the office for better part of the past two weeks, this reply regrettably comes with a few days of delay.

As Bahá'í writings emphasize the societal importance of religion and spirituality, one might be inclined to publicly oppose removal of religious references from the Pledge of Allegiance. However, as with most controversial issues, the Bahá'í stance is often subtle and tends to lie at the intersection of several Bahá'í principles (e.g., here, religious freedom, religious practice as an individual responsibility, non-involvement in controversy...).

In this case, we recommend not taking a position. In the first place, public debate on the issue is likely to be carried out in a spirit of partisanship.

Whatever the merits of either side of the issue, Bahá'ís should refrain from becoming embroiled in public contention.

Secondly, you may wish to consider the following paragraph from a letter previously written on behalf of the National Assembly:

"...the National Assembly has decided that the Bahá'í stance towards church-state issues should be one of neutrality based on the principle of obedience to government. The question of what constitutes appropriate religious expression in public places is best left to the legal and judicial authorities"(Office of External Affairs, letter dated September 28, 1999)

With loving greetings,

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Director, Office of Public Information

— Pledge of Allegiance (Used by permission of the curator)