

House Committees  
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Contact Information  
77 S. High Street Columbus, OH 43215  
<https://ohiohouse.gov/members/sean-p-brennan>  
Rep14@ohiohouse.gov  
614-466-3485

## **Representative Sean Patrick Brennan 14<sup>th</sup> House District**

### **Sponsor Testimony H.B. 117**

Chairwoman Fowler-Arthur, Vice Chair Bird, Ranking Member Robinson and members of the House Education Committee - thank you for allowing Representative Richardson and I to provide sponsor testimony on H.B. 117 – a bill that will require daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag in our schools.

As an American History and Government public school teacher for three decades, I believe in my heart that one of my duties was to instill a feeling of patriotic duty, unity, and love of country in every one of my students. In fact, these ideals are among the goals of the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 – the birth certificates of the state of Ohio and our system of public schools in Ohio.

However, over the course of my career, I have become concerned that what was once common practice in all of our schools has faded, like an aging flag. In fact, throughout Ohio's schools, there is a spectrum of Pledge of Allegiance policies – from schools that do not recite it at all, to those that recite it on special occasions, to those that recite it weekly, to those that recite it daily, as they should.

Anyone who walked into my classroom witnessed how it oozed with love for our nation – with many flags, the Pledge of Allegiance on a large poster, large copies of the Charters of Freedom, among many other symbols of patriotism – many of which now adorn my Statehouse office. I even had fun lessons on the Pledge of Allegiance. Students left my classes with a sense of pride having learned so much about their nation, their history, and their government. Needless to say, they made me so very proud when they blew the state tests out of the water.

What broke my heart was when students would not stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Now, some students have true religious and other convictions and I truly respect their right under the U.S. Constitution – as does this bill - but I am concerned that we are not doing enough to teach the next generation about the importance of the Pledge and our flag and what they stand for. This bill is one little way that we can move that needle in the right direction.

Saying the Pledge is a simple, time-honored tradition that fosters patriotism, unity, and civic responsibility—values that are essential to shaping the next generation of engaged citizens.

The Pledge of Allegiance is more than just words; it is a declaration of loyalty to our nation, our principles, and our democratic ideals. By reciting it daily, students develop a sense of pride in being American. In an era where division and disillusionment sometimes overshadow our shared identity, instilling patriotism at a young age helps ensure that our nation’s foundational values are respected and upheld.

Schools play a vital role in shaping responsible citizens. The Pledge serves as a daily reminder of the freedoms we enjoy and the sacrifices made to preserve them. It encourages respect for our country, its laws, and those who serve to protect it. Just as students learn math and science to prepare for their futures, they must also learn the importance of civic duty— including a daily affirmation of allegiance.

Ohio is home to a diverse population with varying backgrounds and beliefs. Yet, despite these differences, we are all Americans. The Pledge unites students under a common purpose, reinforcing the idea that while we may have different perspectives, we all stand together as one nation. A daily recitation promotes a sense of belonging and shared commitment to the values of liberty and justice for all.

Reciting the Pledge takes less than 30 seconds, yet its impact is profound. It is a small but significant way to instill lifelong respect for our country and its ideals. Many states already encourage or require this practice, recognizing its value in shaping well-rounded, civically engaged citizens. Ohio should follow suit by ensuring that every student is offered a moment of reflection and commitment to the nation that provides them with unparalleled freedoms and opportunities.

By passing this bill, the Ohio General Assembly would be taking a stand for patriotism, unity, and civic responsibility. A daily recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance will help shape generations of young Ohioans who respect their country, value their freedoms, and understand their role in preserving democracy.

I urge you to support this bill and ensure that every child in our great state has the opportunity to hear and/or recite a simple yet powerful pledge: a pledge to their flag, their country, and the ideals that make America the land of the free and the home of the brave.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

