

HOUSE FILE

847

HOOVERCHALLENGER.COM SUMMER 2022

A new bill that was created onto Iowa’s public schools.

Executive secretary Elaine Tant starts every morning with the announcement, “I pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States of America...” You may ask yourself, why is she reciting the pledge every morning? In previous years of high school, we’d never hear it. As of 2021, a law passed in Iowa that we must recite the pledge of allegiance every school day.

Representative Carter Nordman introduced this stand-alone bill to give an opportunity for teachers to discuss with students the true meaning behind the pledge of allegiance. One reason why this bill was

introduced was because Iowa was one of the few states that did not require a recitation of the pledge and they wanted to join the union with other states that recited it. In this bill under division six, it states that the United States flag must be displayed in every classroom and each public school district must administer the pledge of allegiance from 1st grade through 12th every school day.

“The majority of states already have a law around the pledge of allegiance. In this case, the fact other states have a law like this may have played a role into it,” social studies teacher Amber Davison said.

Some educators believe that this law was a good bill to be created as it shows honor to those who fought for this country.

“Personally, I’m good with the pledge. As a veteran, the flag and pledge mean something special for me because I know there are so many people that paid the ultimate sacrifice believing in the words,” associate principal Willie Montgomery.

On the other side, some teachers believe that this law was made to hide other laws that were being passed. For example, laws such as House File 2577, the transparency bill, that was added into the school voucher plan.

“I think that House File 847 was passed to deflect from other laws that were being passed at the same time,” IJAG teacher Julie Johnson said.

But as the 2021-2022 school year started, students were confused why they were listening to the pledge of allegiance every morning.

Did you know?

-Iowa, Vermont, and Wyoming were the only states that did not recite the pledge of allegiance in schools

-This bill offers exemptions for non-public schools with religious objections

- DMPS being the largest school district in the state has about 2,500 classrooms. Since the bill passed over the summer, they bought 630 new flags to mostly replace faded ones that cost \$4,200

Enforcing the pledge to be said in public schools make students believe that it's disrespectful and disregards movements that have been fought like the BLM movement. In the pledge when it states, 'with liberty and justice for all,' it means freedom and fairness for everyone in this country. Nowadays, people have been fighting for fairness and equality because equality doesn't exist in this country. People protest for fairness by kneeling or not standing up for the pledge as it's being recited because we know we don't live in a country that is equal and faces racism every day.

However, teachers believe that this law may inspire issues that are important to them.

"I think it may cause some positive reactions. It shows students that they need to be deeply involved in what happens at our state house. Politics and laws affect all of us and for that activism should start in

"REQUIRING THIS LAW TO BE SAID IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS BASICALLY OVERLOOKS STUDENTS WANTING CHANGE ON SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES. IT'S ALMOST AS IF PLACING THIS LAW IS LIKE A MOCK TO WHAT THE STUDENTS WORKED HARDLY TO STRIVE FOR," DELYJAH SAID.

high school to prepare students to remain vigilant and knowledgeable on what is happening at all levels of government," Davis said.

Educators also want students to know that this law gives them an opportunity to continue to express their beliefs on social justice.

"It gives them an opportunity every day to engage in a level of protest. Patriotism can be displayed by both reciting the pledge of allegiance and through the act of protest by not participating," Davison said.



Flag hanging in Suarez's Room.

"I honestly don't understand why public schools now require the pledge of allegiance. In public schools, we are not taught about the meaning of this pledge or the duty it serves to our everyday lives," junior Annika Delyjah said.

Teachers also have mixed feelings about this new bill and forcing it onto students in public schools.

"I have mixed feelings. I grew up saying the pledge every day and beginning my teaching career it became part of a routine. But I will be honest, I never knew the reason why we said it because I've never had a teacher explain the thought behind it. It's not a bad thing, but I don't agree that it was forced on us and students that don't know the true meaning of it, especially putting students' religions in a bad spot when it says, 'under god'," academic interventionist Jennifer Davis said.

Being in a diverse school like Hoover with 76.48% minorities, this law could cause conflict for some students.

"For schools with diversity it is a juggling act of being respectful to our country while also respecting personal, cultural, and religious beliefs. It adds one more layer of trying to make everyone feel included and welcomed," Davis said.

Some say that this law interferes with students fighting for social justice issues.

"Requiring this law to be said in public schools basically overlooks students wanting change on social justice issues. It's almost as if placing this law is like a mock to what the students worked hard to strive for," Delyjah said.