

# Opinion

## Pledge issue taints Dukakis' patriotism

The House of Representatives rejected a bid Sept. 9 to begin House meetings with the Pledge of Allegiance. The bid was rejected on procedural grounds, but Speaker Jim Wright said the oath would be said by the House this week anyway. I was pleased to see that the House handled the pledge issue better than Michael Dukakis.



Lydia Berzsenyi

makes me wonder about the future of this country. What harm could possibly come from teaching children the Pledge of Allegiance?

If children are not taught the pledge, they will miss a vital part of their education. They will miss an important lesson in patriotism and American history.

It all boils down to a saying I've been hearing my entire life: "The children of today will be the leaders of tomorrow." I've always taken that phrase to heart and have tried to contribute to the nation's future in whatever way I can. I think being informed about national issues, national history and national policies is one of the biggest ways citizens of all ages can participate in planning their nation's future.

And what about the children of today? Just because I am no longer one of them (by most standards) I am still concerned for their education. On their behalf I argue that they should be taught the pledge along with the rest of their American history.

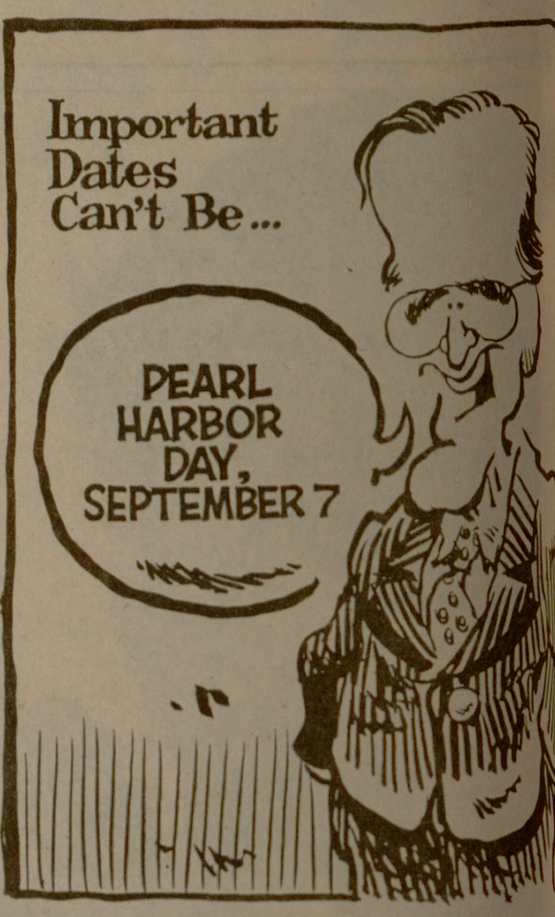
Furthermore, I see nothing wrong with requiring teachers to lead the children in reciting the pledge. These children, who will be the leaders of tomorrow, pay great attention to their teachers on both the conscious and subconscious level. While they are listening to the teacher explaining the pledge, they are mentally noticing the teacher's national pride.

If teachers do not teach their students this piece of their American heritage, they are missing out on an opportunity to instill patriotism in the minds of their young charges.

But the issue is not really up to the teachers. The charge rests with Dukakis. I doubt that I will ever live in Massachusetts, so Dukakis' 1977 veto will probably never affect me personally. But if he is elected President, neither I nor my children will escape his influence.

Dukakis' veto makes me wonder about his patriotism. And no amount of flag waving and fiery speeches will change my opinion about his sense of national pride.

Lydia Berzsenyi is a senior math major and editor of The Battalion.



## Adults and politicians should pledge to be 'invisible', too

For a long time, I've advocated a law that would require all Americans to recite the Pledge of Allegiance when they go to their jobs and begin work. And before they pick up their paychecks.



Mike Royko

And I've supported proposals that require the pledge to be recited at any and all public gatherings.

For example, why isn't the pledge required of movie audiences before a film is shown? Or at a play or sporting event? And why aren't restaurant diners asked to stand and recite the pledge when they are given their table?

My position on this issue is well-known.

I was the first journalist to urge laws that prohibit a bartender from serving a drink to anyone who hasn't stood at the bar and given the pledge.

And I was also the first to demand a law making it mandatory for passengers on air planes to recite the pledge before the plane takes off. Or lands. And to expand this law to cover subway trains, buses, cabs, amusement park rides and other forms of public transportation.

But I've noticed something troubling about this presidential campaign.

Vice President George Bush has not said one word about this issue.

Oh, sure, he's gone on and on about wanting children to recite the pledge in school.

But that's an easy copout. Everybody knows that kids enjoy the pledge. Anything to delay the moment the teacher says, "Hand in your homework."

Besides, most kids don't even know what the pledge means. Most of them say "invisible" instead of "indivisible."

Who knows how many kids grew up confused about why a teacher would want us to be one invisible nation?

But to get back to Bush and his lack of a strong stance on the pledge, I have looked over all of his position papers and news stories going back years and years.

Not once have I seen anything that indicates he supports anyone but children being required to recite the pledge.

In other words, it seems that Bush doesn't even care if adult Americans are ever asked to do what he asks of children to stand up and be counted, even if they think they are in favor of being invisible.

Isn't that rather off? Consider for a moment. Have you ever heard of American children selling secrets to the communists? Of course not.

But there has been many a secret sold by military personnel and other government employees.

Yet Bush has not uttered one peep about the pledge being given every morning in all military mess halls, orderly rooms, barracks and latrines and on all ships at sea. Or even those docked.

Secrets have been sold by traitorous CIA men.

Yet Bush, who once ran the CIA, has failed to issue an order that the pledge be recited by his many agents.

My sources also say that Bush himself, as head of the CIA, was never once seen standing with his right hand over his heart, except when he had indigestion.

Lately, Bush has started asking audiences at some of his political appearances to join him in the pledge, as he did at the Republican convention.

That might impress the audience some of his political appearances, but not him in the pledge, as he did at the public convention. And it looks on television.

But it is strictly for public consumption. It conceals a shocking omission: Bush's part.

I have discovered that Bush's senior staff does not recite the Pledge of Allegiance when it meets with him.

Actually, it is worse than that. He has meetings, the senior staff recited the pledge, with or without him. Nor does Bush's junior staff, or his in-between staff.

And they don't even try to do this lack of patriotism. When one of Bush's press aides was asked about the pledge, she matter-of-factly said:

"At their meetings? No."

Well, do they at least say a prayer?

"No."

How about the National Anthem, they sing it?

"No. Why are you asking this?"

The fact that she had to ask what was being asked makes me ask what they realize how grave this situation is. If they don't, they should ask.

Someone might wonder why I put these same questions to Michael Dukakis and his staff.

Why bother? He's a Democrat, expected of being a "liberal", and we know what they're like.

But I would expect more of a Republican and a close and dear friend of Bob Hope.

Incidentally, I asked Bush's old England prep school if the students recite the pledge. They do not.

I just don't know what to believe anymore.

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## Mail Call

### Graduating seniors getting raw deal

EDITOR: During the first two days of classes this semester I kept waiting to hear the infamous question, "Who is a graduating senior?" But it was never asked. The reason is simple — Our grades will not be due early and we will not get our diplomas in December. I also recently learned that the last final ends a few hours before commencement exercises begin.

We, as students, are clueless about what will happen. On each syllabus from three classes I have seen three different finals schedules. Heaton Hall could not tell me when our grades will be due. Without a "dot day," students with discrepancies in graduation requirements will have to try to clear up matters long distance, adding more confusion.

I read about the hearings in the spring semester concerning senior finals, and thank student and faculty representatives who worked to keep this unique aspect of Aggie graduation intact. The main issue was whether or not we could take separate finals and the faculty refused. I don't recall the exact reasons, but the term "inconvenient" was used. I invite faculty members to further elaborate on reasons for this collective decision.

I would like to know two things:

First, some organization or administrator needs to make a formal written explanation of what the procedure will be and keep us informed of any changes throughout the semester. Students are the ones being inconvenienced.

Second, if you or any organization you belong to feels strongly about this, please write the president's office. It can't hurt and it might help future graduates.

Lisa Crawford '88

Letters to the editor should not exceed 300 words in length. The editorial staff reserves the right to edit letters for style and length, but will make every effort to maintain the author's intent. Each letter must be signed and must include the classification, address and telephone number of the writer.

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The Battalion also serves as a laboratory newspaper for students in reporting, editing and photography classes within the Department of Journalism.

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