



U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services

October 5, 2015

Edwina Rogers, CEO
Secular Policy Institute
401 Ninth Street, NW, Suite 640
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Ms. Rogers:

Thank you for your September 8, 2015, letter regarding the Pledge of Allegiance and the naturalization ceremony.

The naturalization ceremony is a pivotal milestone in the naturalization process. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) aims to make administrative naturalization ceremonies positive, memorable moments in the lives of the participants. The Pledge of Allegiance is one aspect included in the standard naturalization ceremony in furtherance of this goal.¹

USCIS does not have the authority to change the Pledge of Allegiance, as its language is set by Congress and codified at 4 U.S.C. § 4 (2002). However, while applicants are encouraged to participate in all aspects of the naturalization ceremony, there is no legal requirement that they audibly recite the Pledge in whole or in part.

Thank you again for your letter and I hope this response sufficiently addresses your concerns.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Denise A. Vanison".

Denise A. Vanison
Chief, USCIS Office of Policy & Strategy

¹ See Volume 12, Citizenship and Naturalization, Part J, Oath of Allegiance, Chapter 5, Model Plan for Administrative Ceremonies, <http://www.uscis.gov/policymanual/HTML/PolicyManual-Volume12-PartJ-Chapter5.html>