The Pledge of Allegiance was written in 1892 by Francis Bellamy in order to celebrate the 400\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Christopher Columbus’ voyage to America. James B. Upham, a minister, adopted the Pledge of Allegiance as a way for people to honor the foundation of our country. That was over one hundred and twenty years ago. Has the Pledge of Allegiance lost its meaning?

While in school, I remember reciting the Pledge of Allegiance in English and in Spanish. Now that I reflect on that, I realize what a powerful impact that has had on me. My family has been in this country since it was mapped out as Mexico. I have been raised with mostly American culture. With that in mind, I may not know how important our Pledge of Allegiance might be to an immigrant.

The original version of the Pledge of Allegiance used the term “...to my flag and The Republic for which it stands...” In 1923, “to my flag” was changed to “the flag of The United States of America” in order to include immigrants and not exclude their devotion to their country of origin.

This was an important step in a time that the term “equality” wasn’t used in The Pledge, as to not include blacks and women who were not considered equal when The Pledge was originally written.

The Knights of Columbus is a Catholic organization which supported the motion to add “Under God” to The Pledge in 1954. As a newly baptized Presbyterian, President Eisenhower supported the cause and signed into law.

Of course modifications were met with opposition. In 1940, protesters contended that being required to Pledge Allegiance to anything is a violation of The First Amendment. They did not believe that anyone should be required to Pledge to anything. After the inclusion of the term “under God” was enacted, it was believed that a violation of freedom of religion was made onto Americans. However, as American recovered from World War II “under God” was seen as a differentiating point between America and communists countries which do not allow freedom of religion.

So what does it take to unite a country? On September 11, 2001 at 8:46 am eastern standard time, we found out what that meant. No matter how detached we as a people had become from our government, we came together as people in patriotic unity. Our world stopped, and for that time we forgot about ourselves as individuals and remembered each other as a whole.

My first memory of feeling like something happened to our country was on January 28, 1986 when the Space Shuttle Challenger blew up. For the first time, I felt like I was part of something greater than my little world. Unfortunately, we have only come together in tragedy. Recently, terrorist actions have threatened our way of life. Whereas other countries have been in conflict for centuries.

Having been discovered in 1492, did it really take 400 years to adapt into a civilized nation? Did we need a doctrine to enforce our loyalty to our country? Without an official document devoting loyalty to its nation, The Roman Empire fell. While several similarities lie within our customs, perhaps what makes us stronger is a unified devotion to our country.
As citizens of The United States of America, not subjects of the Roman Empire, we have an obligation to appreciate our freedom to object to the Pledge of Allegiance. Whether we as a people come together to show this appreciation, or we protest in unison to the words that we were founded on, the Pledge of Allegiance still stands for something. And that is the right to choose what to believe in.

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