

The Secular Coalition for America and its Massachusetts state chapter opposes government-coerced recitation of the religious Pledge of Allegiance. Our community is relegated to second-class citizenship when patriotic exercises require an affirmation of supernatural belief.

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The mission of the Secular Coalition for Massachusetts, a state chapter of the Secular Coalition for America, is to increase visibility of and respect for nontheistic viewpoints, and to strengthen the secular character of our government as the best guarantee of freedom for all Americans.

<http://ma.secular.org>

The Boston Coalition of Reason is made up of numerous organizations in central and eastern Mass. that share a worldview grounded in reason over superstition, and scientific truth over revealed truth. We work to provide a larger sense of community and to be a central clearinghouse for information on all like minded groups in the area. We are part of the United Coalition of Reason, a national organization that works to raise the visibility of local groups in the community of reason.

<http://bostoncor.org>

FROM THE SECULAR COALITION FOR MASSACHUSETTS
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The godless gather Sept 4th to support AHA Pledge case

Boston, MA - Local activists and secular group leaders have made plans to rally next Wednesday, September 4th, in front of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. Because on that day, oral arguments will be heard in *Doe v. Acton-Boxborough*.

This watershed case, brought by the American Humanist Association and an atheist family in Acton with three school-age children, was filed to challenge the “under God” phrase in the Pledge of Allegiance. But it isn’t your usual pledge case. This one is different because it doesn’t appeal to the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution but to the equal protection guarantee in the Massachusetts constitution. As such, this could result in a game-changing decision. The Humanist attorney, David Niose of Lunenburg, is arguing that, because the “under God” language excludes nontheists, it violates their right to equal protection under law.

Supporters of the separation of church and state expect that a favorable outcome in the appeal will open up a whole new avenue for addressing government sponsorship of religion in general.

According to Zachary Bos (co-chair of the Secular Coalition of Massachusetts; State Director for American Atheists), that would mean “not a victory for atheism per se, but for secularism—the principle that the privileges and protections of our government should be afforded equally to all citizens, and not just those who hold to a particular religious creed. The religiously-motivated lobbyists that worked successfully to insert the ‘under God’ clause into the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1950s, were promoting a sectarian position that the government has no business endorsing.”

The rally in support of the American Humanist Association lawsuit will be held in front of the steps of the John Adams Courthouse at Government Center. Supporters will gather at 8:00 and disperse at 10:30 AM. Oral arguments will be heard inside the courthouse from 9:00 to 9:45 AM.

Among those expected to join the rally are Maggie Ardiente and Roy Speckhardt of the American Humanist Association, Greg Epstein of the Humanist Chaplaincy at Harvard, Teresa MacBain, a former member of the clergy and newly appointed coordinator for the Humanist Community Project; Ellery Schempp, co-chair of the Secular Coalition for Massachusetts, and David Niose, attorney for the plaintiff and President of the Secular Coalition for America.

This rally is independently sponsored by the Secular Coalition for Massachusetts and the Boston Coalition of Reason. BostonCoR member organizations include the Boston Atheists (the largest secular membership organization in New England); the Secular Coalition for Massachusetts; the Greater Worcester Humanists; the Greater Boston Humanists; the Ethical Society of Boston; the Humanists of Boston University; and the Humanist Chaplaincy at Harvard.

See also: <https://www.facebook.com/events/702376219788450/>