



# DAN FLYNN

★ DISTRICT 2 ★

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## Representative Flynn Stands Up for American Rights and the U.S. Constitution

**Austin, TX** - In an effort to sensitize students to the Mexican culture and Heritage students during an intermediate Spanish class at Achieve Early College High School in McAllen, Texas, a Texas public high school located about 10 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border, were made to stand up and recite the Mexican national anthem and Mexican pledge of allegiance as part of a Spanish class assignment. There is a growing outrage over this incident where students were forced to pledge allegiance to a foreign country, yet amazingly the school district maintains there was nothing wrong with the lesson.

To add additional outrage, students wearing red, white and green, Colors of the Mexican Flag, had to memorize the Mexican anthem and pledge and stand up and recite them individually in front of the class. That didn't go over well with sophomore Brenda Brinsdon. The 15-year-old sat down and refused to participate. She also caught it all on video (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YC3xejOJyrl>):

"I just thought it was out of hand, I didn't think it was right," she told a reporter. "Reciting pledges to Mexico and being loyal to it has nothing to do with learning Spanish." Adding to the offense was that the presentations in teacher Reyna Santos's class took place during "Freedom Week," the week after the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11 terror attacks, and on U.S. Constitution Day — the same day as Mexico's Independence Day. "Why are we doing their independence when it's Freedom Week and it's also Constitution Day?" Brinsdon said. When reviewing these comments Representative Flynn said, "This whole incident is particularly disturbing especially since I spent a good deal of effort trying to get a simple bill passed that would have allowed the US Constitution to be taught for one semester in the senior year and it did not get even a hearing and yet we allow this incident to occur and some think it no big deal??"

Brinsdon said she complained to the school principal, Yvette Cavazo, who told her it was part of the curriculum and that she should participate. Her father, William, also got involved, calling the school district superintendent to complain. When Brenda made clear she would not stand up and recite the pledge, she was given an alternative assignment: an essay on the history of the Mexican revolution.

Meanwhile, other students continued with their presentations, which took place over the course of several days and many are wondering how many were pressured into this as 'part of the curriculum'. When Brinsdon talked to Santos — a first-year

teacher at Achieve — about her new assignment, the teacher told her she grew up in Mexico. "She told me that she loved Mexico," Brinsdon said.

School district spokesman Mark May defended the presentations, saying it's a state requirement for upper-level language classes to teach about foreign culture. According to the state's Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills standards, students are expected to gain "knowledge and understanding" of other cultures and use the language to demonstrate understanding of different practices and perspectives. There are no specific requirements about learning to recite pledges or anthems. Representative Flynn upon learning about these comments said, "If Mr. May actually thinks this is true I will guarantee him we can file legislation that will change his way of thinking. He is misled, inaccurate, and defending 'political correctness' versus the American rights of American Children."

May, providing comments that have enraged local parents and state officials said it's up to the teacher how to interpret and teach the standards. "It wasn't required to pledge loyalty and renounce the U.S., they were simply spreading the culture of another country," May told The Blaze. "In my mind it's no different from memorizing a poem or memorizing a passage from Shakespeare." William Brinsdon took issue with that notion, saying if that's the case it cheapens the pledge. "You're taking their allegiance and their oath from Mexico and cheapening it just as a grade or words don't mean anything," he said.

May reiterated that the lesson was all done within the context of meeting the state requirements, and that the school did its duty providing Brenda with an alternative assignment when she objected. "The students came away with a better understanding of the culture, heritage and customs of a neighboring country where Spanish is the primary language," he said. William Brinsdon is still having a hard time fathoming the idea of reciting foreign pledges and anthems in a U.S. public school in the first place.

"Our kids don't even know the [American] national anthem and here we are...teaching them to memorize and perform the national anthem for Mexico," he said. "I just think it's so backwards." Representative Flynn in reviewing this outrageous episode said, "We are in America and at a time where full studies of the US Constitution and the history of the United States need to be concentrated upon, we waste children's time trying to make them think that Mexican Allegiance has any relevance in their current lives."

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