

## Protesting for Change A2+



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**In U.S. schools, classrooms have an American flag. Every day students face the flag and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. But some students are refusing this patriotic gesture. They want to protest about injustice.**

The Pledge of Allegiance says, "I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands. One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Students and teachers generally stand up for the pledge, and place their right hand on their heart.

Mari Oliver and India Landry, 17, are at high schools in Houston, Texas. They refuse to recite the pledge because, they say, the justice system is unfair to African Americans. Oliver says, "I sit because I don't believe we live in a country where there is justice and freedom for all."

African-Americans represent 12 per cent of the U.S. population, but 40% of prisoners. And 31% people killed by the police are African-American.

## Help

**gesture** (n) a symbolic action

**pledge allegiance** (exp) promise respect and fidelity

**unfair** (adj) not just, unjust







Colin Kaepernick, centre, kneeled during the national anthem, to protest about injustice for African Americans.

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## American Football

Stars of the National Football League started making similar protests in 2016. American football is the most popular sport in the country and many players are African American. Matches start with the national anthem. Players normally stand for the anthem. Colin Kaepernick of the San Francisco 49<sup>ers</sup> refused to stand. He kneeled to protest about police brutality to African Americans.

Other players joined his protest. Professional NFL players but also high-school and university teams.

Kaepernick's protest attracted lots of attention but caused him lots of problems: his contract wasn't renewed. His career is finished.

In 2018, human-rights charity Amnesty International gave Kaepernick its annual Ambassador of Conscience Award for his "exceptional courage".

### Help

**attract** (v) cause to receive

**renew** (v) here, his contract finished and he didn't get a new one

## The Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge appeared in a magazine for children in 1892. A religious minister, Francis Bellamy, wrote the Pledge to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christopher Columbus "discovering" America in 1492.

Soon, schools started asking students to recite the Pledge every day.

## The National Anthem

The U.S.A.'s national anthem is "The Star-Spangled Banner".

Congress officially adopted it in 1931.

The anthem is based on a poem about the national flag.

