

## Examining the Oath

### *I (name) do solemnly swear (or affirm):*

Signifies a public statement of commitment. You are accepting responsibility for your actions. (Integrity First > Accountability)

### *That I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States:*

You are not swearing to support the President, the Country, the flag or a particular service, but rather the Constitution which symbolizes all of these things. (Service Before Self > Loyalty)

### *Against all enemies, foreign and domestic:*

We must always be prepared for current and future wartime operations. (Service Before Self > Duty)

*That I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same:* Civilians pledge allegiance to the nation, not a military service or organization. (Service Before Self > Duty)

### *That I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion:*

Your word is your bond! Without integrity the moral pillar of our core values is lost. (Integrity First > Honesty)

### *And that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office upon which I am*

*about to enter:* Promising to give it your all. (Excellence In All We Do > Mission)

*So help me God (optional):* Signifies truth and commitment to what you have sworn to in the oath. It is a call to a higher being or divine agency to assist with ensuring your own integrity and honest.

## The Oath of Office

"I, *(state your full name)*, do solemnly swear *(or affirm)* that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well; and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter. So help me God (optional)."



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## Oath of Office



*United States Air Force*  
*Civil Servants*

A career of commitment, loyalty,  
and teamwork.



**U.S. AIR FORCE**

## Purpose

All Civil Servants take an Oath upon entering service.

We challenge you to take information contained in this pamphlet to educate and reiterate to others the importance and significance of swearing to support and defend the United States Constitution.

When taking the oath civil servants swear to bear truth, faith, and allegiance to the United States and must understand the significance and how it relates to the Air Force Core Values and the mission of *fly, fight and win*.

Just as enlisted and officers periodically restate their oath of service, so should Air Force Civil Servants. Each time a civilian earns a service pin they should recite their Oath of Service as a symbolic and renewed commitment to defend our nation.

*We are all American Airmen, faithful to a proud heritage and tradition of honor.*



## History of the Civilian Oath of Office

Federal civil servants take an oath of office their first day on the job. The oath underscores that working for the Federal government requires a unique level of public service and dedication. The Constitution establishes our system of government and defines the role for Federal employees - "to establish Justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty."

The history of the Oath for Federal employees can be traced to the Constitution, where Article II includes the specific oath the President takes - to "preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States." Article VI requires an oath by all other government officials from all three branches, the military, and the States. It simply states that they "shall be bound by oath or affirmation to support the Constitution." The first law passed by the first Congress implemented Article VI by setting out this simple oath in law: "I do solemnly swear or affirm (as the case may be) that I will support the Constitution of the United States."

The wording we use today as Executive Branch employees is now set out in chapter 33 of title 5, United States Code. The wording dates to the Civil War in what was called the Ironclad Test Oath. Starting in 1862, Congress required a two-part oath. The first part, referred to as a "background check," affirmed that you were not supporting and had not supported the Confederacy. The second part addressed future performance, that is, what you would swear to do in the future. It established a clear, publicly sworn accountability. In 1873, Congress dropped the first part of the Ironclad Test Oath, and in 1884 adopted the wording we use today.

Our oath is more than a formality that adds flair to a ceremony. It provides the foundation of our service.

