



NATIONAL FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE®

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CHUCK CANTERBURY
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

6 February 2017

The Honorable Stephen A. Womack
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Womack,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the members of the Fraternal Order of Police to advise you of our strong support of H.J. Res. 61, which would amend the Constitution to give Congress the power to prohibit the physical desecration of our nation's flag.

Attempts by Congress to protect the flag statutorily have failed to withstand judicial review. The Supreme Court has, in two narrow 5-4 decisions, overturned statutes prohibiting the physical desecration of the flag. Amending the Constitution is the only way to return to the American people the right to protect their flag.

Flag burning is not free speech; it is an act of vandalism--a hate crime, pure and simple. What is the difference in the political statement made by a vandal torching the American flag and a terrorist who makes his political statement by blowing up a government building? Quite simply, there is no difference. The American people recognize that, and Congress ought to recognize it by passing this amendment.

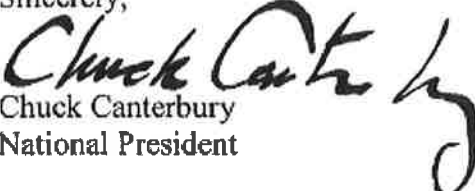
When we bury a hero, a brother or sister from the ranks of our military or our police departments, a flag is draped over the coffin. It is folded solemnly and presented to the surviving members of the family in remembrance of the one who gave his or her life. Whether a soldier fighting a foreign enemy on a foreign shore, or a police officer killed in the line of duty--the sacrifice of each is symbolized by the flag. To desecrate this symbol is to dishonor that sacrifice. To use freedom or liberty as a shield to commit a crime is no more than base cynicism and a very real misunderstanding of the American concept of liberty.

I salute you for your sponsorship of House Joint Resolution 61, and pledge to work with you to see that the Congress adopts this amendment to protect our flag from those who would dishonor our nation and its heroes.

— BUILDING ON A PROUD TRADITION —

If we can be of any further assistance to you in moving this bill forward, please do not hesitate to contact me or Jim Pasco, Senior Advisor to the National President, in my Washington office.

Sincerely,


Chuck Canterbury
National President