

Former Captain Jeremy Broussard (United States Army)

June 16, 2005

RE: Flag Desecration Constitutional Amendment

Dear Representative,

I am honored by this chance to share my views on the proposed constitutional amendment to ban "desecration" of the flag of the United States. As a combat veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom and a former Captain in the U.S. Army, I urge you to oppose this proposed amendment to the Constitution.

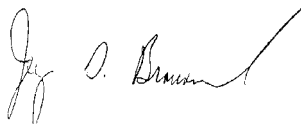
I joined the Army as a commissioned officer in 1999. In the spring of 2003, my artillery unit was among the first to enter Iraq. After major fighting ceased, my unit remained in southern Iraq to provide much-needed humanitarian support to Iraqi civilians in the cities of Karbala, Najaf, and surrounding areas. I am proud of my service in defense of my country and the people of Iraq.

During the fighting in Iraq, I saw friends of mine die in battle. Each of us suffered and sacrificed to provide freedom to the Iraqi people. With this in mind, I am profoundly disturbed by the apparent willingness of Congress to sacrifice our own freedoms here at home by amending the First Amendment for the first time ever. When the coalition forces entered Iraq, it was to topple a brutal and repressive dictatorship, one that did not hesitate to jail and torture its own citizens who protested against it. By amending the Constitution to ban a form of expression, Congress dishonors the legacy of servicemembers who fought and died in defense of freedom.

I am angered by the thought of those who might burn the U.S. flag in protest, but I defend their right to do so. Although the flag is a powerful symbol, it is not the reason that I or my fellow soldiers fought. We fought for liberty, and we fought to stay alive. To attempt to protect this piece of cloth, special as it is, at the expense of the Bill of Rights is a grave mistake.

I just finished my first year of law school at Howard University, where I completed a required course in Constitutional Law. This course confirmed what I already knew to be true: the American way of life, our liberties and freedoms, are based upon this nation's Constitution. Amending the Constitution to undermine the fundamental right to free speech will do lasting harm. I urge Congress to oppose this proposed amendment, and instead to fight for the unfilled needs of current soldiers, returning veterans, and the families of those who lost their lives in battle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeremy A. Broussard". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Former Captain Jeremy Broussard (United States Army)