

Constitution. President Bush has proposed this amendment that I just read to you and it has been introduced into the Congress. If it passes and is ratified by at least 38 states, it will become part of the U.S. Constitution. A lot of people, including some attorneys, are puzzled by the court's reasoning. There was a poll taken in Nebraska and 74 percent disagreed with this U.S. Supreme Court ruling and in the...the national polls show that two out of three disapproved of this. It seems that flag burning is more than free speech. It's an action that we ought to be able to prohibit. Most people recognize that anyone has a right to criticize his or her government, but burning a flag goes beyond that. Our flag is a national symbol of that freedom. Our flag is a banner of liberty and sometimes a symbol of sacrifice. When someone burns that flag or spits on it or tramples it, then he is desecrating not just the flag but also the memory of those men and women that gave their supreme sacrifice for the freedom of our country. There are all kinds of curbs on free speech rights. It's against the law to yell "fire" in a theater and this is because of the safety hazard to the public. We are prohibited from desecrating other national symbols such as parks and public memorials, but getting back to that freedom of speech, it's just like you can't yell "hijacked" on a plane. If you do, you'll be picked up immediately and escorted off the plane. We cannot deface a mailbox in our country. If we do, we'll be arrested. In fact, we cannot even burn leaves in our backyards unless we get a permit and a lot of times they will not even allow you to get a permit to burn these. But if you do, you can be arrested. But the Supreme Court doesn't see it that way. It becomes incumbent on elected leaders to find a way to enact laws which will protect our flag. I feel that the only way left is to amend the U.S. Constitution. A lot of people say we shouldn't put things like this into our Constitution, but I feel that the Constitution belongs to the people. It is the people's document and when they demand a simple change, they deserve to be heard. In his farewell address, George Washington, the first president of our country said, and I quote, "The basis of our political system is the right of the people to make and alter their Constitution of government." LR 10 calls on Congress to pass an amendment and then submit the amendment that they passed to the states for ratification. Eight states, eight states passed a resolution such as this last year already. Fifteen states passed a similar resolution so far this year, so that makes a total of 23. Twenty-five other states have legislation pending this year. I'm working with the state American Legion on this resolution