

Protect Old Glory

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It has been a decade since a shocking 5-4 U.S. Supreme Court ruling invalidated century-old federal and state laws banning the physical desecration of the Stars and Stripes. The only way the American people can reclaim the right to protect our flag from being burned, torn, trampled or spat upon before our very eyes is through a constitutional amendment, slated to be voted on by both houses of Congress before Memorial Day.

Polls over the past decade consistently shown over 80 percent of the American people support this flag protection amendment. It has passed the U.S. House before, and will again. In spite of Clinton administration opposition, all that is needed are just two more U.S. senators voting “yes” — and we hope Sens. Max Cleland, D-GA., and Ernest Hollings, D-SC, are flooded with calls for support.

American Legion national commander Butch Miller rips into opponents: “A piece of cloth — of no value? Is that their position? God help our nation if it is their final testament that the flag that may drape the coffins of some of our sons and daughters in uniform is just a piece of cloth in their eyes.”

This newspaper takes a strong stand for the First Amendment. And we understand that, presently, flag burning has been judicially deemed to be “protected speech.” But we agree with U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who says this nation can have a “narrow, special amendment to protect a special flag from desecration.”

Why not pass Senate Joint Resolution 14, and then see if it gets the required 38 states needed for ratification? Let the people, through their elected state legislatures, speak.