

# Hands off

## Congress' attempts to legislate morality infringe on First Amendment

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Who needed that pesky little First Amendment thing anyway?

All it's ever done for us as a country is give us a great big pain in the neck, right? So, let's ditch it. Let's let the majority rule and the minority be trampled upon without remorse.

Or not.

As of late, Congress has been striving to bring "morals" back into politics. Morals indeed, because, as of yet, none of them have taken stands on blackmail, deep pocket politicking, smear campaigns, adultery, drug use or anything else vaguely of political substance. This isn't about cleaning up Washington and making sure that our politicians stand for what we stand for. Ha!

No, folks, the big stands so far have been on those two issues that everyone has been screaming out "Help us, Congress!" for so long. That's right: the Ten Commandments and flag desecration.

Er, what?

It is now permissible for schools to post the Ten Commandments, in an attempt to curb school violence. Oh, this is sharp. I mean, this is really brilliant. Let's see now, what was on the walls of my schools growing up? Hmm ... no sir, I can't recall. But beyond the fact that it isn't going to do any good for anyone, it is going to do some bad.

See, I understand where Congress came up with the idea - there's a Commandment that reads "Thou shalt not kill" - but let me illuminate a couple of things to you. There are nine other Commandments, one of which reads "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Another talks about taking the Lord's name in vain.

Now, maybe I'm not the brightest fish in the pond, but I do recall that church and state are supposed to be separate. You can't force students to say or hear the Lord's Prayer before school. The Supreme Court ruled against that, and a lot of other things like that.

School is a state funded institution. You gotta go. So, whether you like it or not, you'd have to see the Ten Commandments if they were posted. That's where it crosses the line.

You can put them up at home, if you like. Or in your car. A student could even attach a small poster of them to his or her own desk. What you can't do, however, is let teachers post them. We don't allow teachers to post everything they want to on the walls, because that isn't their job.

There are any number of other things I can think of that could be posted that people would object to. Should we allow articles of Jewish faith, Muslim faith, hell, even Satanism faith to be posted? I subscribe to the all or none theory on religion in schools - either you let

them all in, regardless of anything else, or you close 'em all out.

My own philosophy says keep 'em all out. Religion doesn't belong in school, because it's not something everyone can agree upon. This isn't to say that kids aren't allowed to be religious in schools, but you can't force it on them. You can't put things up where they have to see, hold assemblies where they have to attend (or be shunned by the rest of the school) and you can't force them to spout religious rhetoric that they may or may not agree with.

Congress says that our kids aren't getting enough morals instruction, so they want the schools to take over.

This isn't the place where morals belong, folks. Morals are for the home. Learning is for the schools. In schools, we're supposed to learn information and theory, then make our own judgments, with the aid and assistance of our parents.

But, since today's parents are just too goddamn lazy, they want the schools to do it for them. They figure, "Hell, we're the majority, so we'll decide what all the kids see and make the teachers teach it."

The idea of doing things your way because you're the majority isn't a new concept. Technically, it's supposed to be a keystone to democracy.

Of course, so is personal freedom. You're supposed to have solid rights that can't be taken away, no matter what the majority decides. Otherwise, we could take away rights from anyone we wanted to - short people, incredible tall people, overweight people - you name a group, they could be cut out of something.

Ah, mob rule at its finest.

Gang mentality is also attempting to push America into making flag desecration illegal.

Now, think about this for a second. Laws are passed which make flag desecration illegal, then the Supreme Court smacks the laws down as unconstitutional. So what

does Congress attempt to do? Pass a constitutional amendment.

To Congress I ask: don't you people have anything real to do with your time?

The Supreme Court decided that flag burning falls under my constitutionally protected First Amendment rights for freedom of speech.

And Congress wants me to "voluntarily" give up these rights. They want me to subscribe to a limiting of my freedom of speech.

The hell with that.

If I want to protest the actions of my country, I have the right to burn the flag to express my anger. It's called symbolic speech.

If Congress passes this Amendment, you can count on me being out on the steps of a government building, Zippo lighter in one hand, American flag in the other.

Congress claims it's disrespectful of me to do this, but rebellion and dissent has always been disrespectful. That's the nature of it. You're not supposed to be civil when you're angry. When our government pisses us off, we have the right to express that anger.

The other claim Congress makes is that people died for our flag. I hate to break it to them, but no one ever died for an American flag. People have died for freedom, or fighting for America, but no one has ever died over a physical flag.

A flag is a symbol. Just because the symbol is destroyed doesn't mean any of the concepts behind it are.

If I burn a flag, I'm not slighting any of the millions of veterans. I'm protesting something. Destroying a flag doesn't erase all the achievements of those soldiers, just like burning a Nazi flag can't erase all the atrocities that Hitler committed.

Do you want Congress to take away your freedom of speech? Do you think that kids should have religion force fed onto them instead of education? Will Arlington Cemetery

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cause an earthquake, sinking the east coast into the Atlantic Ocean because a few people burn a symbol?

The right to freedom of speech comes with the price of hearing what

everyone else has to say, and that means everyone.

Me, I think things were fine until Congress started monkeying around, and I'll burn a flag to that.

**hey man! get a haircut.**

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