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John LaFalce, Nick Lampson, Tom Lantos, Sander Levin, John Lewis, William Lipinski, Zoe Lofgren, Nita Lowey, Bill Luther, Carolyn Maloney, Thomas Manton, Edward Markey, Matthew Martinez, Carolyn McCarthy, Karen McCarthy, Jim McDermott, James P. McGovern, Cynthia McKinney, Martin Meehan, Juanita Millender-McDonald, George Miller, David Minge, Patsy Mink, John Joseph Moakley, Jim Moran, Jerrold Nadler, Richard Neal, Eleanor Holmes Norton, James Oberstar, David Obey, John Olver, Major Owens, Frank Pallone, Bill Pascrell, Jr., Ed Pastor, Donald Payne, Nancy Pelosi, Charles Rangel, Lynn Rivers, Steven Rothman, Lucille Roybal-Allard, Bobby L. Rush, Loretta Sanchez, Bernard Sanders, Charles Schumer, Jose Serrano, David Skaggs, Louise Slaughter, Deborah Stabenow, Fortney "Pete" Stark, Louis Stokes, Ted Strickland, Bart Stupak, John Tierney, Esteban Torres, Edolphus Towns, Nydia Velázquez, Bruce Vento, Maxine Waters, Melvin Watt, Henry Waxman, Robert Wexler, Bob Wise, Lynn Woolsey, Albert Wynn, Sidney Yates.

225TH ANNIVERSARY OF ALL SAINTS' EPISCOPAL CHURCH

HON. ROBERT A. BORSKI

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 30, 1997

Mr. BORSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the 225th anniversary of All Saints' Episcopal Church. All Saints' Church was founded in 1772, in the rural area of Torresdale, now known as Northeast Philadelphia. Dr. William Smith, the church's first rector, cooperated with previously established Swedish missionaries to organize All Saints'.

As we honor the anniversary of All Saints' Church, it also serves as a reminder of the history of our Nation. The congregation of All Saints' has been a part of that great history. This parish has seen and experienced all of the great and troubled moments that have made this Nation what it is today. The members of this church have been participants in the very events that have shaped this country.

This past weekend the city of Philadelphia was the forum for a national summit on volunteerism, and the central role that it plays in the success of our nation. All Saints' is an example of the virtues discussed at this summit, and should be commended for its efforts. The early precedent of cooperation and involve-

ment set in place by its founders, has continued throughout the history of the church. A spirit of warmth and service emanates from this group of parishioners. All Saints' is an example of community goodwill, and has served as a unifying force for members of the district.

Under the direction of Dr. Chinn, the current pastor, the church has developed programs to help those less fortunate. Members of the congregation prepare and deliver meals for the elderly and families who are struggling in their current situations. In times of crisis and need, help is always forthcoming in family oriented programs of service and volunteerism. Through the donation of hymnals and vestments, All Saints' also serves those churches within the religious community who are less fortunate.

All Saints' Episcopal Church should be a reminder to us that history and good will isn't just what we read in textbooks or hear about in other areas. It is evident in our communities and neighborhoods. It is living and breathing right in our midst. All Saints' has a place in the great past of the city of Philadelphia, and it will continue to shape and mold both the neighborhood and the people who reside there.

On their 225th anniversary, I would like to congratulate All Saints' Episcopal Church on a long standing ideal of service and community centered action. I wish them luck in their future endeavors, and thank them for 225 years of unwavering commitment to the people of Philadelphia.

DRIVE TO RATIFY FLAG PROTECTION AMENDMENT CONTINUES

HON. GERALD B.H. SOLOMON

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 30, 1997

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, earlier today, I testified before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on the Constitution in support of House Joint Resolution 54, the flag protection amendment. As of today, this joint resolution has 274 cosponsors, two dozen more than we had in the 104th Congress when we overwhelmingly approved similar proposal by a vote of 312 to 120. It is my fervent hope and expectation that this amendment will come to the House floor for a vote before Flag Day, June 14. I urge any supporters who have not yet cosponsored the joint resolution, to do so now, and I respectfully request that my remarks from the subcommittee hearing be printed here.

Thank you very much Chairman Canady and panel members for inviting me here today to testify on the Flag Protection Amendment.

I also want to commend Mr. Canady and the over 270 other cosponsors of this joint resolution. And let me add this: with such good people on my side, I cannot wait to represent this amendment, first on the House floor, and then to the states for ratification.

But first, with your indulgence Mr. Chairman, I would like to tell you why I think this amendment is so important.

It is important for many reasons. First of all, the overwhelming majority of Americans support this amendment.

In Congress, it has won the support of members from both sides of the aisle, in both chambers. The presence of my good friend Bill Lipinski next to me today is proof of that.

And finally, and this may be even more important, I am joined by constitutional scholars in saying this amendment actually strengthens our First Amendment freedoms.

I emphasize that, Mr. Chairman because some Americans have raised questions about our fundamental freedoms of speech and expression. I have the same concerns they do, and they deserve some straight answers.

Now, I am not going to spend too much time paying tribute to the flag. I am sure it's safe to say that respect for the flag is something everyone in this room shares.

Americans have always felt that way about their flag, and that's why there is so much precedent for what we're doing here today.

Some critics might say that the Supreme Court has spoken on this matter, and that's that! Well, not quite.

In the history of the Supreme Court, few members guarded the First Amendment so jealously as Justice Hugo Black and Chief Justice Earl Warren. Both stated forcefully that there is no First Amendment problem with banning flag desecration.

And they also believed that nothing in the Constitution prevented individual states from enacting laws to prohibit the physical desecration of the American flag!

What we seek today is not an amendment to ban flag desecration but an amendment to allow Congress to make that decision.

Some of you may point out that this amendment differs from the one I offered in the last Congress. You are right. In the 104th Congress, the House overwhelmingly voted 312 to 120 to allow Congress and the States to prohibit the physical desecration of the American flag.

Unfortunately, that amendment fell three votes short in the Senate. While I support enabling both Congress and the States to prohibit flag desecration, a few members expressed their concern that giving the States this power could lead to 50 very diverse laws on the topic. While I do not have those concerns myself, I worked with this amendment's cosponsors and the members of the Citizens Flag Alliance to rewrite the Amendment to address those concerns and only empower Congress to prohibit flag desecration.

It is entirely appropriate to draft the amendment in this way. It is after all, the American flag—our nation's flag—that we are discussing. The federal government should be the one to make laws protecting it. I know this will relieve many of those who raised this concern in the past.

And physical desecration does not only include flag burning, it also includes the outrageous acts of people defecating on the flag—that's right, actually treating our flag like it was nothing more than toilet paper. You will hear a witness testify more about that later.

One vote—I repeat, one vote—in a 5 to 4 decision turned the Court's back on the tradition of Justice Black and Chief Justice Warren, and all of a sudden flag-burning became "expression" protected by the First Amendment. But the very analysis of that slim majority did not support that conclusion.

The Court said that the government cannot prohibit the expression of any idea just because society finds that idea offensive or disagreeable.

But the Texas state law overturned in that 1989 decision did not suppress any idea at all.

Look at it this way. What idea does burning a flag communicate? What idea does defecating on the flag communicate? What thought does it express? Obviously, none!

Under that Texas statute, and others like it, no one was required to worship the flag or was prevented from speaking about the flag, or even prevented from insulting the flag verbally. It only said they could not physically desecrate the flag.