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To Burn or Not to Burn

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The First Amendment allows people to speak and write freely, practice any religion, and assemble peacefully. Flag desecration, burning being one of many ways to desecrate the flag, is a form of protest. Flag burning, at least in the U.S., is not considered to be unconstitutional. According to the rulings in the U.S. Supreme Court rulings in Texas v. Johnson and U.S. v. Eichman, flag burning is covered under "symbolic speech" – a legal term in the U.S. used to describe actions that purposefully and discernibly convey a particular message or statement to those viewing it. “Symbolic speech” is covered by the right to free speech in the First Amendment.

Even though it is covered, many people do not think it should not be. Burning of the flag is often seen as "un-American" and many people find this act to be greatly offensive. Some even go as far as to demand sending people to jail for burning the flag. This would put the United States on the same level as a number of other countries. Several countries including: Austria, China, and Denmark have ruled that only foreign nations' flags are illegal to burn. The Denmark flag can be burned, as well as the German flag and many other flags.

Looking into flag burning, it seems to be constitutional. As long as it is done in such a way that does not harm anyone else, there should be no issues with it as a form of protest. Investigating the opponents of flag burning, one may find a myriad of different reasons for supporting a ban. Some people think that the flag symbolizes the American people, and think of it as a sacred symbol. With this logic, it is easy to understand why some people believe that burning a flag goes too far and support a ban on this particular form of protest.

Whichever side you may be on, it is important to remember that flag burning is merely that: a flag. It is a symbol, one that has a meaning dear to the heart of any patriot, but it is just that: a symbol. The act of flag burning is also symbolic; it is used to get attention in a dramatic and visual fashion. Regardless of your opinion, remember in this (and all things) to be respectful; consider the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of others before you act or speak.
Hope 4 Africa @ ISU has been an awesome experience for me during my time at ISU! It has allowed me to get involved and be a leader, have a lot of fun, and most importantly help others. What’s cool about our club is that we are students helping other students. All the money we raise helps improve our partner schools so they can provide a quality education to all of their students. I would highly suggest you come to a club meeting, attend an event, or check out our website to learn more about our club and the Hope 4 Africa organization as a whole.

-Bennett Coffman, Club President

WHAT WE DO

Hope 4 Africa at ISU is a student branch of the main organization Hope 4 Africa, Inc. We raise money for schools in Kenya by organizing events and fundraisers in order to improve their education. We believe that as young as we are we can still make a difference in this world by giving other young people the tools they need to achieve their dreams.

WHERE WE FOCUS

Hope 4 Africa raises money for the Ogilgei Primary School, the Kirobon Primary School, and Boror High School in Kenya. The four programs we focus on are:

Hope 4 Students:
Providing Bright and needy students access to quality education

H2O 4 Hope:
Improving the quality of education by providing access to clean water

Music 4 Hope:
Giving the opportunity to learn how to play various instruments

Electricity 4 Hope:
Installing access to electricity

Find us on Facebook, and get involved today!
Or for more information, visit us at www.hope4africa.info