

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Mr. Speaker, Americans cherish their flag and all it represents. It is fitting and proper to do everything in our power to honor this symbol of America.

This proposed constitutional amendment is the wrong way to go about doing so. The authors of the Constitution and the Bill of Rights gave us a wise and enduring framework, one which has guided this Nation for over 200 years. We should but rarely and in moments of absolute necessity alter their work. This amendment does not meet that test. However repugnant burning or otherwise desecrating the flag is to us individually, flag desecration is not a problem in American society today. In the last 10 years, I cannot remember a single instance where anyone in Oregon walked up to me and raised this as an issue. To elevate a moronic but anachronistic and virtually extinct form of protest to the level of constitutionally defined crime, in my judgment, is likely to increase the incidence of flag desecration as people turn to burnings to gain attention for themselves. This serves the interests of absolutely no one other than the extremists who will have been handed a new tool for expressing their cause.