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July 5, 2006

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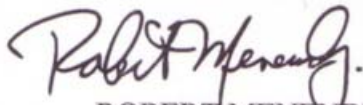
Thank you for contacting me to express your opposition to a Constitutional amendment to ban the desecration of the American flag. I appreciate hearing your views and the opportunity to respond to you on this important issue.

My parents came to this country from Cuba to secure a better life for themselves and for their children. To them, and to me, the flag serves as a tangible reminder of the freedom they lost in their homeland and found in America. The flag of the United States of America is unique among all the symbols of this great nation. No other symbol of our country is so universally recognized or beloved by its people. I believe that it is a sacred symbol and one that transcends politics and personality.

While I am a strong supporter of the first amendment rights to freedom of speech and expression, there are several restrictions and limits on speech already. We have laws against slander, libel, pornography and inflammatory statements posing a threat to public safety, just to name a few. It is for these reasons that I voted in favor of an amendment to protect our flag. As you may know, the amendment failed to receive the necessary two-thirds majority to amend the Constitution.

Though we may disagree on this issue, I want to thank you for sharing your thoughts with me and allowing me the opportunity to share my thoughts with you. Please do not hesitate to contact me in the future about this or any other matter of concern and visit my Website (<http://menendez.senate.gov>) to learn more about how I am standing up for New Jersey families.

Sincerely,



ROBERT MENENDEZ  
United States Senator

RM:ks