

News from Senator

BOB DOLE



(R - Kansas) SH 141 Hart Building, Washington, D.C. 20510-1601

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 1989

CONTACT: WALT RIKER
(202) 224-5358

DOLE: HIGH COURT TILTS "WRONG" ON FLAG DECISION

WASHINGTON -- SENATE REPUBLICAN LEADER BOB DOLE (R-KS.) ISSUED THIS STATEMENT REGARDING THE SUPREME COURT'S DECISION TO LIMIT THE POWER OF STATES TO OUTLAW THE DESECRATION OR DESTRUCTION OF THE AMERICAN FLAG.

THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF TALK LATELY ABOUT HOW THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES IS TILTING "RIGHT." WELL, TODAY IT DIDN'T TILT RIGHT -- IT TILTED "WRONG."

IT IS DEAD WRONG WHEN IT COMES TO THE DESECRATION OF OUR COUNTRY'S FLAG. FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS A CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEE THAT AMERICA HOLDS DEAR; AND WE HAVE DEFENDED THAT RIGHT FOR TWO CENTURIES IN THIS VERY BUILDING.

BUT WE DRAW THE LINE WHEN IT COMES TO OUR FLAG. IN MY VIEW, THE CONSTITUTION, FOR WHICH MILLIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN HAVE GIVEN THEIR LIVES TO DEFEND, HOLDS NO GUARANTEE FOR DESECRATION; NO BASIC RIGHT TO DEFACE; AND CERTAINLY NO PROTECTION FOR THOSE WHO WOULD DISGRACE OUR FLAG IN THE NAME OF ART.

IT WAS A 5-4, VERY FRAGILE, MAJORITY. IT COULD HAVE JUST AS WELL GONE THE OTHER WAY. AND NO COURT, NOT EVEN THE SUPREME COURT, HAS STRUCK DOWN ANY FLAG TRAMPLING STATUTE.

SENATOR DOLE IS THE CO-AUTHOR OF A BILL - WHICH HAS SINCE BECOME THE LAW OF THE LAND - THAT MAKES IT A FEDERAL CRIME TO "TRAMPLE" THE FLAG. THE AMENDMENT CAME IN RESPONSE TO A SO-CALLED ART EXHIBIT IN CHICAGO THAT ENCOURAGED MUSEUM-GOERS TO STEP ON OLD GLORY. DOLE CALLED THE EXHIBIT "DESPICABLE".