

108TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 2162

To provide for protection of the flag of the United States.

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IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MAY 20, 2003

Mr. BOUCHER (for himself, Mr. HOLDEN, Mr. SCHIFF, and Mr. FROST) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

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## A BILL

To provide for protection of the flag of the United States.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Flag Protection Act  
5 of 2003”.

6 **SEC. 2. PROTECTION OF THE FLAG OF THE UNITED**  
7 **STATES.**

8       (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 700 of title 18, United  
9 States Code, is amended to read as follows:

1 **“§ 700. Protection of the flag of the United States**

2       “(a) ACTIONS PROMOTING VIOLENCE.—Any person  
3 who destroys or damages a flag of the United States with  
4 intent to provoke imminent violence or a breach of the  
5 peace, and in circumstances reasonably likely to produce  
6 imminent violence or a breach of the peace, shall be fined  
7 under this title or imprisoned not more than one year, or  
8 both.

9       “(b) DAMAGING A FLAG BELONGING TO THE  
10 UNITED STATES.—Any person who steals or knowingly  
11 converts to his or her use, or to the use of another, a flag  
12 of the United States belonging to the United States and  
13 intentionally destroys or damages that flag shall be fined  
14 under this title or imprisoned not more than two years,  
15 or both.

16       “(c) DAMAGING A FLAG OF ANOTHER ON FEDERAL  
17 LAND.—Any person who, within any lands reserved for  
18 the use of the United States, or under the exclusive or  
19 concurrent jurisdiction thereof, steals or knowingly con-  
20 verts to his or her use, or to the use of another, a flag  
21 of the United States belonging to another person and in-  
22 tentiously destroys or damages that flag shall be fined  
23 under this title or imprisoned not more than two years,  
24 or both.

25       “(d) CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this section shall  
26 be construed as indicating an intent on the part of Con-

1 gress to deprive any State, territory, possession, or the  
2 Commonwealth of Puerto Rico of jurisdiction over any of-  
3 fense over which it would have jurisdiction in the absence  
4 of this section.

5 “(e) DEFINITION.—As used in this section, the term  
6 ‘flag of the United States’ means any flag of the United  
7 States, or any part thereof, made of any substance, of any  
8 size, in a form that is commonly displayed as a flag and  
9 would be taken to be a flag by the reasonable observer.”.

10 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections  
11 for chapter 33 of title 18, United States Code, is amended  
12 by striking out the item relating to section 700 and insert-  
13 ing in lieu thereof the following new item:

“700. Protection of the flag of the United States.”.

14 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

15 It is the sense of the Congress that the States should  
16 enact prohibitions similar to the provisions of this Act in  
17 an order to provide the maximum protection to the flag  
18 of the United States.

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