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The American Legion National Commander commends Iowa City flag defenders

INDIANAPOLIS (January 27, 2017) American Legion National Commander Charles E. Schmidt praised the patriotism of a young FedEx driver and another man who confronted flag-burning protesters Thursday in Iowa City. The driver, Matt Uhrin of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, used a fire extinguisher to douse smoldering flags and angrily rescued at least one from demonstrators at a pedestrian mall in downtown Iowa City.

“We have been told that a flag-protection amendment to the Constitution is unnecessary because no one burns flags anymore,” Schmidt said Friday. “In recent weeks, we’ve all seen that’s far from accurate. Mr. Uhrin and another young man who stepped in to stop the flag burners in Iowa City clearly understand that deliberate destruction of our nation’s most profound symbol of unity is both a violation of logic and an insult to all who have served our country in uniform. As leader of the nation’s largest organization of wartime veterans, I commend them for stepping up in defense of our nation’s colors.”

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 in 1989 that flag burning is a legal act of free speech protected under the First Amendment. The American Legion, the Citizens Flag Alliance and the majority of the U.S. public disagree and continue to work with Congress to pass a constitutional amendment giving it the power to prohibit physical desecration of the U.S. flag.

With a current membership of 2.2 million wartime veterans, The American Legion, www.legion.org, was founded in 1919 on the four pillars of a strong national security, veterans affairs, Americanism, and youth programs. Legionnaires work for the betterment of their communities through more than 13,000 posts across the nation.

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