

FOIA MARKER

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Folder Title:
William Detweiler-Telephone Call

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Memorandum for Harold Ickes

FROM STEVE HILTON

DATE: JUNE 8, 1995

SUBJECT: Telephone Call to William Detweiler, National Commander of the American Legion
Regarding the Flag amendment

COPY

As we discussed, attached for your use are materials related to the current controversy about our position on the proposed constitutional amendment to ban flag desecration. The materials include:

a request for a presidential meeting by the National Commander of the American Legion;

a press releasing in opposition to our position by AMVETS, the fourth largest Veteran Service Organization;

a list of the organization supporting the ban;

Presidential decision memos on this issue; and

a transcript from the veterans media roundtable where the President discussed his position on this issue.

As we discussed, I think we need to be forthcoming to the American Legion to ensure that they do not put the full weight of their resources in criticizing us. I am informed that some in the Legion are urging that the President be actively and publicly criticized. In fact, the National Commander is scheduled to appear on CNN's Crossfire this evening. My discussions with the National Commander have been cordial and it is my sense that he also would like to reach some accommodation stay away from inflammatory rhetoric. As we discussed, I believe that we should state that the President's position is clear, he is supportive of the Legion's goals but must disagree with its approach. However, he does not have an active role to play in this issue because the constitutional amendment must be considered and ratified by the Congress and the states. Therefore, the Administration intends on remaining as silent as possible on the issue consistent with the President's statements at the media roundtable.

FYI. Debbie Wilhite states that the Legion's outside advisors are urging the Legion to request that the White House make some public statement that we respectfully disagree with the Legion's position and that despite your dialogue with the National Commander, a meeting with the President is still a possibility.

CC ✓ Alexis Herman
Bob Jones (VA)