



It's time for the real patriots to fight back

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I volunteered and served in Vietnam three times, I am white, American and am proud to be a patriot who shows respect for our flag.

The actions of the of the NFL players are a peaceful protest to draw attention to their communities being treated unfairly and unjustly. They are kneeling down (which conveys respect and reverence) in prayer for our country during the anthem. The real problem is that it is uncomfortable to have the players pointing out that we have racial bias issues that need to be addressed.

Our service people don't volunteer to fight and sometimes die for the flag, but rather the ideas it represents. Those ideas include freedom of speech, freedom to assemble in protest, justice for all, freedom of the press, rule of law and the right to vote, which are embedded in our Constitution.

The oath that service people swear is "I, (name), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; ... so help me God."

America has been the place that a person could say what they felt and fight injustice. The people we were fighting against were the ones who crushed dissent and suppressed their population. Our country was founded because we stood up and fought against injustice and we are stronger because we have fought against injustice.

Unfortunately, a very vocal minority in our own country is now engaged in trying to crush dissent and suppress us by taking our rights away. This minority has made an unholy alliance with Vladimir Putin (the former head of the KGB), the American Nazi Party, the KKK, the Sovereign America groups and other terrorist groups to take over this country. They attack freedom of speech, the right to protest, freedom of the press, claiming this newspaper has a liberal slant and claiming the mainstream media in this country produces fake news. They undermine the rule of law, education, science and engage in voter suppression. To gain and maintain control, they engage in outrageous gerrymandering of legislative districts that are not representative of the majority of "we the people." They are now packing the courts with judges the bar association calls unqualified.

The path that America is heading down is not what I and other service people swore an oath to defend. A recent poll of 8,000 service members and veterans who are also members of the non-partisan Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America shows 62 percent of these service members and veterans think NFL players have the right to protest during a game. Another poll by the Cato

Institute shows 61 percent of Americans oppose NFL players being “fired” for not standing for the national anthem, with only 38 percent agreeing with President Trump statement.

Patriotism is defending our Constitution and our freedoms from those who seek to suppress our rights and destroy our way of life. It is time for real patriots to put their country above their political party or ideology and follow the oath our service members took to protect the rights provided for in our Constitution. Don't be misled by those who would use patriotism and nationalism to suppress us!