

Downriver Eye Doctor Flew U.S. Flag Upside Down

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LINCOLN PARK, Mich. - It's a sign of disrespect to veterans, service members and anyone who's patriotic -- an American flag flown upside down. Why would someone fly Old Glory upside down, especially during the Fourth of July holiday? It's the work of a Downriver eye doctor. He sat down with FOX 2 to explain his views and attention grabbing protest.

It certainly caught people's eyes. An American flag flying upside down in front of Dr. Thomas Byrd's office on Fort Street over the Fourth of July weekend. The eye doctor says he did it when he asked himself some questions.

"What's the state of our nation at this time? And I thought that she's in distress. So, I thought I would flip the flag in the long-standing sign of distress," said Byrd. "And by inverting the flag I would perhaps get a few people to ask themselves maybe the same question. How is the Constitution doing? How is my liberty? How is my freedom compared to a few years ago?"

Dr. Byrd says flying the flag upside down was never intended to be disrespectful. He simply wanted to get people's attention.

"A lot of people misunderstood and somehow thought I had some beef with the United States or that I... disrespected the flag or the country, and that couldn't be further from the truth," Byrd said.

The U.S. Flag code says the flag should only be flown upside down as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life and property.

"We are certainly in dire danger of property. There's a great deal of property being taken from people right now, but it's not the intent that we are in dire and immediate need that we're being overrun," said Byrd.

Dr. Byrd says he's a Conservative who respects the Constitution and he did find some of former President George W. Bush's approaches to Constitutional issues troubling. Some Conservative and Libertarian groups, such as the Cato Institute, found Bush's record sharply at odds with the text, history and structure of the Constitution. But those days did not inspire Dr. Byrd to flip the flag.

We asked Byrd who is a greater threat to the Constitution, George W. Bush or Barack Obama? He answered, "I think the Obama administration, by far."