

Capitol Monitor

Congressman J. Randy Forbes, Fourth District of Virginia

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:: The Biggest Piece of the Pie ::

I remember fondly the holidays when I was young. I remember mom, wearing her red-checkered apron, as she carefully pulled a fragrant apple pie from the oven. As the pie cooled, my siblings and I could hardly contain our excitement. But before the much-anticipated dessert, we would enjoy our annual Christmas dinner. My siblings and I sat around the table and after prayer, devoured turkey, gravy and mashed potatoes, but often glanced back into the kitchen, where the pies awaited.

Towards the end of the meal, my mother would push back her chair and disappear into the kitchen. She would bring out the apple pie, slicing it carefully. Each of us watched with eagerness, silently plotting for the fight for the biggest piece. Without fail, the argument ensued, but would only last until my mother gave us a gentle reminder – the biggest piece belonged to Dad.

The bigger lesson of the memory is this: with dishes clanging, pie awaiting and football on the television, sometimes the gratefulness we ought to feel is forgotten. In the heat of the moment, we forget to enjoy it. We instead reach selfishly for the right channel on television and worry who is going to clean up the kitchen. Too often we overlook the emotional joy of giving to others and enjoying the memories made from doing so. We too seldom express truly heartfelt thanks for those who have made sacrifices on our behalf and for the blessings in our lives and on our nation.

This week, my focus is on the importance of gratitude – for those who are so deserving: our men and women in uniform, their spouses, parents and children. These individuals deserve more gratitude than we can give. During this time of giving thanks, I encourage you to show your gratitude to those who sacrifice everything.

The Department of Defense provides a website: www.americasupportsyou.mil and the General Services Administration's site for citizens: www.firstgov.gov also suggests ways in which citizens can support the troops.

Here are some of the wonderful ways that we can remember our troops during this holiday season:

[Send a Virtual Thank You from the Defend America Website](#) – whether lengthy or brief, a note of encouragement is

ON THE HILL

[Current Floor Proceedings](#)

[Bills Coming Up This Week](#)

[Monthly Whip Calendar](#)

OFFICE LOCATIONS

307 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202.225.6365

505 Independence Pkwy, Suite 104
Chesapeake, VA 23320
757.382.0080

2903 Boulevard, Suite B
Colonial Heights, VA 23834
804.526.4969

425 H. South Main Street
Emporia, VA 23847
434.634.5575

always appreciated.

[Volunteer to Help Veterans](#) - If you want to give your time and talents to support the care of America's veterans, [click here](#) to complete a volunteer application and be contacted by a local Veterans' Affairs Voluntary Service representative.

[Volunteer for Operation USO Care Package](#) - The United Service Organizations, Inc. (USO) enlists the support of individuals around the world to support the troops through Operation USO Care Package.

Let us, instead of reaching for the biggest piece, give more of ourselves to those who deserve it the most. We thank them for choosing service over self and the great blessing that they protect – freedom.

:: Observing Flag Etiquette ::

In June of 1777, the Continental Congress established an official flag for our newly founded nation. Today, nearly 230 years later, our flag continues to stand as a symbol of freedom, valor, and hope. Constituents often ask me about the proper treatment of such an important symbol to our nation. The following questions and answers regarding the United States Flag Code will help you in following proper flag etiquette.

What is the proper of time of day to fly the flag?

It is the universal custom to display the flag only from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaffs in the open. However, when a patriotic effect is desired, the flag may be displayed 24 hours a day if properly illuminated during the hours of darkness.

Should I take the flag down during a rain storm?

The flag should not be displayed on days when the weather is inclement, except when an all-weather flag is displayed.

When should the flag be displayed?

The flag should be displayed daily and on all holidays, weather permitting, on or near the main administration buildings of all public institutions. It should also be displayed in or near every polling place on election days and in or near every schoolhouse during school days.

What is the proper way to display the flag?

The flag should never be displayed with union down, except as a signal of dire distress in instances of extreme danger to life or property. When displayed against a wall or a window, the blue field should be uppermost and to the left of the observer.

Where should my flag be mounted in relation to the front of my house?

The flag should be displayed in a position of prominence. This usually means to left or right of the front door, or at the center of the house. If you are flying two flags, however, the American flag should always be positioned to the left of the other flag as the viewer approaches the house.

Should I destroy the flag if it touches the ground?

No. The flag should never be dipped toward any person or object, nor should the flag ever touch anything beneath it. However, if your flag does touch the ground, you should immediately correct the situation and clean the flag with a mild soap solution if it has been dirtied.

My flag is really old and is ready to be retired. How should I dispose of it properly?

The Flag Code states that when the condition of a flag is no longer fitting for display that it should be disposed of in the most dignified way possible. Your local VFW chapter, the American Legion, and some Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops offer services to help you properly dispose of your flag.

For more flag etiquette tips or if you would like to purchase a flag flown over the United States Capitol, please visit my website at randyforbes.house.gov.

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