

Texas v. Johnson / Cartoon Analysis—Answer Key



Source: "Hayworth the Bear," *The Arizona Republic*, June 1995, <http://www.esquilax.com/flag/cartoons.html>.

Note: J. D. Hayworth was a Republican congressman from Arizona (1995–2007) who voted in favor of an amendment to prohibit flag burning.

Observe

1. What people and objects are shown? Make a list of what you see in the cartoon including captions.

In the cartoon, there is a bear wearing overalls and a hat that says "J. D." He has a bucket in his hands. On the ground, there are remnants of a flag with smoke coming out of it. Above the bear's head, it says, "Hayworth the Bear." The voice bubble reads, "Only you can prevent free speech."

2. Which of the items on the list from Question 1 are symbols? What does each stand for?

The bear caricature, which represents a politician, J. D. Hayworth, is an allusion to Smokey the Bear, who is the character used in advertisements for advocating the prevention of forest fires.

Reflect

3. What is happening in this image?

In the cartoon, J. D. the bear is pouring a bucket of water, onto the burning flag and is saying, "Only you can prevent free speech."

4. What significance does the dialog have?

The dialog is significant because its message is that the proposed anti-flag desecration amendment will restrict free speech. The underlining of you signifies that the reader can and should play a vital part in the proposal and ratification process.

Evaluate the Message

5. In your opinion, what is the cartoonist's message? In your opinion, how do they feel about the ruling in *Texas v. Johnson*?

The cartoonist seems to agree with the outcome of *Texas v. Johnson* and disagree with Hayworth and other politicians who have tried to pass an amendment that would prohibit the desecration of the flag. The fact that he says, "Only you can prevent free speech," indicates that he believes, as the Court does, that flag burning is a form of constitutionally protected free speech.

6. Do you agree with the point of view and message of the cartoonist? Why or why not?

Student answers will vary. Some students will argue that flag burning should be constitutionally protected, as it is a form of speech that does not threaten to cause danger to anyone. Others will argue that the flag is an important symbol that must be protected.

Question

7. What do you still wonder about?

Student answers will vary.