§ 400. Legislative findings and objectives. The American flag is the symbol of our country, of the ideals embodied in our constitution, and is the symbol of the spirit which should animate our institutions. It is the emblem of freedom in its truest and best sense, signifying government resting on the consent of governed; liberty regulated by law; the protection of the weak against the strong; and security against the exercise of arbitrary power and as such it is recognized that the flag and all it symbolizes occasions deep emotional feeling in many people. Because of the flag's significance as a symbol of our country, and the feeling our citizens have toward it, the flag should not be a vehicle for the expression of political, social or economic philosophy as some groups and individuals have tried to use it.

Therefore, the legislature hereby finds and declares that the best interests of the people of the state of New York will be served by enacting a comprehensive article setting forth rules for the display and use of the American flag on and in public buildings within the state in order to give the flag the respect it is due and to lessen the possibility that the flag could be used to express political, social or economic causes.