

Is it disrespectful for NFL players to take a knee?

On August 26, 2016, Colin Kaepernick, a San Francisco 49er protested by kneeling down during the national anthem at a football game. Soon after other football players followed and this led to a controversial debate. Is it disrespectful for NFL players to kneel down during the national anthem? The ProCon article, the First Amendment, and the Infographic justify why it is not disrespectful to take a knee. It is not disrespectful for NFL players to take a knee during the national anthem as a sign of silent protest, because of the First Amendment, oppression of black people, and racial injustices.

To begin with, it is not disrespectful because of the First Amendment. The Bill of Rights, which consists of the first ten amendments, protects our rights and freedoms. The First Amendment states, "It guarantees freedom of expression by prohibiting Congress from restricting the press or the rights of individuals to speak freely." Under the First Amendment, it is not disrespectful for football players to kneel down, because they are exercising their freedom of expression. These football players have the right to express their ideology in any way they want, without anyone interfering. Source A, the ProCon article, says, "Not standing for the national anthem is a legal form of peaceful protest, which is a First Amendment right." This is true, as the First Amendment guarantees this right. Peaceful protest is not a disrespectful manner to protest, because no one gets hurt. Others may say that U.S. army soldiers and veterans find what these football players are doing as being disrespectful, but this is not true. In the ProCon article it states, "A letter signed by 35 US veterans stated that far from disrespecting our troops, there is no finer form of appreciation for our sacrifice than for Americans to enthusiastically exercise

their freedom of speech.” If these U.S. army veterans believed that they were not being offended, but instead felt appreciated, then kneeling down during the national anthem is not disrespectful.

To add on, it is not disrespectful because of oppression of black people. It is wrong that black people face discrimination just because of their skin color. Colin Kaepernick and other football players have knelt down to raise awareness to battle this issue. The ProCon article claims that Colin Kaepernick said, ”I’m not going to stand up to show pride in the flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color...” Collin just believes for what is right, not wrong so he knelt down as a form of silent protest. America is just not following ideals, as everyone should be treated equally. The ProCon article also states, “When a person believes the United States Of America is not living up to its ideals of freedom, liberty, and justice for all, refusing to stand up for the national anthem is appropriate and justified.” Football players who kneel down are not wishing to disrespect the American flag.” Football player who kneel down are not wishing to disrespect the American flag. Instead, they believe that America needs to change, by guaranteeing freedoms, liberty, and justice to all people of color as the ProCon article stated.

Furthermore, this form of silent protest is not disrespectful because of racial injustice. People of color are being treated unfairly in the U.S. and people like Colin Kaepernick want that to change. In Document C, the Infographic, it states, “Colin Kaepernick’s decision to not stand during the national anthem as a way of protesting police killings of unarmed minorities had drawn support and scorn far beyond sports.” Minorities in the U.S. consist of people of color. It is not justifiable for police to kill unarmed people just because of their skin color. The ProCon article states, ”...there’s a lot of racial and social injustices in the world that are going on right now.” Football players are silently protesting for

this major issue and are not doing it to disrespect anyone. All they want is for racial and social injustices to be a thing of the past.

In conclusion, it is not disrespectful for NFL players to take a knee during the national anthem as a sign of silent protest. Silent protest is not disrespectful in any way if it's justifiable. Colin Kaepernick was standing up for what he believed was right. He wanted America to change for the better. He wanted everyone to be treated equally, and face no discrimination no matter what their skin color is.