



5 REASONS CENSORSHIP SHOULD OFFEND YOU!

A TURNING POINT USA PUBLICATION



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FOREWORD

Like never before, freedom of speech is being stifled on college campuses nationwide. Faculty and administrators are shutting down debate, limiting speech to designated zones, and creating “safe spaces” in the name of political correctness. This repressive movement of censorship is the antithesis of the founding principles of our great nation.

Without the ability to express ourselves freely, uninhibited by others, America would cease to be a free nation. The purpose of this booklet is to educate students on the First Amendment and explain what can happen when the government or other entities control our means of communication.

It is with great pleasure that I present to you *“5 Reasons Censorship Should Offend You.”* I hope this booklet sheds light on the importance of free speech and the need to push back against any form of censorship.

Charlie Kirk

Founder and Executive Director

Turning Point USA

INTRODUCTION

“CONGRESS SHALL MAKE NO LAW RESPECTING AN ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, OR PROHIBITING THE FREE EXERCISE THEREOF; OR ABRIDGING THE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, OR OF THE PRESS; OR THE RIGHT OF THE PEOPLE PEACEABLY TO ASSEMBLE, AND TO PETITION THE GOVERNMENT FOR A REDRESS OF GRIEVANCES.”

THE **FIRST**
AMENDMENT TO
THE **UNITED STATES**
CONSTITUTION

In the Spring of 1789, one of the greatest events in human history took place. Our founding fathers wove the Bill of Rights into the binding fabric of the United States. In 1789, our First Amendment rights were created.



The First Amendment is the blueprint for an open society and gives citizens guaranteed basic freedoms. Regardless of race, religion or creed, Americans are free to pursue their dreams. However, it's no secret that free speech is under attack.

Increasingly, college students are being censored. Today, teachers and professors all across the country are training young people to believe that censoring things we don't like or respect is moral. Turning Point USA is fighting back against leftist

professors who have the sole mission of indoctrinating their students. We will not let these professors succeed. The goal of this booklet is to empower students to have the confidence to defend their fundamental First Amendment right in classrooms and universities.

Our forefathers built our nation with the fervent desire of securing liberty that would endure. America is at a critical juncture. Equipping college students with the knowledge of censorship's negative effects is a huge step in giving our posterity an exceptional America. Listed below are Turning Point USA's "5 Reasons Censorship Should Offend You".



**THE FIRST AMENDMENT IS THE
BLUEPRINT FOR AN OPEN SOCIETY
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BASIC FREEDOMS. REGARDLESS
OF RACE, RELIGION OR CREED,
AMERICANS ARE FREE TO PURSUE
THEIR DREAMS.**

01 | WHAT IF MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. WAS CENSORED?

"OUR LIVES BEGIN TO END THE DAY WE BECOME SILENT ABOUT THINGS THAT MATTER."

MARTIN LUTHER
KING JR.

The First Amendment is the first of 10 fundamental rights the founding fathers wished all Americans to have from the inception of our country. The basis for the First Amendment was to protect American citizens from persecution of the government. At the time the Bill of Rights was written in America, people in England who chose to voice opinions or write pieces criticizing the government were not protected by free speech, and therefore were often times subject to consequences. At its core, the First Amendment allows American citizens to make up their own minds and to voice their opinions in whatever manner they so choose. On college campuses today, free speech is under attack. Students are taught that if someone says something that offends them, they are allowed to tune the other individual out. However, this is not how the founders intended free speech to work. America at its best is a collaborative environment, a country built off the dissenting opinions of a diverse group of citizens.

Students today do not realize the danger of tuning out the other side. The political philosopher Hannah Arendt once stated: "...the more people's standpoints I have present in my mind while I am pondering a given issue, and the better I can imagine how I would feel or think in their place, the stronger will be my capacity for representative thinking, and the more valid my final conclusion, my opinion." For years, disagreement and dissent have made Americans better thinkers

and communicators. By hearing the opinions of those that do not agree with us, we learn to question our own beliefs and expand our views on the world around us. This is an important part of maturing as both a citizen and as a private individual, as we navigate the difficult task of deciding what we believe is right and wrong.



To provide some historical reference, on October 10th 1963, U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy authorized a wiretapping operation on the telephones owned by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. His association with “radicals” who had spoken out against government bigotry and corruption concerning Civil Rights made him a target of the FBI.

Without the First Amendment, Martin Luther King would have been silenced and most likely imprisoned for his anti-government message.

Imagine if the FBI had been able to violate King’s freedom of speech in the same ways it disregarded his privacy. Perhaps the historic March on Washington would have been censored from the news, and the Reverend’s iconic “I Have a Dream” speech would not have been broadcasted. If the United States Constitution had not protected Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s message of equality, perhaps segregation in the South would still be commonplace.

It’s worth considering how different our society would be today had government been granted the power to censor speech which had been considered dangerous or offensive. Freedom of speech is what has fueled civil rights movements throughout our nation’s history.

Even with the First Amendment free speech has been consistently threatened by those in power since our nation’s inception. In the first decade after the ratification of the U.S. Constitution, the Federalist-controlled Congress validated

the fears of those opposed to the new constitution, on the basis that it allowed for “unchecked” power being granted to the federal government.

Despite the First Amendment’s clear wording that protects free speech, Congress passed the Alien & Sedition Acts in 1798. The Sedition Act stated a “false, scandalous, or malicious” speech or writing against the government was a crime punishable by fines or imprisonment. Aside from its blatant disregard for the First Amendment, the Sedition Act(1798) provided precedent for future efforts to suppress free speech. James Madison said of the powers granted to government in these acts as a power, “which more than any other, ought to produce universal alarm, because it is leveled against that right of freely examining public characters and measures, and of free communication among the people thereon, which has ever been justly deemed, the only effectual guardian of every other right” (Virginia Resolution, 1798). In a bold rejection of this despotism, voters ousted the Federalists from both the Presidency and Congress in the election of 1800, which is also referred to as the “Revolution of 1800.”

This was not the last time the First Amendment faced opposition from the federal government in our nation’s history. During World War I, President Woodrow Wilson sought to censor the speech of Americans who disagreed with the United States’ involvement in the war. The Espionage Act of 1917 gave the Postmaster General the authority to ban the mailing of letters, packages, and newspapers that he determined were critical of the government and its foreign policy. The Sedition Act of 1918 even made it a crime to “insult” the U.S. government or to criticize its actions abroad.

Despite these constant attacks on the First Amendment from those in power, the American people have bravely fought for free speech throughout our nation’s history. We owe them our thanks for preserving our right to speak freely in protest of our government.

02 | FREE SPEECH ZONES AND SAFE SPACES INHIBIT LEARNING

"IF FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS TAKEN AWAY, THEN DUMB AND SILENT WE MAY BE LED, LIKE SHEEP TO THE SLAUGHTER."

GEORGE
WASHINGTON



If you attend a public university, your campus may have a free speech zone, safe space, or other rules/regulations designed to restrict free speech.

Roughly 1 in 6 of America's top colleges and universities have so-called "free speech zones." That means 1 in 6 universities have taken the First Amendment and moved it to a confined space on campus.

Universities with free speech zones require that if students wish to table or hand out fliers on campus, they must be within a designated square or rectangle on campus. More often than not, these free speech zones are in secluded areas of campus that do not have much student traffic.

It's important to emphasize that on a public university's campus, free speech zones are not only counterproductive but unconstitutional. The First Amendment cannot be confined to a specific location on public taxpayer-funded property.

Very recently, students participating in Turning Point USA's Free Speech Week were threatened with arrest by the College of DuPage campus police for handing

out pamphlets. The pamphlets were written about “free speech zones” and the dangers they imposed on the free exchange of ideas and opinions on campus.

A campus police officer confronted these students, demanding they stop handing out literature and get a permit or face arrest. One of the students participating in the free speech event, Joe Enders, said: “I feel like my Constitutional rights have been violated. I believe the officer was forced by the college to do something he doesn’t believe in.”



Some students have even been threatened for simply handing out the U.S. Constitution on their campus. Specifically, students at Southern Oregon University were told by administrators they must stop handing out copies of the United States Constitution on campus, or else the Police would be called and disciplinary action would be taken. One student boldly and respectfully replied: “Thank you for coming down here and explaining to us the unconstitutional policies here on campus, but we’re not going to move.”

While most students understand the importance of respecting the First Amendment, many universities continue to restrict free speech on campus. Many of these universities claim that it is important to censor speech that is deemed “offensive” by other individuals and to create a “safe space” for students that are offended by others opinions.

WHILE THEY MAY THINK WHAT THEY’RE DOING IS CREATING A BETTER ATMOSPHERE FOR LEARNING, IN REALITY, THEY’RE DOING THE COMPLETE OPPOSITE.

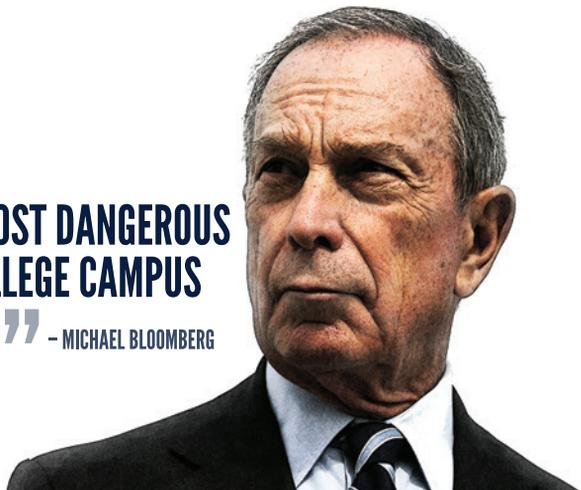
What these safe spaces actually do is stop students from being exposed to differing opinions. Instead of universities being a place of free thought and

educated future leaders, they are telling students they can run away from people that disagree with them. In the real world, people do not have the luxury to pick and choose what they are exposed to.

Recently, Jewish students attending the University of California-Berkeley tried to attend the 27th annual Students of Color Conference. The conference was intended to be a “safe space” where students of color, as well as white progressives, could address and discuss issues of structural and cultural inequality on college campuses. One of the Jewish students, Arielle Mokhtarzadeh, quickly discovered that this “safe space” was also a place where progressive students promoted anti-Semitism and attacks on Jewish students. The solution is not to create a “safe space” for some and disparage the views of others. The solution is to respect the views of all students and foster an open exchange of ideas.

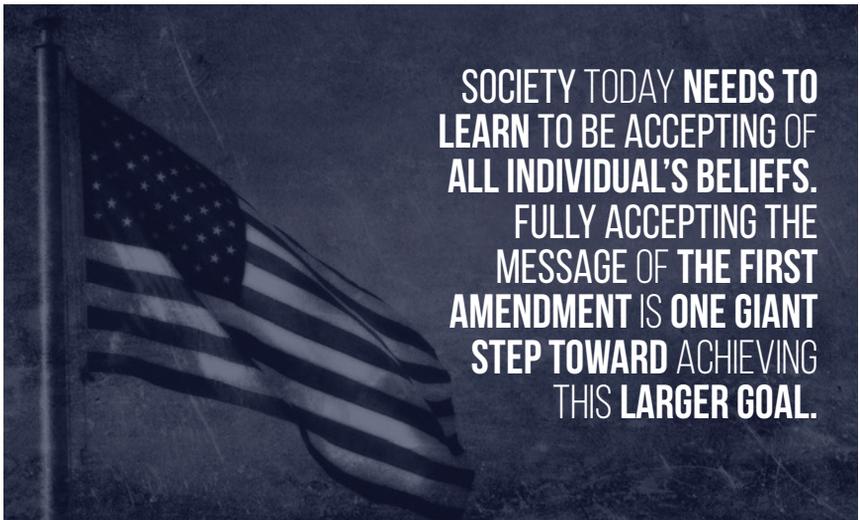
The U.S. Constitution, primarily the First Amendment, was always designed to assist learning by allowing everyone to express their opinion and views; the hallmark of learning on college campuses. Fighting back against “free” speech zones and “safe” spaces will be vital for the US to continue as a free thinking society. Hearing the perspectives of others, helps us open our minds to understanding a different point of view.

**“ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS
PLACES ON A COLLEGE CAMPUS
IS A SAFE SPACE.”** – MICHAEL BLOOMBERG



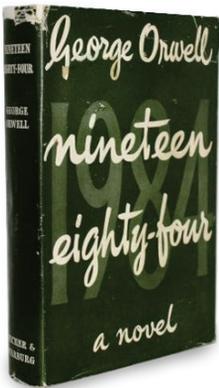
Every person is born into a particular set of circumstances that influence their personality and worldviews from the day they are born. As children, we do not get to choose who are parents are or where we live. Yet, these factors are ultimately the biggest predictors of personal beliefs. For many young Americans, going off to college is the first time a student is truly exposed to people who have lived lives dramatically different from their own. It is important for this exchange of ideas to occur to help students from all backgrounds, nationalities, and creeds to cooperate with one another, an experience students will ultimately be thrust into once they enter the job market. If college students continue to hear their own opinions repeated back at them without being exposed to the other side, society will become more and more homogenized until there are no differences between individual's opinions at all.

Instead of censoring students whose opinions differ from the majority, it is important to highlight and broadcast these opinions to the majority. Society today needs to learn to be accepting of all individual's beliefs. Fully accepting the message of the first amendment is one giant step toward achieving this larger goal. Professors, teachers, and parents must learn to trust students to make their own decisions rather than pushing an indoctrination of common societal beliefs.



03

TYRANNY BEGINS WITH CENSORSHIP



In George Orwell’s classic novel, *1984*, depicts a world in which the state determines what is “truth”. The main character, Winston Smith, dares to venture outside of the ruling party’s acceptable perspective of blind loyalty, and conformity. Winston, a worker for the state’s Ministry of Truth, spent his days altering history in favor of the party’s agenda. Organizations such as the “Thought Police” track down “thought-criminals” - those who challenge the status quo - through ever-present surveillance and psychological methods.

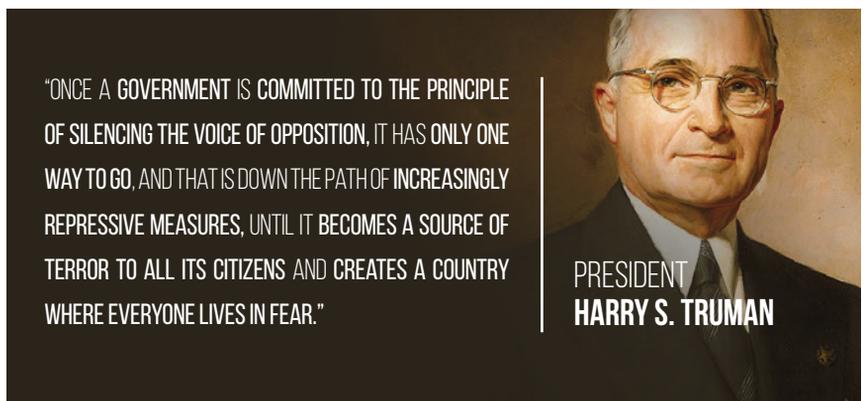
The super-state described in *1984* seems, at first glance, to be an exaggeration; its totalitarianism seems impossible to imagine happening in our world. However, this is sadly not the case. The American people are oftentimes unaware of the far-reaching presence of tyranny worldwide. In many countries around the globe, “free speech” is regarded as an alien concept rather than an unalienable right.

For instance, subversion of basic human rights in the People’s Republic of China has reached a level of excessive force not seen since the rule of the murderous 20th-century Chinese dictator, Mao Zedong. According to Amnesty International, an international human rights organization, China has the “largest recorded number of imprisoned journalists and cyber-dissidents in the world.” The free flow of

information has been prevented, as the Communist Party has erected version 2.0 of the Great Wall of China in its new “Great Firewall of China.” Chinese citizens have been censored from writing critical opinions of the Communist Party online by the Party’s 2 million-strong “internet police force.” Book publishers have been imprisoned and have gone missing for selling copies of banned books like *Alice in Wonderland*. Several of these missing book-sellers have recently appeared on Chinese state television, being forced to “confess” to crimes they didn’t commit.

A free press has historically acted as the greatest check on government corruption and misconduct, allowing the people to view the world outside of the ruling party’s perspective. If the United States did not have free speech and press, the American public would never have known about Nixon’s Watergate scandal or the government incompetence surrounding Vietnam. In many nations, young journalists Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein would have faced criminal prosecution for their efforts to expose the Nixon administration’s illegal activities. Without a free press, citizens are given no alternative to the government’s version of the truth and are unable to hold those in power accountable.

The First Amendment was put into the Constitution to protect us from the government, but more common today than gratitude, however, is an attitude of apathy. When the fundamental right of an individual to express their beliefs is taken away, tyranny is sure to follow.



04 | CENSORSHIP VIOLATES YOUR FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

It has become commonplace on college campuses for students to be censored in the name of not offending others. However, censorship is the antithesis of our First Amendment right to free expression.

The People's Republic of China is a prime example of a country that's notorious for censorship. The 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre is best remembered by the image of a man standing in front of four tanks, an image which is banned from all Chinese history books and censored all over the country. However, one clever person decided to superimpose giant rubber ducks over the tanks and that image managed to make it past Chinese censorship. The Chinese government, embarrassed by the failure of censorship reacted by banning the phrase "big yellow duck." Censorship to this degree sets a dangerous precedent we never want to have in America.



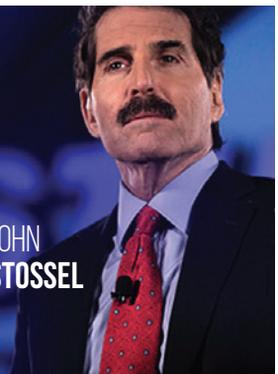
Another prominent form of censorship is the restriction of words. Some college campuses, including the University of Tennessee, are now urging incoming students and teachers to not use "he", "she", and "them", but rather gender-neutral "ze" and "xe". These college administrators are trying to censor our lives even to the extent of how we talk to each other for the sake of political correctness. If this trend continues, we're going to become a society of people who can't handle any words or actions arbitrarily deemed "offensive".

Even President Obama came out against campus censorship, saying: “If you hear something you don’t like, you should have an argument with them. But shouldn’t silence them because ‘I’m too sensitive’”.

If we slowly give up our right to express ourselves freely, what is to prevent the loss of other rights? In many cases the first step toward a stronger central government begins with limitations on free speech. These bans slowly lead to the dissolution of other laws until the government becomes an ultimate, central authority. One example of the gradual reduction of laws is Russia’s transformation into the USSR. Under Stalin and former Russian leaders, Russian citizens enjoyed no right to freedom of expression. The interests of the state were put above all other individual rights. In an Emory Law article, Tatyana Beschastna explains how, “in the early 1930s, political speech and criticism of the government were controlled, first, through artificial famine and starvation created by the Soviet government, then by placing its citizens in labor camps... After this, the period of mass repressions began with hundreds of thousands of people executed without trial. Any government criticism was reported to the Prokuratura and was immediately prosecuted by the government without a hearing.” This example shows the progression of the loss of freedoms given to Russian citizens. In the context of the United States, while the original ban limited the first amendment, the sixth amendment’s right to a fair and speedy trial was later violated as well as the eighth amendment’s cruel and unusual punishment clause.

“FREE SPEECH MATTERS. IF WE GIVE IN TO THOSE WHO WOULD SHUT US UP, THE CENSORS WILL PUSH AND PUSH UNTIL WE HAVE NO FREEDOM LEFT. IF WE’RE GOING TO SORT OUT WHICH IDEAS ARE GOOD AND WHICH ARE BAD, EVERYONE MUST BE ALLOWED TO SPEAK.”¹²

JOHN
STOSSEL



05 | FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS THE CORNERSTONE OF ANY DEMOCRACY



Free speech is the cornerstone of our democratic process, enabling the voice of the people to be heard, unencumbered by the ruling party's narrative. Free speech is characterized by the ability to interpret current events and political happenings in a way that differs

from the status quo— it challenges conventional wisdom, bringing about innovation and ingenuity in political problem-solving. Without free speech and the unregulated flow of information, the American people would be entirely unprepared to combat tyranny. It is the duty of every American generation to protect the freedoms their predecessors have passed on to them; this duty bearing more significance as time passes and complacency replaces that unique passion for liberty, which has defined America as a nation since 1776.

At its core, the concept of democracy requires nothing short of absolute free speech. Democracies across the world which lack free speech end in tyranny or a state in which only the illusion of democracy exists.

A brief look at other nations will show the stunning and irrefutable correlation between censorship and the crumbling of the democratic process. In Egypt, shortly after the 2012 election of president Mohamed Morsi, the ruling party began prosecuting journalists who published content critical of the president and his party. Within a year the new government had fallen, overtaken in a military

coup. In the People's Republic of China, a nation well known for its totalitarian censorship, democracy does not exist. The voice of the people goes unheard, replaced by an illusion of democracy. The eight officially recognized "opposition" parties serve as a rubber stamp for the Communist Party and nearly all decisions are made by high-ranking members of the Communist Party. We must learn from these nations and remain vigilant to ensure America does not go down the same path. If we allow ourselves to be censored, we will lose our voice and our ability to influence the direction of our nation.



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All questions should be directed to info@turningpointusa.net. Someone on our team will respond within 48 hours.



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