

On September 17th, 1787, the founding fathers of the United States of America signed The United States Constitution, and it was later ratified in 1788, by nine out of thirteen states, thus putting it into effect. The Constitution is regarded as the heart of the United States, and the glue that holds this country together. Within the document lies The Bill of rights, which dictates what freedoms citizens are entitled to. Many amendments are added and reevaluated, the value of each fluctuates throughout the years of The United States. However, there is a specific reason why the freedom of expression was the very first amendment. The first amendment allows individuals the freedom to say and publish whatever they please, and whether this is advocating against an injustice, expressing one's own emotions or ideas, as well as gather together and protest against issues that people may disagree with. It is also recognized as the freedom of expression and is vital to build a country that has the people's best interests at heart.

The first amendment is written as "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." These few words have had drastic effects on how our country has developed today, influenced many major movements, as well as inspired historical leaders and changed countless lives. Whether its the the battle for women's suffrage, the Civil Rights Movement, the LGBTQ+ Movment, and even now, with Black Lives Matter and Stop Asian Hate. All of these examples have been influenced by those who felt the need to change the world around them, and use their voice as a tool, a tool to change and inspire, to tear down societal

norms and build a better world for future generations. Without the freedom of expression, it would have been a much more difficult task to achieve, even though some issues are not completely resolved. Racism is still alive. Sexism is still alive.

Homophobia is still alive. It is essential that youth from later generations have the drive and examples to carry on the will of figures before them, and change the world as well.

However, for the world to be changed, there must be individuals from different backgrounds being able to voice their opinions to how they see fit. Diversity goes hand in hand with expression, expression is ability to voice oneself by loving who they want to love, speaking what language they speak, pray to anyone, and create whatever kind of art they want. Modern society needs diversity to function and to support all peoples. According to [Richard V. Reeves, the director of the Future Middle Class Initiative](#), it is easier to become financially successful when white. Statistics like these only show how systemic oppression can start, and how people who express themselves differently must speak up. Racial differences are more than how someone looks, it involves their cultural identity as well, the music individuals listen to, the language they speak, the people they interact with. So it is crucial that people of all races, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, learn to advocate for themselves and others.

Advocacy comes in many different forms whether it be music, art, protests, or even speaking out around a person's school or workplace. Musical artists utilize their talents to spread a message, rappers like Kendrick Lamar, or J.cole have wrote in their lyrics to speak out against racism. In Kendrick Lamar's song Hiiiipower, he voices "Visions of Martin Luther staring at me If I see it how he seen it, that would make my parents happy Sorry, mama, I can't turn the other cheek" In this song he addresses how

his anger and rage, prevent him from seeing the situation peacefully, after all of the racism he has seen and experienced. He was entitled to release this song and rap these lyrics, although some disagree with Lamar's views. Guidero Rivera responds to a Kendrick Lamar song 'Alright' where he acknowledges the issue of police brutality and renounces the police force, Rivera disagrees with his statement and responds "[This is why I say that hip-hop has done more damage to young African Americans than racism in recent years.](#)" This illustrates that without the freedom of expression, advocates like Kendrick Lamar would be shut down by higher status officials that disagree with his views. Murals would be torn down as seen in [Nemhauser v. city of Mount Dora](#), where the city attempts to violate a couple's first amendment rights against a mural that they were told they did not need a permit for. Governments would be stricter on protests, more so than they are as seen during [a peaceful protest in the bronx during september 2020](#). With all of these examples, they prove how a world without the freedom of expression is a world that does not have the focus of the people.

But how can the freedom of expression build a better world? Many wonder how much good the voice of the youth does in newer generations. But the reality is that young people all over the country and the world are being inspired, and are changing the world for the better. Whether it is Greta Thunberg, Malala Yousafzai, Yara Shahidi or all of the people that will be inspired to through the John F Tinker Foundation. Hope is not lost for the future. The volition of great leaders in the past will be passed on, and inspire countless more. Many are willing to fix the world, and take up the monumental task before them. The encouragement of expression creates a more empathetic,

productive society, one where all types of people are acknowledged and cared for. A society that is healthy, and truly does have the people in mind.

The United States is not a perfect country, and there is no such thing as one. But that must not distract people from the importance of the first amendment. The freedom of expression is the key to a brighter future. A world where people can express themselves however they please, through art, music, protests and most important of all, their voices. Young individuals of all backgrounds across the globe are realizing this and making their own difference. Those who speak up are those who change the world, and there are many people speaking up. The future is not certain, but as long as there are people who have the will to express themselves, then the future is in good hands.