

Freedom of Speech

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What does freedom of speech mean to you? Freedom of speech is the ability to express your opinions whether that is through conversation or through clothing. Freedom of speech is the ability to walk down the street without being judged based on how you dress or what you believe. It's the ability to choose a belief system based on what you find to be right. Freedom of speech is the base to every other freedom that's ever been fought for in the United States. Freedom of speech allows people to fight for what they believe is right. If we lived in a world without freedom of speech we would be doomed. We would live in a world without color. Without people's opinions, nothing spontaneous or special would happen. There would be one belief, one leader, or one group of people all connected through the idea they can't speak for themselves.

We lived in a world without freedom of speech before. The bill of rights was ratified on December 15th 1791. When the first 10 amendments were put in place, to protect the rights of the American people. These rights were established to ensure people of all ages received the ability to think and decide for themselves. Many people have different beliefs on freedom of speech. Some believe that freedom of speech is directly related to prosperity. Author Fa Wencong from the Pacific Legal Foundation states "Free speech is inextricably linked to prosperity. After all, prosperity comes from new ideas, and new ideas can thrive only in a society in which they are free from suppression"(Wencong.)

Other people believe that freedom of speech is directly related to hate speech. Hate speech which translates to criminal acts directed or based on a person or persons race, nationality, Religion, sexual orientation, and or gender. Hate speech has been more common in the last few years. It's been seen in the Black Lives Matter movement, Me Too movement, or the Marriage Equality movement.

However, hate speech is much different from free speech. Hate speech is used to belittle people. Whether it's because you don't agree with them or they are different from you. Hate speech is a tool used to start arguments or fights. In rare and severe cases it starts riots. On Tuesday May 26th 2020 the flood gates to years of hate speech were opened when George floyd was killed. Protests started slowly and peacefully with walks from "Cup Foods" to the Minneapolis Police Department. However peaceful protests can be turned unpredictable out of fear and anger. Stores were looted, fires were started, and the officers released tear gas, rubber bullets, and flash bangs.

Hate speech is a branch of free speech turned ugly. The first amendment was put in place not to give us new freedoms but to ensure the government didn't take away the freedoms we should have. Freedom of speech is a good thing. It allows people to be creative and express themselves. It allows the world's canvas to be many colors, not just black and white. All good things come with flaws, as Isaac Newton said "For every action there is an opposite and equal reaction." So what does freedom of speech mean to me? Freedom of speech is the right to express what I see and what I want in the world.

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