

# Importance of Freedom of Speech

Freedom of speech has been an instrumental part in the building of the United States as it has been a key symbolization of democracy in the country since being published as the first amendment in December of 1791. Freedom of speech is such an essential part of the constitution as it allows the United States to develop and improve equality. Freedom of speech allows citizens to speak out in a peaceful manner against what they believe are unlawful acts performed by the government. This amendment as a whole is a key part in why the United States is looked on in such a positive light from people across the world as an ideal democracy system giving all citizens a voice that can be heard.

One of the best attributes of the amendment is the ability for the people to have a strong influence to change laws implemented by the government. A great example in history of the impact of freedom of speech is the "I Have a Dream" speech by Martin Luther King Jr. In August of 1963, MLK led a peaceful protest along with some of the most powerful civil rights leaders at the time all to fight for African American rights. According to Zarr(2022) MLK's movement led to the federal government to take more actions towards racial equality. During the speech, MLK brought together multiple races to fight for one cause, and successfully brought a dramatic and historic change to the world just with the use of freedom of speech. Without this amendment, these changes in the US could have taken many more decades to surface, if even being passed because citizens wouldn't be able to fight for their beliefs and the rights of different races. The movement by MLK shows what the freedom of speech amendment can do for the United States as whole, it can give any person a chance to make a stand for what they believe

in. Before becoming the foundational pieces of the equality movement, MLK was a baptist minister, an ordinary job that didn't offer a voice beyond their community if any. The first amendment was made to hear the voice of citizens, to help bring equality to the United States. Freedom of speech allows an ability for change, ability for fairness, and especially the ability to be heard without criticism.

Freedom of speech allows citizens of a democracy to be able to freely express their own belief against a law or act, especially against the government. These kinds of expressions among citizens are essential for progression and change in society. Without the protection of the first amendment, other crucial laws like equality in voting would certainly not be in progress today. US history.org(2022) states that when Rosa Parks protested sitting in the back of the bus, she sparked a movement led by MLK and Ralph Albernathy against Jim Crow Laws. The Jim Crow laws were rules that separated black from whites in public, very obviously showing that whites were above blacks in the law. Freedom of speech has continued to help citizens speak out against controversial topics in this present day. According to (Wermiel 2019) freedom speech has raised awareness and promoteed national dialouge about racism, sexual harassment, gay rights, and more. This shows why the use of freedom of speech is so impactful, allowing all people of the US to be heard and speak out not only against unfair laws, but as well as the ability to help promote laws against unfair and controversial treatment.

Especially from outside countries, democracy is looked at as arguably the most successful government system in the world. Other countries like Russia, have always been under a dictatorship or monarchy where citizens in Russia may not have much of a voice or no impact in their own country's government. In the 1950's under Joseph Stalin's rule, citizens had lost their freedom according to Trueman(2022). Russia had total power of the media where citizens could only speak or read what," the state allowed them too". If anyone spoke against those rules, they would be severely punished by being sent to labor camps a majority of the time. People of Russia were basically not allowed to form an opinion of their own but instead,

had to only agree with their ruler Stalin. For the people of Russia, there was no equality for citizens in their country and there was nothing they could do about it, because they couldn't speak out against unfair and unholy rules. Examples like this in history are why America's democracy is looked on in such a positive manner, the democracy gives American citizens the choice to form their own beliefs and the ability to express their beliefs. Compared to dictatorships that limit the rights of citizens, and are given basically no power, contrast to United States citizens who have a say in the government.

Freedom of Speech is used for citizens to speak out against unlawful or unfair acts by the government. This amendment is one of the most important rights to any citizen because it allows the ability to give everyone a chance to voice an opinion, and even potentially help make a change to a law for the better. Some of America's most crucial turning points in equality came from the right of freedom of speech, like Rosa Parks boycott and MLK's march and speech, which both helped for African American rights. Freedom of speech helps bring a chance of change, an ability to be heard, and a sense of unity

## References

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