

BULLY PULPIT

Freedom of Speech

USCourts.gov explains free speech, basically in a nutshell, as, “Freedom of speech includes the right: Not to speak (specifically, the right not to salute the flag). *West Virginia Board of Education v. Barnette*, 319 U.S. 624 (1943).

Of students to wear black armbands to school to protest a war (“Students do not shed their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse gate.”). *Tinker v. Des Moines*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969).

To use certain offensive words and phrases to convey political messages. *Cohen v. California*, 403 U.S. 15 (1971).

To contribute money (under certain circumstances) to political campaigns. *Buckley v. Valeo*, 424 U.S. 1 (1976).

To advertise commercial products and professional services (with some restrictions). *Virginia Board of Pharmacy v. Virginia Consumer Council*, 425 U.S. 748 (1976); *Bates v. State Bar of Arizona*, 433 U.S. 350 (1977).

To engage in symbolic speech, (e.g., burning the flag in protest). *Texas v. Johnson*, 491 U.S. 397 (1989); *United States v. Eichman*, 496 U.S. 310 (1990).

Freedom of speech does not include the right:

To incite imminent lawless action. *Brandenburg v. Ohio*, 395 U.S. 444 (1969).

To make or distribute obscene materials. *Roth v. United States*, 354 U.S. 476 (1957).

To burn draft cards as an anti-war protest. *United States v. O'Brien*, 391 U.S. 367 (1968).

To permit students to print articles in a school newspaper over the objections of the school administration. *Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier*, 484 U.S. 260 (1988).

Of students to make an obscene speech at a school-sponsored event. *Bethel School District #43 v. Fraser*, 478 U.S. 675 (1986).

Of students to advocate illegal drug use at a school-sponsored event. *Morse v. Frederick*, ___ U.S. ___ (2007).

With that, we watched a man lose his life after a crazy decided he didn’t like what was being said on college campuses. Charlie Kirk opened liberal bastions of intolerance, hatred and single-mindedness on college campuses when he began his Turning Point USA college campus tour. Kirk’s life ended Sept. 10 debating college kids on topics relevant to today.

Sadly, many chose to celebrate Kirk’s death in terrible ways using social media; and, many paid the price of unemployment for that celebration. As an employer, I have the ability to unemployed someone if they choose to speak out in a way that is unbecoming to my business; that’s just the way it is.

Jimmy Kimmel was taken off the air for his less-than-truthful remarks concerning Kirk’s killer; but he’s back on since Disney folded to the pressure of left-leaning voices. But that does not mean that the American public has to listen to his malarkey; several affiliate stations have chosen to run news programs rather than Kimmel’s drivelt.

My thought and question remain – where is the kindness? Has American society broken down so far that people dance on the grave of a dead man?

Apparently, again, those doing the dancing didn’t see that a vast number of Americans were supporters of Charlie Kirk – whether they agreed with everything he said or not. According to nypost.com, “The memorial service for slain conservative activist Charlie Kirk drew at least 20 million viewers who tuned in on cable as well as via online streaming — generating an audience that eclipsed the massive in-person turnout in Glendale, Ariz.

“Verified figures from YouTube and X show 7.49 million views on Kirk’s own channel, 3.8 million impressions on his account on X, 2.43 million views on Fox News’ YouTube livestream and 1.26 million on the Associated Press’ YouTube feed as of Monday.

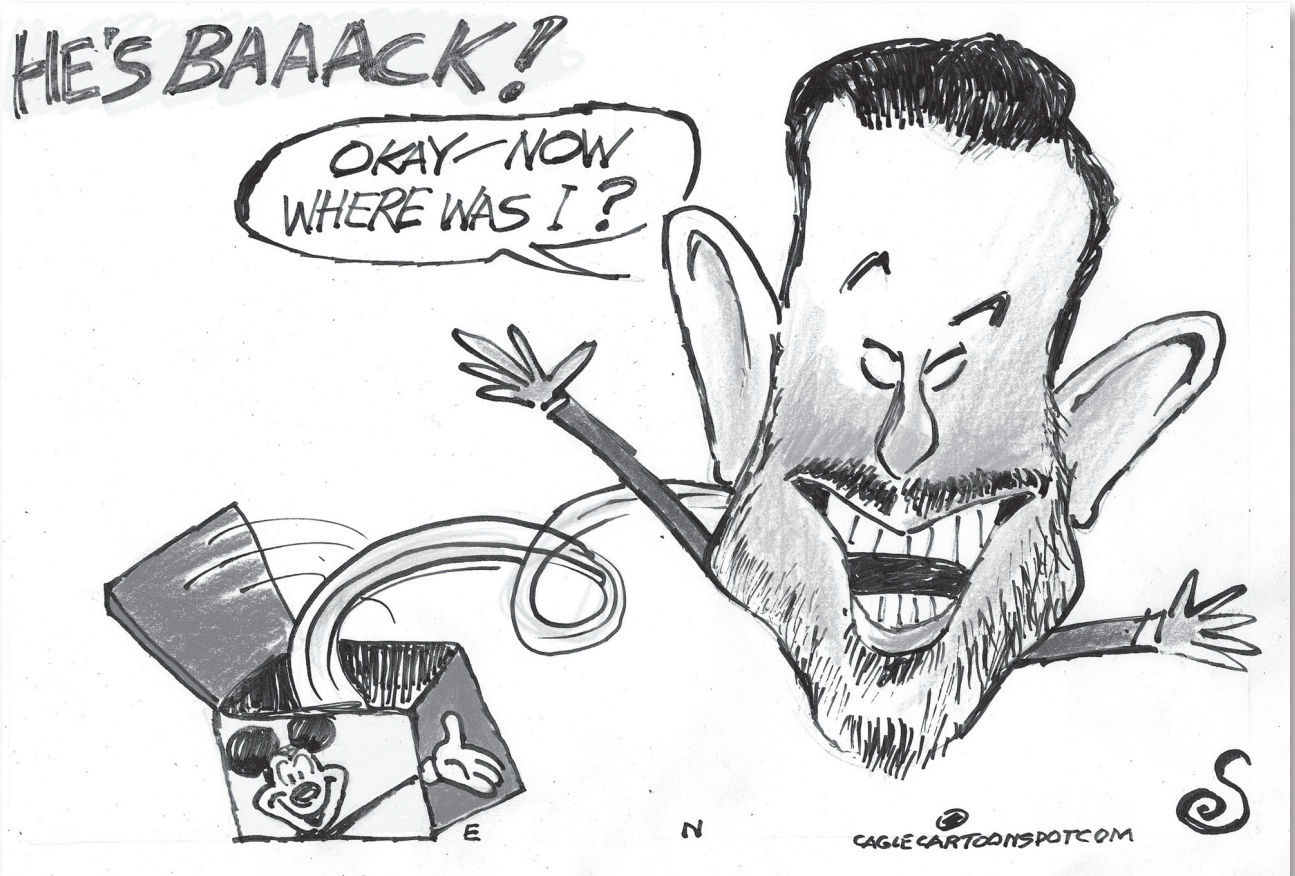
“That subtotal, tallied from just four outlets, does not include dozens of additional simulcasts on Rumble, Facebook and Twitch, nor replays that continue to climb.”

State Farm Stadium in Glendale, Ariz. filled up in hours for the memorial held Sunday with a capacity of 73,000; an adjoining arena that fit 20,000 was also full. Glenn Beck reported seeing another approximate 100,000 people turned away from the memorial when seating capacity was reached inside.

Freedom of speech allows people to voice their opinions; but human decency dictates people behave with decorum and act like decent human beings.

Americans should look at those fired, canceled, etc. for acting like oofs. Be a good person.

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Fire Department/ city worth saving

Dear Editor:

I lived in Pleasanton for 31 years and in that time I have never seen what I am seeing from the local government. I see the people stand up and say they want to save the fire department, I see the majority of the council vote to save it, then I see the mayor putting forth just enough effort to look like he isn’t trying to sink it. I have heard from the council and firefighters that everyone has tried to get a couple qualified firefighters on the department and the mayor refuses them for

clearly personal reasons as qualifications aren’t an issue. Didn’t the mayor take an oath that says he will faithfully discharge the duties of the office of Mayor of the City of Pleasanton to the best of his abilities? Is this that? How is holding personal issues against these men and risking lives not an ethics violation or something?

He has been told the fire department cannot operate like this and he still doesn’t care. The only reason could be because they plan on sinking the fire department after the election so why make it look like its functional in the meantime. The issue is that this could cost one of

the citizens their life or the lives of their family. That seems like a price the mayor is willing to pay. He has to know that is the result of a fire department that is not operating properly. Yet he refuses to allow them to do so. The fire department and council and firefighters should not have to fight every step of the way to get what they need!! This is unacceptable!

Why is he making these decisions since he doesn’t know what it takes to run a fire department? Why is the Chief not in charge of that? I see the council trying to fix that; we can only hope that passes, but judging from the behavior I have already seen in the

videos, the mayor will not let that pass, he has to be in charge so he can be the “gate keeper” to quote the council. This is more like D.C. politics than the community government we used to have.

Who are these people that have brought these nasty politics, power hungry politics, and putting politics above the “safety of the lives and property of the citizens” as said by one of the firefighters trying to get appointed? It’s sad to see that friendly city going down this road. I wish I could vote there still; it’s a city worth saving from these people.

Clara Gillette
Fort Scott

First Things First: A Free Speech Primer

Reprinted from Kansas Press This Week

BY ERIC P. ROBINSON, USC SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND MASS COMMUNICATIONS

There’s been a lot of public statements and commentary in the past few days, weeks and years about what the free speech provisions of the First Amendment mean. Some of the statements, even from those charged with enforcing the law, have been strained, incomplete or just flat-out wrong.

So, here’s a basic guide to what the courts have determined the First Amendment to mean.

The First Amendment states that “Congress shall make no law... abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press...” I will focus here only on this speech and press provision, leaving interpretation of the provisions regarding religion and those regarding peacefully assembling and petitioning the government, although they also

involve speech.

First of all—and this is going to seem like a very lawyerly point—“Congress” doesn’t just mean Congress. Under U.S. Supreme Court precedent, the First Amendment applies not only to Congress, but also applies equally to the other branches of the federal government: the executive branch (the President, his staff, cabinet and administrative agencies) and the judicial branch (the federal courts). This means that no entity of the federal government, in whichever branch of the government organization flowchart it might fall, is barred by the First Amendment from “abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press.”

The First Amendment also applies to state and local government entities. This is because of language in the Fourteenth Amendment, which provides that “No State shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the

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Rescuing Bill Belichick

BY TOM PURCELL

In our hopelessly polarized world; surely, we can agree on this: Bill Belichick needs an intervention.

If you haven’t yet heard, Bill, 73, is engaged to 24-year-old former cheerleader, beauty queen and philosophy major, Jordon Hudson.

They met four years ago on a plane when Bill began chatting with her.

She was reading a book called “Deductive Logic” and — quickly deducing he had lots of money — she chatted back.

They exchanged contact info and kept in touch, which laid the groundwork for their May-December romance — or, to be precise, their May 1-Dec. 31 romance.

At the time, Bill was still dating his longtime 60-year-old girlfriend.

When she and Bill split (privately in 2022, publicly in 2023), he wrongly concluded his next romance should be with a woman born the same year he started worrying about prostate health.

Nobody knows the details of their early relationship.

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Linn County News encourages letters to the editor. They may be mailed, emailed, faxed or hand-delivered. To be published, the letter must:

- Be hand signed.
- Include writer’s name, city and phone number as letters will be verified for authenticity.
- Be 500 words or less.
- Be received by 5 p.m. Monday to appear in that week’s edition.
- We reserve the right to print or not print reader’s contributions. No malicious, slanderous or threatening letters will be allowed.
- Letters with political content will not be accepted the week preceding an election as it does not allow time for a response.

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