



Campus Free Speech Reforms

The Problem

- 📖 The nonpartisan free-speech watchdog, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) finds that 9 out of every 10 universities it surveyed have official policies on their books that are in violation of the First Amendment.
- 📖 If our students are not free to learn, they stand little chance of learning how to be free. Both American democracy and American higher education will wither if free speech and debate are squelched.

The Opportunity

- 📖 The Texas Legislature has the opportunity to restore free speech and inquiry on all of our state's public university campuses.
- 📖 There is bipartisan support for campus free speech working its way through the Texas Legislature. The bipartisan support for campus free speech is animated by the fundamental conviction on which our democratic faith rests—that We the People, if free to investigate and debate various public policies, will choose the best policies as well as the leaders who espouse them.
- 📖 Moreover, the bipartisan support for campus free speech reflects the recognition that the First Amendment is not “political” or partisan. Instead, the First Amendment is the indispensable means to ensuring that all parties are given a fair chance to engage in politics.

Proposed Scenarios

- 📖 If HB 3395/SB 18 is passed, Texas will make drastic strides towards restoring the First Amendment on our campuses.
- 📖 If the proposed legislation fails, Texas students will continue to be deprived of the opportunity to grow intellectually and morally through hearing all sides to an argument.

The Path Forward

- 📖 Failures on the part of our universities to uphold the First Amendment on their campuses has led to state legislation around the country.
- 📖 If Texas passes SB18/HB 3395, it will become the 17th state to enact laws to uphold the First Amendment on public university campuses.
- 📖 The Supreme Court has ruled that “state colleges and universities are not enclaves immune from the sweep of the First Amendment.
- 📖 Academic freedom is a subset of the freedom of speech promised under a constitutional democracy.
- 📖 The cultivation of free minds both transcends and depends on the political freedom enshrined in our Constitution.