



## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

April 10, 2015

The Social Justice Pathway At Palo Alto High School  
Palo Alto Senior High School  
50 Embarcadero Rd  
Palo Alto, California 94301

Dear Students:

Thank you for writing to express your concerns about an individual's right to free speech. I always enjoy hearing from students like you, and I commend you for speaking out on this important subject. Please accept my sincerest apologies for the delay in my response. For security reasons, postal mail is routed to an offsite facility for testing before it is released to my office and, unfortunately, your correspondence was delayed in the process.

I recognize that you are writing as a part of Social Justice Pathway, which, as you mentioned in your letter, is a program at your high school that places importance on the principles of justice and service. It is great to hear that you all have taken an active interest in serving your communities. I understand that you all took the time to write to me after hearing about a protest conducted by Stanford students after the grand jury's decision in Ferguson, Missouri not to indict Officer Darren Wilson in the fatal shooting of Michael Brown.

As you know, the First Amendment states, "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." The First Amendment is a cornerstone of our democracy, and Americans' ability to express their opinions is critical to our national strength and wellbeing.

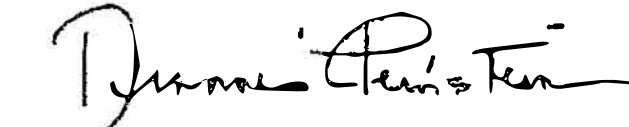
I firmly believe in the rights of all people to freedom of speech and to assemble peaceably to express their views. Non-violent political discourse encourages the expression of ideas and is an important part of our democratic system. I agree with you that police officers represent the law, and their job is to uphold the rule of law.

You stated in your letter that you would like me to instruct police officers to enact practices and policies that protect protestors from harm. Please know that, as a United States Senator, I do not supervise local police departments. Nevertheless, you do have avenues to express your concerns. I would encourage you to contact the Palo Alto Chief of Police to express your views. For your convenience, I have provided the relevant contact information below.

Chief of Police  
Palo Alto Police Department  
275 Forest Avenue  
Palo Alto, California 94301  
(650) 329-2413

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write to me. If you should have any further questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my Washington, D.C. office at (202) 224-3841, or visit my website at [www.feinstein.senate.gov](http://www.feinstein.senate.gov). I hope to hear from you all again in the future, and I wish you all the best as you continue with your studies!

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

DF:mv