

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 770

Expressing support for the First Amendment to the Constitution and its bipartisan impact regarding the protection of free speech as well as academic freedoms for all students and faculty.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 3, 2021

Mr. MURPHY of North Carolina (for himself, Mrs. CAMMACK, Mr. JORDAN, Mr. BOST, Ms. STEFANIK, Mrs. MILLER-MEEKS, Mr. MANN, Mr. BUDD, Mr. DAVIDSON, Ms. LETLOW, Mr. BABIN, Mr. NORMAN, Mr. STEUBE, Mr. FITZGERALD, Mr. CLINE, Mr. RESCHENTHALER, Mr. WEBER of Texas, Ms. TENNEY, Mr. LAMALFA, Mr. MCCLINTOCK, Mr. MOORE of Alabama, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Mr. OWENS, Mr. BISHOP of North Carolina, and Mr. C. SCOTT FRANKLIN of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Expressing support for the First Amendment to the Constitution and its bipartisan impact regarding the protection of free speech as well as academic freedoms for all students and faculty.

Whereas the Constitution is the law of the land;

Whereas the First Amendment to the Constitution specifies that 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;

Whereas restrictions on speech at elementary and secondary schools, and public institutions of higher education amount to suppression and student censorship, which is a violation of the Constitution;

Whereas Supreme Court Justice Robert Jackson wrote in 1943 about the role of schools in our society, stating that they ought not to strangle the free mind at its source nor teach youth to discount important principles of our Government as mere platitudes;

Whereas supporting and enforcing these protections is a bipartisan issue that benefits students of any political or personal ideology, and balancing and protecting the rights of different parties help make a campus more conducive to learning, which also promotes the best academic experience and outcomes for each and every student at any learning institution;

Whereas the American Civil Liberties Union supports the idea that the right to free speech is not just about the law but also a vital component of civic education;

Whereas the Bipartisan Policy Center believes a free and open society depends upon the free and open exchanges of ideas and perspectives;

Whereas teachers, college administrators, and boards of trustees are often too timid to push back against the culture of intolerance on their campuses, and high percentages of students are afraid to express their views on controversial issues;

Whereas a 2019 Young American Foundation poll found that 46 percent of polled students stated they have stopped

themselves from sharing their ideas or opinions in the classroom, while half of students attributed their self-censorship to being judged by their classmates;

Whereas the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) reports that just under a third of students say that their college administration makes it either very or extremely clear that they will protect free speech on campus;

Whereas FIRE also found, in a 2021 survey, that 83 percent of students report self-censoring their viewpoints at least some of the time in the classroom and 21 percent report censoring their viewpoints often;

Whereas free speech and academic freedom are both clearly under attack today by institutions, creating a toxic environment for students across the entire political spectrum;

Whereas the American Council of Trustees and Alumni President Michael Poliakoff stated in 2021 that higher education is in crisis, and at some institutions, the erosion of freedom of speech and the degradation of the curriculum puts them into a moral freefall;

Whereas a 2020 Gallup-Knight Foundation study revealed that 81 percent of students support a campus environment where students are exposed to all types of speech, even if they may find it offensive;

Whereas echoing the late Congressman John Lewis, who stated that without freedom of speech and the right to dissent, important evolutions like the civil rights movement would have been a bird without wings, and this freedom pertains to all issues critical to the future of our democracy and academics; and

Whereas the newly founded and nonpartisan Alumni Free Speech Alliance fights to protect the rights of faculty and students across the ideological spectrum from suppressive institutions: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives ex-
2 presses support for the First Amendment to the Constitu-
3 tion and its bipartisan impact regarding the protection of
4 free speech as well as academic freedoms for all students
5 and faculty.

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