

# “FIRE Announces the Stand Up for Speech Litigation Project”

## Video Transcript

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Greg:

Good afternoon, everyone. Thanks for coming out today. We have a very big and special announcement today. And I’m posting this actually right now in Huffington Post and on Ricochet, too, so you can check out my statement there. And I’ll begin. Twenty-five years ago, we had reason to think that the temporary insanity of campus speech codes had come to an end. In 1989, the first modern generation of speech codes was defeated in Federal court in a case called *Doe v. Michigan*. And from that decision until today, campus speech codes have consistently lost in court as clear violations in the First Amendment that are incompatible with higher education.

The codes which famously banned everything from inconsiderate jokes to inappropriately directed laughter — that’s a real code — and limited free speech activities to tiny, out of the way, “free speech zones” fared no better in the court of public opinion, often being obscured by those both on the political left and right. But amazingly, all of these years later, campus speech codes are still alive and thriving. These restrictions on free expression somehow remain the rule rather than the exception, even though speech codes have been successfully challenged in more than two dozen lawsuits over the years.

Yet, according to our estimates, 58 percent, nearly three-fifths, of public universities still maintain speech codes that are unambiguously unconstitutional. Our organization, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, also known as FIRE, was founded in 1999 — we’re celebrating our 15th anniversary this year — to defend basic rights on America’s college campuses, chief among them freedom of speech and academic freedom. For 15 years, FIRE’s main approach has been to persuade universities through letters and press releases to uphold the free speech rights of their students and faculty.

We have challenged universities to defend in public what they do to their students and faculty in private. We have had a positive impact on the free speech rights of literally millions of students. But over time, it has become clear that this is just not enough. Many universities maintain their speech codes not just because they may actually believe in a mythical “right not to be offended” on campus, but because they believe that there is no “down side”. They say to themselves, “Well, maybe I can point toward speech codes if we get sued for harassment, discrimination, or personal injury. And it’s not very likely that we’ll have to go to court for violating students’ free speech rights. So let’s keep our speech codes.”

Universities have also relied on the fact that their financial and legal advantages are overwhelming when compared to an 18-year old student coming onto campus and taking on a six-figure debt to do it. In this amoral calculus, free speech loses. FIRE has, therefore, decided that we need to change the incentive structure to one that favors freedom of speech on college campuses rather than suppression of descent. Today, we are here to announce that we have begun a massive litigation effort with the law firm of Davis Wright Tremaine and attorneys Bob Corn-Revere, Ronald London, and Lisa Zycherman.

Our goal is nothing less than ending the generation long scandal of campus codes once and for all. We quietly began this project in the fall of 2003 with the lawsuit at Modesto Junior College in California, a college that told a student he could not hand out copies of the U.S. Constitution on Constitution Day. Following that astonishing example, we actually found another case at University of Hawaii at Hilo in which two students were again told that they could not approach students to hand out Constitutions. The Modesto Junior College lawsuit settled for \$50,000.00. The Hilo case is ongoing.

And that was just the beginning. This very morning, we have filed suit against four more public universities that maintain flatly unconstitutional codes. Those colleges are — lucky colleges — Ohio University, Iowa State University, Chicago State University, and Citrus College in California. I’m proud to be joined today by Bob Corn-Revere who will be providing more detail about these lawsuits, and you will shortly hear from some of the student-plaintiffs themselves. It’s worth noting that one college we filed against today, Citrus College in California, had already agreed to abolish its absurd free speech zone after a 2003 lawsuit and

settlement — that was a lawsuit that we coordinated, along with ACLU attorney Carol Sobel, and they've apparently ignored it.

Universities' stubborn refusal to relinquish their speech codes must not be tolerated. The half dozen lawsuits we have already filed are just the beginning. More suits are already in the pipeline. And we're confident that after this announcement, more students and faculty members will come forward to challenge speech codes in court. We also hope that the ever-increasing army of college and university attorneys and risk managers will see this as an opportunity to do the right thing and convince their clients to dump their speech codes once and for all.

But if not, we may see those colleges in court. Freedom of speech, like all liberties, only survives when people like these brave students are willing to stand up for their rights, to stand up for speech. Thank you.

Bob:

Hi. I'm Bob Corn-Revere with Davis Wright Tremaine. Thanks for coming out today. I just wanted to say that we at Davis Wright are honored to be asked to participate in the important work of helping to safeguard First Amendment and due process rights on American college campuses as part of FIRE's Stand Up for Speech Litigation Project. It's also a privilege to represent the courageous young women and men and faculty members who have chosen not to follow the path of least resistance, but instead to challenge the exercise of arbitrary and illegal authority.

These are acts of civic virtue and the benefits will derive not just to these students and their campuses, but to students nationwide. Now, as Greg said, these are clear violations of our most basic right to freedom of expression on college campuses. And for that reason, it's doubly ironic. First, these violations are ironic because college campuses have been uniquely recognized as the quintessential marketplace of ideas upon which the concept of the First Amendment is based.

Second, these examples are ironic because the law in this area is so well established. The abridgments of basic rights that occurred in these cases violate Supreme Court commands that go back decades and even some that have been reaffirmed unanimously by the Supreme Court as recently as last week. Consider the four cases we filed today. First, at Iowa State University, the school manipulated its trademark policy to deny approval for certain T-

shirt designs proposed by the ISU chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML).

ISU has hid behind the pre-textual claim that the shirts somehow promoted illegal drugs or suggested that the message was being endorsed by the university when it is abundantly clear that the shirts merely state the position of ISU normal, the organization, on the political issue of drug policy reform. Students Paul Gerlich and Erin Furleigh are challenging this clear example of political censorship. At Citrus College, Vincenzo Sinapi-Riddle was threatened with being kicked off campus for speaking to another student outside the school's tiny and ironically named "Free Speech Zone" about his petition drive protesting the activities of the NSA.

This happened despite the fact that protections for free speech in the public forum were articulated by the Supreme Court as long as 80 years ago and the fact that Citrus College already was forced to eliminate its free speech zone in a lawsuit settlement in 2003. And just last week, the Supreme Court unanimously reminded us that this type of face-to-face communication is the essence of First Amendment expression, and no form of speech is entitled to greater constitutional protection.

At Ohio University, Isaac Smith and Students Defending Students, the group for which he serves as associate director, were ordered to stop wearing shirts with a mildly risqué slogan under a vague school policy prohibiting demeaning or degrading speech. Officials of the school took this action despite the fact that the Supreme Court held 43 years ago that the First Amendment protects clothing, even those with crude political slogans, and that was the case involving a jacket urging, well, let's just say an anatomically improbable act involving the selective service system. We've come a long way, baby.

At Chicago State University, administration is going to great lengths to silence faculty members Phillip Beverly and Robert Bionaz for their blog CSU Faculty Voice, which provides critical commentary on mismanagement at the university. Among other tactics, the school has adopted a broad and poorly defined cyber bullying policy as a tool of censorship. These efforts fly in the face of principles reaffirmed by the Supreme Court again unanimously last week that speech by teachers intending to reveal corruption

and the misuse of public funds lies at the heart of the First Amendment.

Now, these four cases were just a selected few, but they represent the kinds of abuses that happen on America's college campuses on a daily basis. The Stand Up for Speech campaign will begin with these four cases and then move on to others as necessary until we reinforce the message first articulated by the Supreme Court more than four decades ago that state colleges and universities are not enclaves immune from the sweep of the First Amendment. Finally, let me just introduce the team of lawyers at Davis Wright Tremaine's Washington, D.C. office who will be working on this campaign. I'm working with Ronnie London. Ronnie, please stand.

And Lisa Zycherman, Lisa. They are two long time colleagues who are veterans of numerous free speech battles and who I'm privileged to work with on these cases as well. Ronnie, Lisa, and I will collaborate with other lawyers in Davis Wright Tremaine offices in different parts of the country as well as with local counsel from other law firms in making sure that the constitutional rights of our clients are vindicated. Thank you.

Isaac:

Hello. My name is Isaac Smith. I am a senior at Ohio University, and I am the associate director of Students Defending Students. When a high ranking administrator at my school told me that she didn't want to see me wearing "that shirt" again, it seemed like an odd request. I told her that it was my impression that the content of the shirts had been approved and that, regardless, we had paid for them with our money. This is the shirt. This is what is objectionable. They are a little inappropriate. But that's the point. They're funny. They're attention-grabbing. The T-shirts advertise a student organization in which I participate, Students Defending Students.

What we do is we help students navigate the community standards process at Ohio University. And we're dramatically underused. We wanted a way to advertise that would get the word out. And comedy works. But that comedy wasn't well received by the administration. Another administrator approached us at SDS and told us that we shouldn't be wearing these shirts. Both conversations were thinly veiled mandates to get us to stop wearing them. And you know what? It worked. Our director expressed the discomfort that was felt by the administrators, and

we stopped wearing the T-shirts at official events and anywhere at all. They wound up at the bottom of the drawer.

After a while, I realized this wasn't the first time that student speech had been silenced on campus. I started paying attention to what the university does and what its administrators say. And I realized that we live in a climate that's very unfriendly for expressing a contrary opinion. Most people don't know about the specific section of the code of conduct that punishes unpopular speech. But they don't have to. Unpopular speech at Ohio University is discouraged at every turn. So I decided to act. I'm tired of seeing my university work so hard to discourage people from speaking. Their attempt to presumably create a friendlier campus is doing just the opposite.

The directives undoubtedly changed the way that we act and the way that we present ourselves at SDS. We don't wear the shirts anymore. Even talking about them around the administrators is taboo. That needs to change. And now is the perfect time. I am firm in my choice to move forward to change things at my school, but I know that there are hundreds of other schools with speech policies just as restrictive as the one at mine and where students may be hesitant to stand up for their rights. You've got to speak up, and you've got to speak out. Schools need to know that being open to different viewpoints is exactly what college is for.

Start having frank conversations with your administration. Work with your student government and other students. Raise awareness about why censorship is bad. And remember that the law is on your side.

Paul: Hi. My name is Paul Gerlich. I'm the current president of NORML ISU. And this is one of our approved T-shirt designs.

Erin: My name is Erin Furleigh. I'm the current vice president of Normal ISU, and this is one of our once-approved and then rejected designs.

Paul: So first, we really wanted to convey that we tried to go through every possible internal means before choosing to do this. Legal action is not what we wanted to do. And we're not lawyers. We're students. I'm an engineering student and a finance student. She's genetics. She's pre-med. We're not comfortable with this kind of thing. This is not what we wanted to do at all. But here we are.

And we love Iowa State. We love being involved with all of the organizations and opportunities that they offer. I was in the government student body for a while. She's an honors student. And there are many other things that we involve ourselves with.

But that's what leaves us really disappointed is because we were actively involved with campus, and yet, our voices were still silenced. And our ability to work towards something, however controversial it might be to the university, is still unfairly diminished. And so NORML ISU is an activist organization for marijuana law reform. But our mission has never included encouraging the use of drugs or substances of any kind. However, our university has treated us as if our mission pertains directly to its use.

Erin: As members of NORML, we've worked hard to contribute positively to our campus and community through building leadership, volunteering hundreds of hours, and providing education from verified sources for those that are interested. Despite all of these things, we've seen more resistance from the university than other clubs. And we're constantly questioned and held to a different standard due to the controversial nature of the reform that we support. The work that we do as an Iowa State University organization should allow us to use our voices in activism to achieve bigger goals together than we could individually.

But our university administration has prevented us from even putting the word "marijuana" on our designs selectively and unfairly placing obstacles to block our efforts.

Paul: And as was previously mentioned, college campuses haven't always - are supposed to be a catalyst to new and progressive ideas. But recently at ISU, we've been made to feel like voicing our opinions and our beliefs is wrong when, frankly, it's not.

Erin: It's definitely been a long road, and we do look forward to reaching an understanding with those involved. We're hopeful that all affected campus organizations will get the opportunity to continue positive efforts through Iowa State. But for us, the university's slogan, "Choose your adventure at Iowa State" will never mean the same. Thank you.

Molly: I'm reading on behalf of Merritt Burch from University of Hawaii-Hilo. I'm Molly Nocheck, and I work for FIRE.

"My experience with the lawsuit has been amazing. Initially, I was a bit wary to go into something as serious as litigation after the events on January 17, but the whole idea of it has quickly grown on me. I thought with the extremely overbroad policies in place trying to make a difference was impossible. But I was wrong. When we go to college, we go there to grow as a person both intellectually and individually. But we can't do these things when our freedoms are not protected.

I believe that the freedom of speech in America is one of the most important and fundamental rights, especially on a college campus."

Thank you.

Greg: And before we take questions, I just wanted to thank people who made this possible. I particularly want to thank Bob, Ronnie, and Lisa and Davis Wright Tremaine. I want to most of all thank the student plaintiffs. Thank you so much for coming forward. It's amazing how many terrible violations we see on college campuses where students aren't willing to fight them. But that's always disappointing. So it's always inspiring to see students who are willing to fight. But not just students though. We want to thank the professors who are plaintiffs at Chicago State University. The professors have, in many cases, done a great job of defending their rights and the rights of their students.

But then, of course, I also want to thank people at the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, FIRE. Now, when I started actually making a list of everybody who has been involved in helping with this project, it's pretty much the entire organization. So rather than do that, I just wanted to single out some people, some who are here, some who aren't, and if you are here, stand up or wave because some of you are already standing up. Robert Shibley, I want to thank Katherine Sevchenko who has been spectacular, Will Creeley, our legal director. We've been talking with Bob in DWT for months now working on this stuff.

My former assistant, Pierce, who is here really stepped up to make sure that this event came off. My assistant, Nate. Akil Alleyne. Almost the first day he started at FIRE, I was like hey, yeah, put



together a National Press Club event for us. And of course, the question was well, how do you do that? I'm like we have no idea. So thank you, Akil. Alisha Glennon, our development director who is not here. Gina who is in charge of our website who we really threw a lot of curve balls at today. And of course, Molly Nocheck. So thank you very much, and we'll take questions.

Cara: Hi. Thanks for taking my question. I guess a two-part question. First off – and you touched on this a little bit in your opening statement, but if you don't mind elaborating. Why, despite I think as you put it a string of unbeaten – you know, all these legal victories against free speech codes, why are universities still doing this? It sounds like there are some legal reasons maybe to kind of protect themselves. But if you can just talk about if they're getting defeated in the courts, why do you think they're still doing this? And secondly, as far as your action goes, why sue and why now?

Greg: Great questions. And where are you from?

Audience: My name is Cara Roland, and I'm with Fox News.

Greg: Okay. I wrote a book called *Unlearning Liberty: Campus Censorship and the End of American Debate* where I try to address that answer. And I never believed that anything much in the world is caused by a single thing. But the four factors that I talked about why speech codes are so tenacious, and they just won't seem to die are 1) is frankly what I called ignorance. When I go and talk to administrators, you talk about basic constitutional law, particularly basic First Amendment law, and it sounds like rocket science to them. They have not been taught this very important area of law, and that's really disappointing.

The two other factors that are kind of subtle that people sometimes overlook is the mass expansion of the bureaucratization of universities. The number of people who are involved in the administration for universities surpassed the number of people involved in full-time teaching in 2005 and that trend has only gone up. And part of what they do is they pass more and more and more policies, and they justify the existence of those policies by enforcing them sometimes in ways where you get the impression they're trying to do the right thing. In an awful lot of cases, like the one at Modesto, it just kind of seems like it's a mindless application of ridiculous rules.

And I want to be clear. Some administrators are really great, and they're concerned about students. Others, they don't want you making fun of the school, they don't want you saying something that makes them uncomfortable. And the bureaucracy point is linked to liability. As I mentioned a little bit in my statement, universities have a sort of exaggerated sense that if they hyper-regulate everything, including speech that that will somehow insulate them from liability if they get sued. That's a huge motivator for this stuff.

And unfortunately, we've come to realize that even though we primarily solved things through public awareness that we really have to start resetting that incentive structure because general counselors are saying to themselves what's the chance we're going to get sued for having a speech code? Not all that likely. Well, we're here to increase that likelihood. And hopefully, students and faculty will join with us to take on their schools because, as I said, they're going to win if they take on the university speech codes. And the fourth one, frankly, is sort of like the crowd pleaser for some people is political correctness. I mean, there's no mistake that it's pretty easy to get in trouble for what you say on the modern college campus. And that's still the case today. I think that – but that's the factor that people think this is all related to simply that. I think there are a lot of structural ways that we've gone about increasing – sort of incentivizing censorship on campus. And we hope today to start to reverse that process.

Oh, and the “why today?” Why today? Honestly, we've been hesitant to go the route of being primarily a litigation group. And honestly, just in the past couple of years, we realized, okay, it's just – we're not achieving enough by fighting these things out in the court of public awareness. So behind the scenes, we started putting together this large litigation program.

And the reason why we're doing it at such a large level is we really want to get general counsels considering freedom of speech when they write their policies. I mean, just to give another example of a code that we fought and defeated years ago, Texas Tech University used to have a sole 20-foot wide gazebo as the only place you were allowed to engage in free speech activities on campus, and that had not been challenged until FIRE came around. The first step is to get rid of the codes that don't pass the laugh test. And then once you actually get rid of those kinds of codes, hopefully,

you can start to inculcate a real culture of freedom of exchange of ideas that universities should be.

Kate: I'm Kate Winkle with the Scripts Howard Foundation Wire here in Washington. I was just wondering, I know a lot of these policies, handbooks, and things like that for universities, it seems like administrators want to address things like bullying, harassment, gender, sexual orientation, etc., discrimination. But obviously, it also infringes on free speech. So what would be a better method for the universities to address those concerns?

Greg: I get the question sort of like these are all well intended. And I always have to take that on. A lot of them aren't. A lot of them are, again, just hyper-bureaucratized rules saying that, "we're in charge. You have to run everything by us. You can only protest in this little, tiny area. And by the way, don't criticize the school." To the extent to which they are well intended, I don't see the same sort of passionate belief in the philosophy of positive suppression that, for example, Jonathan Rauch wrote about in the 1980's and 1990's, one of my favorite authors. And there was this real kind of zeal that we were going to stop insensitive or hurtful or racist or sexist speech.

That is still on campuses. But I don't see as much of that sort of philosophical zeal. I see more of the sort of mindless application of these rules that came into existence a long time ago. Now, FIRE - I think sometimes because a lot of these codes come in the form of harassment codes, universities - sometimes people don't read what we write. They say, "like you believe people should be harassed?" Our really radical position on this is that universities should adopt the language adopted by the Supreme Court in the *Davis* decision that explains what harassment is in that context. We think it provides a perfect guideline to what harassment means both from a legal standpoint but also from a common sense standpoint.

And so we've been advocating for that for years. And we think that Congress could certainly help out by just making the law around some of these things clearer. Because when it comes to stalking or harassment or bullying, all of these things, they're things that can be addressed through clear laws. And we believe to a degree, a lot of that guidance already exists. But at the same time, if you're claiming you're going after harassment, but you're banning

“inappropriately directed laughter,” you should probably know you’ve gone too far.

Ronald Collins

Ron: Hi. I’m Ron Collins writing for Concurrent Opinions Blog. I have two short questions. First, has any thought been given to publicizing on a continuing basis the cost to the public of this litigation? So, when a university defends a case, they have to pay their lawyers or outside lawyers plus when they lose, they also have to pay the other side. I think it might be helpful if that information was publicized on a regular basis. That’s the first question.

And the second question is although the record of defeating these laws at the District Court and Circuit Court have been quite favorable, the fact remains that student free speech law at the Supreme Court level has been dismal for decades.

I wonder if any thought has been given with these cases to possibly taking these cases up to the Supreme Court with an eye towards changing existing free speech law affecting students?

Greg: Great. Of course, two fantastic questions. For the first one, and I’m definitely going to defer to Bob for a little bit of this, too. With regard to the first one, we do actually try to emphasize the costs to universities. And definitely, whenever there’s a big settlement, and sometimes, the settlements are very big when a university gets busted for violating a student or faculty member’s freedom of speech, we sing that to high Heaven. Now, one of the things that we’re running into though, and I would definitely love if we could hire a legal fellow to work on this all day long, I would love that because – funny. Come work for us, Ron.

But part of the amoral calculus that I was talking about is that universities, at the same time, are concerned about the cost of even frivolous claims of personal injury or harassment or defamation or whatever. So there’s a cost, as far as they’re concerned, on both sides. And it’s become up to us to raise the cost on the other side. But I think at the same time, a lot of this can be solved by clearer rules when it comes to this kind of stuff. When it comes to the Supreme Court, my normal answer on this is that – and you’re right that K through 12 student rights are dismal. I mean, the *Bong Hits for Jesus* case was just – it’s a ridiculous

case to read.

It makes no sense. The rights of high school students I think are in terrible shape. College students, the rights of college students going back even to the '70s, they're pretty well defended. And the rights of professors have actually – the existing case law has actually been very – has been very strong throughout the decade, so much so that the only reason why I think we might not necessarily get to the Supreme Court in some of these cases is that the law is already very favorable and already very clear. And unless you have a circuit split on these kinds of cases, you're not actually going to end up before the Supreme Court.

So in a sense, it's actually good news. I don't know if that's that likely. And Bob?

Bob: I've really got nothing to add.

Greg: Okay.

Jonathan: Some guy, never mind. A question for any of the students: Are you seeking and are you getting support from other students on campus? Or are you finding yourselves isolated by these efforts or what?

Isaac: Is it okay if I answer from here, or do you guys with the cameras want me up at the podium? Podium. All right.

So far, in terms of support from other students, just in general efforts, I know that I'm not particularly isolated in arguing against the universities' speech codes and against the way that the university silences speech. Right now, at Ohio University, I think students are pretty fortunate to have a pretty radical student government that just got elected that is pretty big on protests and that has been shut down a lot about their speech.

So I feel like I'm actually in pretty good hands with other students on campus who are on the side of making sure that the university gets rid of all of these restrictive speech codes. Does that answer that? Any follow up?

Paul: I've got an interesting kind of take from my perspective, if you don't mind hearing it real quick. The funny thing about it is actually because the university put this new policy into effect

directly because of our T-shirt, other organizations are now against us, and they think it's our fault. One of my co-workers, his girlfriend is the president of the Meteorology Club, and they've started to see some of these restrictions. And she hates me. She absolutely hates me. I'm like, "I didn't do this. Like this isn't our fault." So yeah, it's kind of interesting. I mean, there are definitely people that are on our side.

I was in the GSB [government student board], so I'm kind of friends with the president and former president and the current president, and they're trying to work with us, faculty senate, the president of the faculty senate was on our side. But some of the less informed, like not really sure what's going on, all I know is I'm being restricted kind or organizations are really upset at us and the university. But it was interesting to get that perspective.

Greg: And I just want to add one thing to that. For the first case that we dealt with at Modesto Junior College, the student who was stopped from handing out Constitutions on Constitution Day, I've never seen a university that seemed to portray itself more as if they were the real victims of the lawsuit as opposed to the student who was told he couldn't hand out Constitutions on Constitution Day. As a First Amendment lawyer, my job can be very surreal some days.

Audience: This is for the students. Could you talk a little bit about the process you went through at your own colleges working with the administrators and other university representatives before deciding to take the next step with FIRE?

Erin: We started NORML ISU in 2012. And so we made this awesome T-shirt, or I think it's awesome. And the university disagreed. So we had them approved initially. We had a lot more orders placed for them. So we tried to get them approved again. So we sent them to the trademark licensing office. And then we received notification that it had been rejected following some lash back from articles that were published in local newspapers, the *Des Moines Register*, which I don't know if you're familiar with Iowa, but that's kind of a big thing for us. And after that was rejected, we kind of thought that was interesting that they were approved and then suddenly, it's not okay to have these shirts.

We met with some officials, and we just kind of wanted to know what we could put on shirts because they seemed to change the

process. And slowly, we kind of figured out that there isn't really a process. So that was difficult to navigate. And we'd just be sent from one official to another and trying to figure out who is making the decisions and who is really going to tell us what they're going to accept and what they're not going to. So we placed a bunch of T-shirt designs that we thought would meet their requirements and should meet their requirements, and they rejected those as well. So some of our brochures just said NORML ISU supports legalizing marijuana not the university at all.

So after those ones got rejected as well, we were told that we could appeal the – formally appeal the decision. And we tried to do that, and they rejected it again. And at that point, we were really considering giving up on it because we're little students, and they're big university officials. And it can be really intimidating when you're young and just going into college. So we were looking for other options. Our advisor suggested FIRE and the ACLU and some other organizations that might be able to help us. FIRE reached out to us, and they've been really great – or we reached out to FIRE actually and asked them if they thought that we had any – are we really wrong here?

Because I feel bad, and I don't think I should feel bad about this. And they said we're going to help you out here. And it's been great. And that's what we've done so far trying to fix it.

Isaac:

So in the statement that I gave, I mentioned that this is really the perfect time for us to move ahead in litigation. One of the standard responses that we've gotten from the university regarding the content of our shirts and regarding the code of conduct is well, you guys have input on changing the code of conduct, so why don't you utilize that? And we've tried to do that. We've tried to do that every year, and we've been stopped pretty much at every turn about the direction that we would like to see the code of conduct changed.

We've received a model code of conduct for feedback, and the direction that the university is moving there with the new model code of conduct is actually even more restrictive than the code is right now. So that's a big reason that we're trying to, at Ohio University, make this push right now. The formalized options that we have been given have really – they've said hey, you can do all these things. You can ask us for our opinion on this. You can give your opinion on this. But then, we're just going to ignore you

because you're dinky, little college students, and we don't actually care that much about your opinion. Does that fully answer the question? Thanks.

Greg:

I think we have time for one more question. All right. Well, very good. And I just wanted to give one more story about what I've heard from students. And I've heard this repeatedly. Students, so often times, they're well meaning. They can be kind of trusting of administrators. And I've heard so many different cases where someone went, the university had a ridiculous speech zone, they had a ridiculous speech code. And they went to the administrators, and they said, "No, we really want to help you. We really want to reform that, but the process takes a long time. So it will take about two years. So come back to us in two years."

And I know a handful of students that actually were diligent enough that they came back two years later, but nothing had changed on the policy, and they were told, "Oh, sorry, we didn't get around to it." And what had actually happened was the university was trying to mute the students' ability to challenge the code. And I had talked to a student who realized this in the spring of his senior year at college, and he was like I can't let that happen to me ever again. Anyway, thank you so much for coming out today.