

FIRE QUARTERLY

FREE SPEECH MAKES FREE PEOPLE

**FIRE expands beyond campus: We're ready
to defend free speech wherever it is threatened**





THE TIME FOR FIRE'S EXPANSION IS NOW. HERE'S WHY.

A message from FIRE President and CEO Greg Lukianoff

You may be wondering why we at FIRE have decided to take our work beyond campus. The simplest answer is that we felt called to do it, both as individuals and as an institution. FIRE is a unique organization staffed by people from across the political spectrum who agree on only one thing: the essentiality of freedom of speech to an innovative, pluralistic, democratic, and peaceful society. For 23 years, we have seen how dangerous it is for free speech to be seen as a partisan value. We believe that our team has the best chance of preserving freedom of speech as a principle that transcends politics.

We are not leaving campus behind: In fact, we're expanding our core work on campus. Between our new ability to rigorously poll students and rank schools according to their commitment to free speech, our new Faculty Legal Defense Fund, and the success of our existing programs, our work on campus has never been more comprehensive. That's why we can confidently expand our scope.

We started discussing the possibility of officially launching an expansion around our 25th anniversary in 2024. However, as you've probably heard me say once or twice before, 2020 was the worst year for freedom of speech, both on and off campus, that we have ever seen. We decided we could no longer wait, so in 2021 we started looking seriously at where else we can help.

Our goal is ambitious, and we have a difficult road ahead. On campuses across the country, FIRE has become — and will remain — the authority on free speech and due process and a stalwart defender of individual liberty for both faculty and students. Off campus, we will likely face criticism for not taking certain cases, because — unlike in higher education where we have capacity to respond to, or intervene in, most significant challenges to free speech — we won't have capacity right out of the gate to weigh in on every free speech case that comes up across the country.

But our expansion is crucial, and the time for it is now. To have a robust free speech culture, society doesn't just need people who uphold the letter of First Amendment law. It requires leaders who can publicly and unapologetically make the case for why the First Amendment and free speech are indispensable.

An old adage says, "a society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit." With your help we can plant the seeds of a society where free speech and expression will flourish for generations to come.

VICTORY: AMERICAN UNIVERSITY CLEARS STUDENT OF BOGUS HARASSMENT CHARGE

After pressure from FIRE and over a thousand free speech advocates who emailed their concerns to the administration, American University finally announced that a student who offended a pro-life classmate will not be charged with discriminatory harassment.

Daniel Brezina is one of eight law students investigated by American University from May 25 to July 7 for commenting in a back-and-forth about abortion in a class GroupMe chat. In the chat, students discussed the ramifications of Justice Samuel Alito's leaked draft majority opinion in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization*, which would overrule *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. Many criticized the opinion and discussed plans to protest and to donate money to pro-choice advocacy groups.

One student took offense to some of the messages in the chat, writing, "as a Republican, I find it insulting that conservatives would be thought of as overturning people's civil rights," and saying that "... baseless claims that abortion bans are 'class warfare' is deeply offensive to both me and my Greek Orthodox faith."

Despite the fact that the other students in the chat never mentioned his faith, the offended student claimed that the pro-choice commentary in the chat constituted harassment and discrimination against him based on his religious beliefs. Subsequently, eight accused students — including Brezina — received a notice from American's Office of Equity & Title IX saying they were under investigation for

"harassing and threatening messages" that "unreasonably interfered with [the complainant's] educational experience." Apparently, the students' conduct was investigable under the university's sweepingly broad non-Title IX harassment policy, which bans all speech and conduct that subjectively "offends."



"If American doesn't commit to changing the way it handles these investigations, other students will still have to fear being investigated for pure speech."

—Student Daniel Brezina

Brezina alerted FIRE of American University's violation of his rights and we took action, demanding that American drop the investigation, sharing details of the case publicly, and encouraging people to email the university president in defense of students' right to speak freely. FIRE generated coverage of the case from Reuters, The Atlantic, The Washington Examiner, and more. Then, 30 faculty members cosigned an open letter

calling on American to "promptly conclude this investigation and reaffirm its commitment to protecting its community members' expressive freedom."

After 43 days, these efforts paid off — and American backed down.

While Brezina celebrates this victory, he remains skeptical of his university's commitment to free speech. "I'm glad that the school has cleared me, but this investigation should never have happened in the first place," he said. "If American doesn't commit to changing the way it handles these investigations, other students will still have to fear being investigated for pure speech."

We agree. Investigations into clearly protected speech, even when they don't result in further punishment, violate the university's robust promise of free expression and create a chilling effect among students — a punishment in itself. That's why FIRE will continue to demand that American revise its problematic harassment policies as we continue to defend freedom of speech, across the political spectrum, wherever it is threatened.



FIRE's Alex Morey defended Daniel in FIRE's letter — and in the media.

FIRE ANNOUNCES \$75 MILLION EXPANSION INTO OFF-CAMPUS FREE SPEECH ADVOCACY, DEFENSE



On June 6, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education became the Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression.

America's leading defender of free speech, due process, and academic freedom in higher education is expanding its free speech mission beyond campus. The \$75 million expansion initiative will focus on three main areas of programming: litigation, public education, and research.

"America needs a new nonpartisan defender of free speech that will advocate unapologetically for this fundamental human right in both the court of law and the court of public opinion," said FIRE President & CEO Greg Lukianoff. "FIRE has a proven track record of defeating censorship on campus. We are excited to now bring that same tireless advocacy to fighting censorship off campus."

As part of its expansion initiative, FIRE is also launching a \$10 million nationwide advertising campaign to

promote a culture of free expression. The campaign, "Faces of Free Speech", will last throughout 2022. The campaign will initially reach Americans through robust national cable television, digital, and billboard advertising.

FIRE will celebrate its next chapter on April 18, 2023 during a gala celebration in New York City.

"Our defense of freedom of speech and inquiry on campus will remain core to what we do and will grow in the coming years."

Over its 23 years of advocacy, FIRE won more than 500 direct advocacy victories on behalf of college students and faculty members (with thousands more resolved behind-the-scenes), secured 425 campus policy changes affecting 5 million students, helped pass rights-protective legislation in 20 states, and drove a nationwide reduction in the prevalence of the most restrictive kinds of campus speech codes, from 75% in 2007 to 18% today.

Defending individual rights in higher education remains one of FIRE's core competencies.

"Our defense of freedom of speech and inquiry on campus will remain core to what we do and will grow in the coming years," said Lukianoff. "But we have come to realize that defending the First Amendment and a culture of free speech off campus is essential to protecting those values on campus, just as much as fighting for those values on campus is essential for preserving them off campus."



Have you seen FIRE's new billboards? Check them out in the following cities: Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Denver, Des Moines, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, New York City, Orlando, San Francisco, Tallahassee, Tampa, Washington D.C.

As part of FIRE's expansion, we highlighted four stories to show why free speech matters. FIRE's "Faces of Free Speech" campaign aired as commercials on top networks throughout the summer.



Stefan Klaer:

Montana State University student who displayed a Black Lives Matter flag in his dorm window and was forced by the administration to take it down.



KJ Lynam:

Member of a conservative student group at Emerson College suspended after handing out stickers critical of the Chinese government.



Nate Boyer:

Former U.S. Army Green Beret who declined Colin Kaepernick's invitation to kneel for the national anthem, but began a constructive dialogue, offering to stand next to Kaepernick instead.



Tom Smith:

Law professor at the University of San Diego investigated for criticizing the Chinese government for inaction in investigating the origin of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We need to remind older Americans that freedom of speech is still a value worth fighting for, and we need to teach younger Americans that everything from scientific progress, to artistic expression, to social justice, peace, and living authentic lives requires the staunch protection of freedom of speech for all.

Greg Lukianoff

FIRE President and CEO

ON THAT NOTE:

FIRE's staff has grown to over 90 people — and we're hiring! Lovers of free speech should apply at thefire.org/jobs



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

JAMIE AND ROBERT TAYLOR



As long-standing donors to FIRE, we are thrilled to support its expansion beyond campus free speech advocacy. FIRE has garnered a reputation as a principled, apolitical organization that defends the speech of all Americans on campus. As a former public school board member and a partner of a well-known mutual fund, we experienced, firsthand, the pressure public servants and C-suite employees face to adhere to institutional uniformity. Questioning the merit of a policy or practice has become increasingly discouraged in the classroom, in the boardroom, and in our culture. However, George Orwell was on point when he said, “If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they don’t want to hear.” The First Amendment should be our north star when it comes to speech, and promoting viewpoint diversity and dialogue within any institution will result in better ideas and outcomes. With its expanded mission, FIRE is well-positioned to apply the experience it has gained in successfully defending free speech on campus to all areas of modern life, ensuring that our north star endures, and consequently, the marketplace of ideas continues to flourish.

Jamie and Rob were early supporters of FIRE’s expansion efforts, making a gift above and beyond their annual gift to support our new era. Their investment is helping FIRE level up and become America’s premier defender of free speech.

That expanded fight isn’t just a transition for FIRE: It’s also a call to all Americans to join the new movement for free speech. Americans who want to push back against censorship now have a leader to throw their support behind, an advocate to turn to, and a community to join.

We’re so grateful to have the support of each and every Quarterly reader and we hope that you, too, are excited about our expansion. We can’t build this movement alone and hope that you will help us. You can renew your membership and tell your friends and fellow liberty-lovers to join the movement as well. As more and more people join, it will demonstrate that there is, in fact, a large constituency for free speech that will fight back.

For a limited time, supporters who renew their membership and new members who make a gift of \$25 or more will get our “Free Speech Makes Free People” T-shirt. Wear it proudly and let everyone know that the fight against censorship has a new, bigger and bolder leader.

We’ve got our work cut out for us but with your help, we can restore free speech as the rightful cornerstone of our democracy and culture. If you have any questions about supporting this new era of FIRE, don’t hesitate to contact us at support@thefire.org or 215-717-3473.



FIRE supporter Carrie-Ann Biondi got her shirt — get yours today!
#FIREdUP

FREE SPEECH MAKES PEOPLE FREE. WE MUST DEFEND ALL SPEECH WITHOUT APOLOGY.



It was just a sticker. It said, “China Kinda Sus.”

That was the message that led the president of Boston’s Emerson College to accuse the conservative student group that distributed the sticker of “anti-Asian bigotry and hate.”

It didn’t matter that the message was a criticism of the Chinese government, not Asian people. Or that one of the students handing out the stickers, KJ Lynam, is herself Asian. The college suspended the group. Disheartened by the experience, KJ dropped out of school.

On campus and beyond, labeling speech “hateful” makes those in authority feel empowered to shut it down.

If you ask Americans, most will say they strongly support free speech protections. However, label the speech “hateful” and that support plummets, particularly among Democrats.

We’ve all heard the saying, “Hate speech is not free speech.” There’s just one problem: It isn’t legally true. The First Amendment’s protections do not include a “hate speech” exception. That’s due, in large part, to the problem of subjectivity: Who decides what’s hateful and by what standard? More than 80% of Americans say we can’t agree on a definition of hateful speech, even as 40% say the government should ban it.

For most Americans in the ‘80s and ‘90s, the conflation of words with violence was seen as a direct challenge to our liberal democratic order. Equate words

with violence and soon people will feel justified in using violence instead of words to settle their disagreements. Democracy, in which disputes are resolved not through violence, but through debate, discussion, and voting, cannot survive the collapse of that critical distinction.

Ironically, the growing support for censorship may be due, in part, to free speech advocates winning in the court of law. As First Amendment protections strengthened, remaining legal cases often involve less-sympathetic speech at the margins, like that of the Westboro Baptist Church and white nationalists in Charlottesville. Younger generations who see the First Amendment protect wildly unpopular speech may easily forget that the First Amendment empowered the civil rights movement and the gay rights movement.

But how long will the legal bulwark against additional exceptions to free speech hold? If we don’t promote a culture of free expression, we risk losing it entirely.

What America needs now are vocal, nonpartisan free speech advocates who won’t simply fall back on the circular “because the First Amendment protects it” argument. We need advocates who are willing to unapologetically stand up for the right to speak even the thoughts we hate.

We say “unapologetically” because, too often, even free speech advocates sound like they are apologizing for the offense speech might cause, genuflecting before other values and

never issuing a full-throated defense of our speech rights. Such apologies risk distracting from an essential point: Free speech is a fundamental human right for which we need not apologize.

That’s why FIRE steadfastly refuses to take a position on the content of the speech we defend, aside from saying that it’s protected.

If we don’t promote a culture of free expression, we risk losing it entirely.

Freedom of speech allows us to authentically express our individuality, to learn about our world, and to live peacefully within a democratic society. Free speech is an essential ingredient for scientific progress, social justice, and artistic expression. Most simply, freedom of speech enables us to know what our fellow citizens really think and why.

Free speech makes free people. We must not give up the fight to preserve it.

This op-ed by FIRE President and CEO Greg Lukianoff and Vice President of Communications Nico Perrino appeared in Newsweek. It has been condensed for publication here.

FIRE'S LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES IN KENTUCKY AND LOUISIANA PROVIDE CRUCIAL DUE PROCESS AND FREE SPEECH RIGHTS



FIRE scored major victories for students' rights with the signing of due process bills in Kentucky and Louisiana and a free speech bill in Louisiana too.

The due process laws, KY HB 290 and LA HB 364, provide an array of important procedural protections to students at public colleges and universities accused of violating school policy. Among their provisions, both laws guarantee students the express presumption of innocence, the right to the active assistance of an attorney or advisor,

the right to cross-examination of adverse parties and witnesses by the attorney or advisor, advanced notice of charges, continuous access to an administrative file that must include all of the evidence in the institution's possession, impartiality from the hearing panel, and a cause of action allowing students to sue in state courts for violations of these acts.

These are basic protections that every American should be afforded when they face serious charges of wrongdoing. Now, students at public colleges in Kentucky and Louisiana are statutorily entitled to receive them.

Louisiana's free speech law, HB 185, adopts the speech-protective definition of student-on-student harassment set forth by the U.S. Supreme Court and prevents colleges from charging security fees to students and student organizations based on the content of their expression or the anticipated reaction to an invited guest's speech.

FIRE looks forward to continuing to fight for these important rights on campus, even as we expand our free expression mission off campus.



SPOTLIGHT ON: MICHIGAN AND WEST VIRGINIA

According to two studies conducted by FIRE this spring, 98% of schools in Michigan and every single school in West Virginia maintain policies that restrict students' free speech.

FIRE reviewed the regulations on student expression at 26 Michigan colleges and universities and 17 West Virginia institutions and found both states' speech codes are in worse shape than the national average, with 27% of schools in Michigan and a staggering 47% of schools in West Virginia maintaining policies that earn FIRE's worst, "red light" rating.

These policies include a posting policy at Lake Superior State University that bans posters deemed "offensive, sexist," or "vulgar," and a computer resources policy at West Liberty University that bans

"inappropriate online conduct" like "hate speech." These broad bans allow administrators to punish students over any sort of disfavored speech.

We're not giving up yet, though. In 2010, FIRE conducted a similar study to find every surveyed school in North Carolina maintained restrictive speech codes. After the passage of free speech legislation and hard work on the part of FIRE and other advocates, there are now 15 schools in the state that have eliminated all speech codes — the highest number in any state to earn FIRE's highest, "green light" rating.

Like in North Carolina, FIRE will use these reports to advocate for changes in Michigan and West Virginia. To find out more about a school you care about, find the reports at thefire.org.

ON THAT NOTE:

"There's no asterisk next to the First Amendment demanding civility. Nor should there be. And while aspirational goals to encourage civility are laudable, Orwellian demands to police speech are not."

— **Laura Beltz** in an op-ed for the *West Virginia Gazette Mail*.

LAWSUIT:

PROFESSOR SUES UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON AFTER ADMINS PUNISH HIM FOR 'INAPPROPRIATE' OPINION

When professor Stuart Reges challenged the University of Washington's position on land acknowledgements, administrators punished him, undermining his academic freedom. On July 13, FIRE and Reges sued the university to vindicate his First Amendment right to express his opinion — even if it differs from the party line.

Colleges increasingly promote land acknowledgment statements that recognize indigenous ties to the land on which a college sits. On a list of syllabus “best practices,” UW’s computer science department encourages professors to include such a statement and suggests using language developed by the university’s diversity office “to acknowledge that our campus sits on occupied land.” The fact that the statement could be adapted seemed clear — until Reges wrote one that administrators did not like.

“University administrators turned me into a pariah on campus because I included a land acknowledgment that wasn’t sufficiently progressive for them,” said Reges. “Land acknowledgments are performative acts of conformity that should be resisted, even if it lands you in court. I am pleased that FIRE joined with me to fight back against University of Washington’s illegal viewpoint discrimination.”

On Dec. 8, 2021, Reges criticized land acknowledgment statements in an email to faculty, and on Jan. 3, he included a modified version of UW’s example statement in his syllabus: “I acknowledge that by the labor theory of property the Coast Salish people can claim historical ownership of almost none of the land currently occupied by the University of Washington.” Reges’s statement was a nod to John Locke’s

philosophical theory that property rights are established by labor. The next day, the director of the computer science department ordered Reges to immediately remove his modified statement from his syllabus, labeling it “inappropriate” and “offensive.” Reges refused because the demand was viewpoint discriminatory — other computer science professors included their own land acknowledgments on their syllabi. UW did not investigate or punish them because those statements, unlike Reges’s, were consistent with the university’s viewpoint.

“I am pleased that FIRE joined with me to fight back against University of Washington’s illegal viewpoint discrimination.”

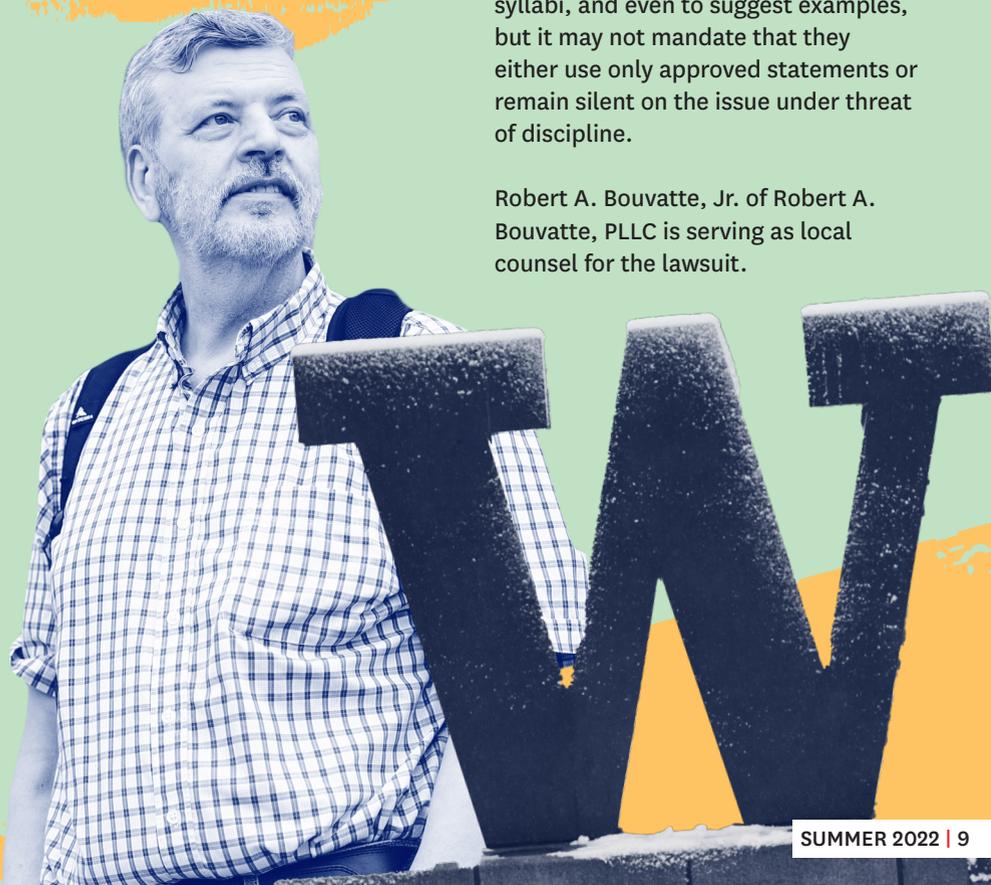
—Professor Stuart Reges

The university launched an investigation into Reges for allegedly violating UW’s unconstitutionally overbroad harassment policy. This investigation has now dragged on for over four months. UW also created a competing section of Reges’s course (featuring pre-recorded lectures by another professor) so students wouldn’t have to take a computer science class from someone who didn’t parrot the university’s preferred opinions.

“It’s ironic that a university whose motto is ‘let there be light’ would shepherd students into a shadow course to shield them from a professor’s opinion,” said FIRE attorney Katlyn Patton.

As a public institution bound by the First Amendment, UW must uphold its professors’ right to free speech and cannot discriminate against them based on viewpoint. UW is free to encourage its faculty to include land acknowledgment statements in their syllabi, and even to suggest examples, but it may not mandate that they either use only approved statements or remain silent on the issue under threat of discipline.

Robert A. Bouvatte, Jr. of Robert A. Bouvatte, PLLC is serving as local counsel for the lawsuit.



PROPOSED **TITLE IX** REGULATIONS WOULD ROLL BACK ESSENTIAL FREE SPEECH, DUE PROCESS PROTECTIONS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

The Department of Education proposed new Title IX regulations in June that, if implemented, would gut essential free speech and due process rights for college students facing sexual misconduct allegations on campus.

The draft regulations are a significant departure from current Title IX regulations. Unlike the current regulations, adopted in 2020 after 18 months of review, the new regulations would roll back student rights by:

- eliminating students' right to a live hearing;
- eliminating the right to cross-examination;
- weakening students' right to active legal representation;
- allowing a single campus bureaucrat to serve as judge and jury;
- rejecting the Supreme Court's definition of sexual harassment in favor of a definition that threatens free speech rights;
- requiring colleges and universities to use the weak "preponderance of the evidence" standard to determine guilt, unless they use a higher standard for other alleged misconduct.

"This new proposal is a non-starter for student and faculty rights," said FIRE Legislative and Policy Director Joe Cohn. "These regulations eliminate the right to live hearings, eliminate the right to cross-examination, weaken protections for free speech, and authorize schools to deny students the right to have the active assistance of a

lawyer. That's a recipe for constitutional violations that courts are unlikely to ignore."

FIRE is submitting formal objections to the proposed changes and is committed to using all the resources at its disposal to ensure that core American freedoms, such as a student's rights to free speech and due process, are not abandoned by the federal government.

"This new proposal is a non-starter for student and faculty rights."

For over a decade, FIRE has led the fight against the erosion of free speech and due process rights on campus through the abuse of Title IX. A 2011 "Dear Colleague" letter sent by the federal government to colleges and universities nationwide kicked off an era of vast Title IX overreach that led schools to crack down on protected expression and eliminate vital protections — including the right to remain silent and even the right to a live hearing at all — in an effort to avoid federal investigation and the possible loss of federal funding.

That era led to more than 600 lawsuits — many successful — against colleges for conducting allegedly unfair disciplinary processes. A 2019 study of top schools conducted by FIRE found that college students were routinely denied even the most basic elements

of a fair hearing. More than two-thirds of colleges surveyed did not even explicitly guarantee students that they would be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

In 2020, at the urging of FIRE and other civil liberties advocates, the Department of Education addressed this overreach with balanced regulations that took the rights of all students into account. The 2020 Title IX regulations provided important protections for those reporting that they were victims of sexual misconduct while still ensuring that those accused were afforded basic due process protections. The regulations also protected free speech rights by defining "sexual harassment" consistent with Supreme Court precedent.

In the years since their enactment, FIRE has defended the 2020 regulations in court against multiple legal challenges.

ON THAT NOTE:

"By rolling back rights for students nationwide, the Biden administration is abandoning core American principles. Protecting due process shouldn't be controversial. Fundamental fairness shouldn't be a partisan concern."

— Joe Cohn in FIRE's Wall Street Journal op-ed

ART INSTITUTE REVERSES EXPULSION FOR STUDENT WHO RETWEETED SEXUAL ART



Student Ash Mikkelsen

When an art school tried to brush aside student rights, FIRE bristled.

A student expelled from Kansas City Art Institute for retweeting sexual art won an appeal on July 12, notching a victory for free expression. KCAI reversed the expulsion decision against student Ash Mikkelsen after a demand from FIRE.

Mikkelsen retweeted sexually explicit Japanese-style cartoons, known as hentai, on a personal, pseudonymous Twitter account. The art institute investigated Mikkelsen for sexual harassment in response to the complaint of another student, who allegedly reported the images to administrators.

In June, administrators told Mikkelsen that they would be expelled for non-Title IX hostile environment sexual harassment under the student code of conduct, despite the fact that KCAI does not define sexual harassment under that code. Mikkelsen was not given an adequate chance to contest

the allegations prior to the university imposing the most severe penalty possible.

The retweets don't meet the legal definition of sexual harassment. As a private university, KCAI is not bound by the First Amendment's protections for free speech, but KCAI is morally and contractually required to uphold its promises of free expression.

KCAI reversed the decision the following week, after FIRE connected Mikkelsen with FIRE Legal Network attorney Ted Green and publicized the story in the Kansas City Star, Daily Wire, Reason and more.

"I'm relieved that the school has recognized its mistake and rectified its actions," Mikkelsen said. "Knowing that standing up for free expression will now allow other students to consume fictitious content without fearing punishment is icing on the cake."



"When we have an art school investigating and punishing students for their artistic expression, we have a real problem. Ash should have never had their academic future threatened because an art school didn't like the type of art they shared on their personal social media account."

— Sabrina Conza
FIRE Program Officer

REPRESSIVE EXECUTIVE ORDER FROM UNC CHAPEL HILL STUDENT GOVERNMENT CUTS OFF FUNDING FOR PRO-LIFE INDIVIDUALS, CAUSES

On July 28, FIRE called on the UNC Chapel Hill student government to rescind an executive order cutting off funding based on pro-life beliefs.

"This is blatant viewpoint discrimination and a clear violation of fundamental First Amendment rights," said FIRE attorney Zach Greenberg. "A student government should represent the entire student body, not abuse their power by seeking to censor classmates with opposing views."

On July 6, the executive branch issued an order prohibiting contracts or funding to "any individual, business, or organization which actively advocates to further limit by law access to reproductive healthcare."

As a public institution, UNC Chapel Hill is bound by the First Amendment. The student government is constitutionally required to distribute funds in a viewpoint-neutral manner.





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BUT WAIT! There's more...

Free speech in Philly: FIRE's summer conference



Dave Chappelle comedy show cancelled — a win for protest rights or a threat to free expression?

Just hours before comedian Dave Chappelle was set to take the stage, Minneapolis' First Avenue theater canceled his show following backlash from staff and community members who found his comedy offensive. FIRE President and CEO Greg Lukianoff explained in Newsweek why a private venue not obligated to host any particular speaker should not bow to pressure from protesters exercising their own First Amendment rights.

"No artist in an earlier era would see this as a victory for free expression," he said. "They would see it as a victory for conformity. They would see it as a victory for a small number of people deciding for others what they should be allowed to see."

Ilya Shapiro thanks FIRE for defense during his investigation from Georgetown Law for a tweet

"FIRE is now my favorite organization in America. Its advice and support in those critical first 24-72 hours of the cancellation campaign against me were crucial in the pushback that ultimately allowed me to survive and thrive. From public relations, to strategic crisis management, to arranging legal counsel, I'm forever indebted to FIRE for supporting me at a time when my reputation, career, and professional livelihood were in danger."