



FREE SPEECH CENTER AT MIDDLE TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

FREEDOM OF SPEECH ★ ★ ★ ANNUAL UPDATE

MIDDLE
TENNESSEE
STATE UNIVERSITY.



FREE SPEECH
CENTER

at Middle Tennessee State University

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"ATTACKS ON FREE SPEECH RIGHTS ARE RISING, EXPERTS SAY"



Ken Paulson

That was the headline of a 2022 Associated Press article centered around new threats to free speech in America.

The AP had reached out to the Free Speech Center in researching the piece; we were eager to share our concerns.

We're seeing a concerted wave of censorship, government encroachment, and intolerance that we have not seen in decades. Record levels of book-banning, government efforts to shape public education to serve ideological goals, and a culture in which shouting someone down trumps listening are all taking their toll on our freedom of speech.

There are organizations to jump into the fray with lawsuits, court briefs, and lobbying. That work is critically important, but it's not the work of the Free Speech Center. As a nonprofit and nonpartisan public policy center at Middle Tennessee State University, we're dedicated to building support for the First Amendment and freedoms of speech, press, religion, petition, and assembly through education, information, and engagement.

This report offers a concise look at the work we do to create awareness and build support. Our efforts include:

The Free Speech Center website: We offer daily First Amendment news reports and free access to the First Amendment Encyclopedia, the most comprehensive resource on these core liberties in the world. More than 5.2 million unique users visit the site each year, with the largest percentage coming from America's schools.

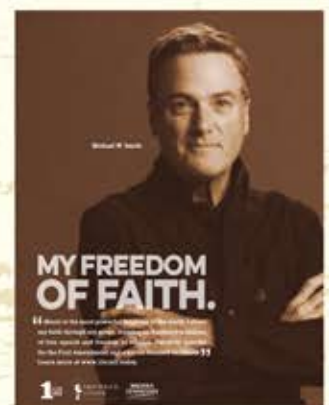
Extensive news media reach: We've found that the most impactful and efficient way to reach millions of Americans with information about First Amendment issues is by doing interviews and providing perspective and information to

news reporters. Over the past year, the Free Speech Center has been quoted or cited in more than 1,000 different news publications and sites, including media in all 50 states.

Educational materials for students, teachers, and the public: The First Amendment Press—the first academic press in MTSU's history—publishes books, teacher's guides, and white papers on the Bill of Rights and free expression for teachers to use. Online "Lessons in Liberty" feature an unprecedented aggregation of online teaching materials for all teachers from primary school through college.

Educational and informative videos: In addition to building an extensive YouTube library, the Free Speech Center partnered with First Amendment Watch to produce a documentary on how to safely and legally monitor public police conduct using a cellphone. The documentary was chosen for select screening at the Accolade Global Film Competition.

A driving force behind the Free Speech Center's work has been a belief that the more citizens understand the role of the First Amendment in our society, the more likely they are to use those freedoms to support and enrich society. It's no coincidence that the most vibrant, ambitious, and successful nation in the history of the world has freedom as its foundation.



EXPANDED WEBSITE SERVES MORE THAN 5 MILLION USERS A YEAR

Constitution Week saw the unveiling of the new Free Speech Center website, including an updated and revised First Amendment Encyclopedia.

"We've been gratified that more than 5.2 million people a year visit our site, many of whom are students and educators. The revamped website offers even more content, a new search engine and improved navigation," said Ken Paulson, director of the Free Speech Center.

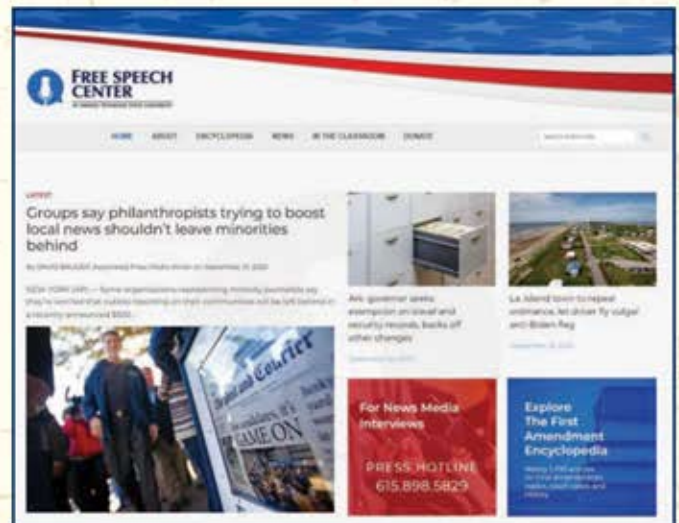
The expansion was made possible through the support of the Knight Foundation and Middle Tennessee State University. The First Amendment Encyclopedia is a collaborative project between the Free Speech Center and the John Seigenthaler Chair for Excellence in First Amendment Studies.

"Encyclopedia articles are written in a straightforward and clear manner, making them accessible to everyone from sixth-graders to scholars," said Deborah Fisher, who oversees the Seigenthaler Chair.

Visitors to the site at freespeech.center will find:

Daily news coverage of First Amendment issues, with content from Free Speech Center staff members and The Associated Press. The new section also features analyses and perspective pieces.

The ever-growing First Amendment encyclopedia, which contains more than 1,700 articles. The new search engine allows users to search by specific First Amendment freedom, topic, case name or keyword.



The Lessons in Liberty section of the website, which provides an overview of the best First Amendment teaching tools online. This gives educators easy access to lessons on each of the five freedoms and America's ongoing commitment to freedom of expression.

The 1 for All Gallery, which offers newspapers, websites and other media platforms a wide selection of public service ads that can be used to promote understanding of the First Amendment. Many of the ads feature prominent artists, authors and performers, including Kane Brown, Ann Patchett, Brad Paisley, Margo Price, Scott Hamilton and Darius Rucker.

SUPPORT THE CENTER . . . SUPPORT FREE SPEECH!

The Free Speech Center is dependent upon financial support from those who share our belief that education about our most fundamental freedoms is critical to American democracy. Independent funding allows the center to develop classroom programs, teaching guides, educational videos, and grade-specific books. It also allows the center to maintain and expand its First Amendment Encyclopedia and daily First Amendment reports.

To support the work of the Free Speech Center, please click on the **Donate** button at the Free Speech Center website: freespeech.center.

Visit freespeech.center for more information and to support the center's mission.

Drop us a message at freespeechcenter@mtsu.edu.

FREE SPEECH CENTER BY THE NUMBERS



6.7 million

Annual Website
Page Views



5.2 million

Annual Unique
Website Visitors



3,086

Newsletter
Subscribers



21,700

Video Views

FREE SPEECH CENTER IN THE NEWS

Over the past 12 months, the Free Speech Center has been quoted or cited in articles appearing in more than 1,000 news media outlets around the world. This list represents a sampling.

Anchorage Daily News (Alaska)

AOL News

Aspen Daily News (Colo.)

Associated Press

Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Bellingham Herald (Wash.)

Billings Gazette (Mont.)

Black Hills Pioneer (S.D.)

Bloomfield Democrat (Iowa)

Bowling Green Daily News (Ky.)

Bradenton Herald (Fla.)

Buffalo News (N.Y.)

Casper Star-Tribune (Wyo.)

Charlotte Observer (N.C.)

Chattanooga Times Free Press

Coeur d'Alene Press (Idaho)

Commercial Appeal (Memphis)

Daily Mail (London)

Dayton Daily News (Ohio)

Detroit Free Press

Detroit News

Durango Herald (Colo.)

Florida Today

Fresno Bee (Calif.)

Grand Junction Daily Sentinel (Colo.)

Greenwich Time (Conn.)

Hannibal Courier-Post (Mo.)

Hickory Daily Record (N.C.)

Houston Chronicle

Idaho Statesman

Jackson Sun (Tenn.)

Joplin Globe (Mo.)

Kansas City Star (Mo.)

KHON-TV (Honolulu)

KLAS-TV (Las Vegas)

KMOX-AM (St. Louis)

Knoxville News-Sentinel

La Crosse Tribune (Wisc.)

Las Vegas Sun

Lewiston Tribune (Idaho)

Lexington Herald-Leader (Ky.)

Lincoln Journal Star (Neb.)

Miami Herald

Missoulian (Mont.)

Modesto Bee (Calif.)

Montgomery Independent (Ala.)

MSN.com

New Haven Register (Conn.)

New York Post

News & Observer (N.C.)

News Tribune (Tacoma, Wash.)

Newsweek

Norman Transcript (Okla.)

Olympian (Wash.)

Omaha World-Herald (Neb.)

Ottumwa Courier (Iowa)

Pawtucket Times (R.I.)

PBS

Roanoke Times (Va.)

Sacramento Bee (Calif.)

San Diego Union-Tribune

SeattlePI

SFGate (San Francisco)

Sioux City Journal (S.D.)

St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Stamford Advocate (Conn.)

Star Tribune (Minn.)

State Journal (Frankfort, Ky.)

Telegraph Herald (Dubuque, Iowa)

The Tennessean

Texarkana Gazette (Ark.)

Times Union (Albany, N.Y.)

Toronto Star

Union Leader (N.H.)

U.S. News and World Report

USA Today

Washington Post

Washington Times

Winston-Salem Journal (N.C.)

WIRED

WLS-AM (Chicago)

WMAQ-TV (Chicago)

WPIX-TV (New York)

WTOP (Washington, D.C.)

WTVJ-TV (Miami)

Yahoo News

Yakima Herald-Republic (Wash.)

Yankton Press & Dakotan (S.D.)