

Hi, My name is Austin Roblin, I am a Junior at Ashland University and an Ashbrook scholar in the Ashbrook Scholar program at AU where we learn the meaning behind self-governance. My experience at Ashland University has been an eyeopening experience. While I've been enrolled at Ashland University I have made friends through various organizations, the main one being Young Americans for Liberty. This last semester I chose to apply to become a recruitment director for YAL. Our duties include recruitment but also spreading the message of Liberty throughout campuses in Ohio, not just our own. Doing so, we bring activities to promote freedom. The free speech ball is one of my favorites to bring. It is a large blow-up ball that students and faculty of the University can exercise their first amendment and write whatever they want on it. Now, it might be weird to hear about a blow-up ball as a way to express freedom of Speech but its just that.

Through the Freedom of speech ball, we are able to get conversations going with students of different backgrounds, about opinions and beliefs they have. There are some considerations for selecting a campus to visit, one being whether or not they have a free speech zone at the University. Coming from Ashland a free speech zone is not something that I was familiar with. As I learned more about it, it became more apparent to me that Free-speech zones were being used to discourage free-thinking on college campuses. Speaking for myself, I believe that the main reason for going to university or college is not only to learn but to learn to think for yourself. A ban on free speech prohibits college students from thinking freely. But, it not only goes against the reason to even go to college, but It goes against American core values.

Our Country was founded on the principles of Self-governance. As long as someone is not doing anything to injure another's life, liberty, or pursuit of happiness then they should be free to do as they want. Freedom of speech is important to me because It allows the spread of Ideas. Being an Ashbrook Scholar we spent a lot of time learning about the meaning of Polis. The word Polis is important because not only was American modeled after the Roman Republic but also after the Greek Polis's sense of Democracy. The Greek Polis means city-state, but, my class determined that Polis really stands for the spread of ideas and culture, which is what a college does. But, not only does it promote the spread of ideas and culture, but it also promotes the idea of "equal speech in public" as Teresa Berjan of The Atlantic writes.

The promotion of equal speech in public is what freedom of speech is. As I understand it Senate Bill 40 promotes the idea of not only the standard of Free speech but the original meaning of the Polis, the equality of speech in public. The FORUM act agrees with the original meaning of the Polis. It prevents publicly funded Universities from creating free-speech zones, or prevent speakers from demonstrating on campus because they're not in accordance with the Universities beliefs. It puts an emphasis on Free-speech and the spread of ideas at Universities. That is why I support Senate Bill 40.