

As a recent graduate from Kent State I know the power Free Speech has, and its importance on college campuses. This is not the first time our students on campuses across the country have seen their voices censored. On May 4th 1970, 4 students were killed by the U.S National Guard for protesting the Vietnam war. Their voices were forever silenced by executive overreach and the thinking that some opinions should not be shared.

That is why it is imperative we have a document like SB 40 passed into law in the great state of Ohio. College campuses are supposed to be an area where all thoughts and ideals are welcome and up for debate. We are seeing universities segregating students from each other with "free speech zones" that designate where and when students can speak their minds freely. This not only is a bill about keeping a thoughtful discourse on college campuses but also about keeping students safe. It seems like everyday we are seeing videos of students being harassed, punched, spit on, having their items stolen, and more just for tabling for an organization others might not agree with.

When we don't allow certain groups to have their voices heard it allows everyone else to in a sense "gang up" on them and run them out of the institution. In my work for a non-profit that works with students at universities I have seen first hand how these regulations are harming our students ability to lead, think for themselves, and to feel confident. With keeping students safe it is also incredibly unjust to impose security fees on these students who's views are seen "differing from the norm". These institutions are hoarding hundreds of thousands of dollars and are more than capable of providing adequate security for a student group.

I will take it a step further though. We need our universities to instruct to their students that they should be accepting off all ideals and not to tear down each other but to build each other up. This bill gives that chance and some much needed relief in intellectual fighting and debates at Universities.