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Reflections on the First Amendment

OCTOBER 5, 2009

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"The Bill of Rights does not come with an asterisk reading 'unenforceable during time of war.'" — Gene Healy, senior editor, Cato Institute, 2004

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"A society is never in more peril than when the people lose the ability to identify a genuine threat to personal liberty." — Journalist Carl T. Rowan, 1993

"The press was protected so it could bare the secrets of government and inform the people." — Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black, 1971

"The First Amendment exists to ensure that freedom of speech and expression applies not just

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to that with which we agree or disagree, but also that which we find outrageous. I would not amend that great shield of democracy to hammer a few miscreants." — Former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, 2000

"Necessity is the plea for every infringement of human freedom. It is the argument of tyrants; it is the creed of slaves." — British statesman William Pitt, 1783

"If you open the door to censorship just a little, it never stays open just a little, and the draft that follows is always more than chilling." — Film director Milos Forman, 1997

"Censorship reflects a society's lack of confidence in itself." — Former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, 1966

"One of the things that almost never works is secrecy — particularly secrecy in defense of dumbness." — Newt Gingrich, former speaker, U.S. House of Representatives, 1996

"Democracy means people have a right to express peaceful dissent from the prevailing view of the government, and the government is obligated to permit and defend that right." — U.S. Sen. Carl Levin, 2003

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[oceanohaptik](#) wrote:

Replying to farmerFarquhar:

...I need amute button for most of what's out there.

It's called the "Off" button.

10/5/2009 8:07:49 AM

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farmerFarquhar wrote:

The First Amendment isn't perfect; although it does provide the right of free expression, it fails to provide the right not to listen.

Imagine television and radio if we had the right to block advertisements.

Imagine offensive rallies of any organization if we had the right to not go, and not have it presented as "news"; if road side signs would magically disappear if we chose not to see those views.

Imagine a world where people who espoused one idea weren't so keen on pushing that idea on others; OM(doyc), there would be no war.

Imagine not having to know that some entertainer is gay, is a drug user, beats their spouse, cheats on their partner...

Imagine not having to know that sports goons shoot up drugs to make themselves super-human.

So, as I said before, the First Amendment isn't perfect. Like IMDB, newspapers should have to tell you, in advance, "Warning, spoiler alert, you don't want to know this".

I need amute button for most of what's out there.

10/5/2009 8:04:38 AM

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Firebrand wrote:

"Censorship reflects a society's lack of confidence in itself. It is a hallmark of an authoritarian regime"—Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, dissenting *Ginzberg v. United States*, 383 U.S. 463 (1966)

10/5/2009 7:11:32 AM

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