



Free Speech Pledge: Lawmakers and the Public Speak Up for Freedom of Speech

March 26, 2021

PRNewswire/ -- Today, Independent Women's Voice (IWV) announced the launch of the Free Speech Pledge. Signed by elected officials and the American public, the Free Speech Pledge demonstrates their commitment to protecting free speech and the ability of all Americans to speak, protest, and express their opinions publicly.

Early signers of the Free Speech Pledge include Senator Mike Braun (IN) and Representatives Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05), Brian Fitzpatrick (PA-01), Ken Buck (CO-04), Michael Burgess (TX-26), Mike Gallagher (WI-08), Nancy Mace (SC-01), Stephanie Bice (OK-05), Tom McClintock (CA-04), Victoria Spartz (IN-05) and Yvette Herrell (NM-02).

Today, freedom of speech is under attack. Efforts to stifle debate and silence dissenters are compounded by cancel culture, a dangerous movement which imposes severe social and economic sanctions on those who express insufficiently woke opinions.

The Pledge lets voters know which lawmakers are committed to using their office to defend Americans' rights to speak freely and protest peacefully, and to ensure that large platforms and services apply their rules consistently and do not engage in viewpoint discrimination against users.

"Freedom of speech must be defended," said Heather R. Higgins, CEO of Independent Women's Voice. "Today, many Americans are afraid to express their beliefs out of fear of retaliation or being 'canceled.' What is happening right now isn't about suppressing hate speech. It's about suppressing history, facts, and viewpoints that some self-appointed woke arbiters who are looking to be offended have decreed are damaging and hateful. That's a recipe for a society defined by fear, division, mistrust, intolerance, discrimination, and ultimately violence."

In summer 2020, Cato Institute released a study finding that 62% of Americans "strongly" or "somewhat" agree that "the political climate these days prevents me from saying things I believe because others might find them offensive." According to the study, only "very liberal" Americans feel like they are able to freely express their beliefs.

"This is not how America is supposed to function," Higgins added. "This is not the foundation of a healthy, pro-human, society in which people with different ideas and beliefs civilly debate their positions, actually listen to each other, display charity and forgiveness, and work together in search of common ground."

For more information on the Free Speech Pledge, please visit freespeechpledge.com.

Independent Women's Voice fights for women and families by effectively expanding support among women, independents, and millennials for policy solutions that aren't just well intended, but actually enhance people's freedom, choices, and opportunities.