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American History

The First Amendment- Louder than the Hateful

In order to create a free democracy and not the controlling monarchy they had just revolted from, the United States' founding fathers clearly saw freedom of speech and press as an important issue. They saw it to be so important that the freedom of speech and press is included in the First Amendment of the Constitution. The First Amendment gives every citizen the ability to say whatever they wish. However, the occasion has risen to question complete freedom of speech, especially with the Internet, which gives users anonymity and more of a pedestal to speak from. But is this a necessary sacrifice to keep our freedom? I would argue that it is.

Those argue against total free speech have a point. In the past few years, in fact, many cases have arisen where we question the First Amendment. The Westboro Baptist Church, a church well-known for its extreme views on homosexuality, frequently protest at veteran funerals. The church claims that the death of these veterans is a sign of God's punishment on the United States for being so accepting of immoral practices, specifically homosexuality. Also recently occurring, Neo-Nazi groups have protested through mostly-Jewish neighborhoods in Ohio. Cases against hate speech and these hate groups of gone to the Supreme Court, but the Supreme Court voted for the Westboro Baptist Church and these Neo-Nazis. Groups like these are the main push for a change to the First Amendment, but the Supreme Court has a reason to vote for these hate groups.

The fact that the Supreme Court would support such evil groups seems like the Court supports them! However, the Supreme Court instead supports the First Amendment and wishes to protect it. If a change were made to the First Amendment that prohibited such extreme speech and protests, this would prohibit all extreme speech and protests. The Westboro Baptist Church and Neo-Nazis would be stopped, but so would any other form of speech. Eventually, the prohibition of this would come back to cripple the people who originally pushed for the change. The Supreme Court doesn't want to support hate groups, but rather they want to support the basic freedoms of all citizens.

Although the families of the veterans and Jewish neighbors didn't get the limit of hate speech, they did receive a greater victory. Shortly after the outrage the Westboro Baptist Church transpired, President Barack Obama put a law in order that any protests at military veteran funerals should be a certain amount of feet away. On top of that, these Neo-Nazis and Westboro Baptist Church have become some of the most hated groups in the United States. At any military funeral, counter-protests go along to protest the Westboro Baptist Church. These victims did not get what they originally wanted, but they eventually got justice without limiting their freedom of speech.

Freedom of speech is very important in maintaining a free society. Despite what these hate groups say, we must protect their right to say what they like to maintain our right to do the

same. With their new fame, they have become the most hated groups in the United States. We cannot fight this hateful speech with restrictions, but with more speech, protecting the innocent. The First Amendment should not be change, but we should become louder than the hateful.