

Resolution 77: Upholding Freedom of Expression

Abstract: In Year of Free Expression, the Student Assembly stands in unity with the ongoing demonstrations and encampment; not on the basis of agreeing with the opinions expressed, but to set the precedent that no student should be punished for exercising their constitutional right, to freedom of expression.

Sponsored by: Karys Everett '25, Jahmal Wallen '24, Claire Ting '25, Imani Rezaka '24, Aissatou Barry '24, Sara Almosawi '25

Reviewed by: Name of Committee, DD/MM/YYYY

Type of Action: Sense of Body

Originally Presented: 04/25/2024

Current Status: In Discussion

Whereas, Voltaire once famously proclaimed, “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it”

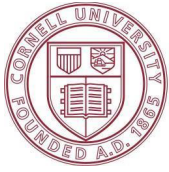
Whereas, The University has had an unfortunate and violent historical pattern of silencing student voices when they express their dissent by way of their constitutional right to protest.

Whereas, in 1985, Cornell University became a focal point for the divestment movement against apartheid. Led by students and later joined by faculty, protests including sit-ins, a shantytown encampment, and hunger strikes ensued, resulting in mass arrests. Despite these efforts, the university's Board of Trustees initially resisted full divestment, causing prolonged tension and activism on campus.

Whereas, In fact, the initial sit-ins led to approximately 100 student arrests, with additional arrests occurring during subsequent protests and demonstrations, ultimately totaling over 1,000 students, faculty, and staff arrested throughout the course of the movement.

Whereas, This University’s history establishes a pattern of suppressing “unpopular” free speech, one that we as a body have actively resisted in the past, present, and now the future.

Whereas, we must affirm the fundamental right to protest peacefully and express dissent without fear of suppression or retaliation, the encampment serves as a powerful reminder of the importance of preserving and protecting the rights of individuals to assemble and engage in peaceful protest,



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33 **Whereas**, we call upon the university administration and all stakeholders to respect and uphold
34 the rights of protesters, and to engage in constructive dialogue to address their concerns and
35 grievances.

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37 **Be it therefore resolved**, The Student Assembly sets the precedent from now and in perpetuity
38 that punitive action against peaceful protest is unacceptable.

39 **Be it further resolved**, that the Assembly recognize that allowing punitive measures against
40 peaceful protest threatens free speech for all, as it sets a dangerous precedent of free speech
41 suppression for voices across the political spectrum,

42 **Be it further resolved**, The Student Assembly need not agree with what students are protesting
43 for, but rather support all students right to protest on behalf of their beliefs.

44 **Be it further resolved**, That the Student Assembly condemn any disciplinary action relating to
45 any student's participation in peaceful protest

46 **Be it finally resolved**, That Cornell University respect the results of the referendum reflecting
47 the broader voice of the student body.

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49 Respectfully Submitted,

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51 Karys Everett '25,

52 *LGBTQIA Issues Liaison*, Student Assembly

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54 Jahmal Wallen '24,

55 *Undergraduate Representative*, University Assembly

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57 Claire Ting'25,

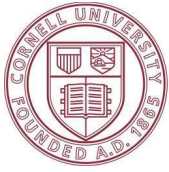
58 *Executive Vice President*, Student Assembly

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60 Imani Rezaka'24,

61 *Arts and Sciences Representative*, Student Assembly

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Cornell University Student Assembly

- 63 Aissatou Barry '24,
64 *Vice President of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*, Student Assembly
65 Minority Students Liaison, Student Assembly
66
67 **Community Sponsors:**
68 Sara Almosawi '25
69 The Arab Graduate Student Association
70 Asian Pacific Americans for Action
71 The Basic Needs Coalition
72 Black Students United
73 The Buddhist Sangha
74 The Cadre Journal
75 Climate Justice Cornell
76 Cornell Progressives
77 Ithaca Ceasefire Now
78 Jewish Voice for Peace at Cornell
79 The Mass Education Campaign
80 The Muslim Educational and Cultural Association
81 El Movimiento Estudiantil Chicanx at de Aztlán
82 Native American and Indigenous Students at Cornell
83 The People's Organizing Collective Cornell, United Students Against Sweatshops Local 3
84 Pan-African Muslim Students Association
85 The South Asian Council
86 Students for Justice in Palestine
87 SoulAAan Nation
88 Young Democratic Socialists of America
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