

## Resolution 7: Protecting the Right to Free Expression

**Abstract:** This resolution urges the Administration to work with students, employees, and faculty to discuss and communicate enforcement of issues involving free expression.

**Sponsored by:** Isaac D. Chasen '23; Shelby L. Williams '25; Duncan A. Cady '23, Danielle Smith '24, Talia Dinstein '25, Ally Leighton '25, Katie Lin '26, Lindsay Reisner '26, Michael Serdula '24, Thej Khanna '26

**Reviewed by:**

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**Whereas,** freedom of speech and the right to protest is enshrined in the First Amendment of the United States Constitution, and like other great academic institutions, has been one of the core values of Cornell University since its founding;

**Whereas,** Cornell University was founded as an institution where any person could find instruction in any study, as well as find the opportunity to freely express their views and opinions, freely express themselves, and freely engage in political discussion and disagreement in a respectful and informed environment;

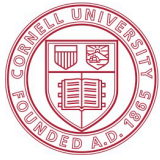
**Whereas,** while generations of Cornell students have lived and learned under our university motto and have proudly supported and endorsed these values, the university, like many other institutions, is now facing new challenges to the civil and free expression of personal views and opinions;

**Whereas,** the Cornell community has historically thrived while entertaining all viewpoints, respecting the views of others with whom we disagree, and celebrating what makes every one of us unique, as this is what makes our institution welcoming to any person and accommodating to any study;

**Whereas,** the right to protest and demonstrate has been a catalyst for change on campus, from past generations' fights for justice and representation, to modern day movements and mobilizations for progress;

**Whereas,** central to social progress is the ability of Cornellians to peacefully yet powerfully express their viewpoints in a diversity of ways, including large scale demonstrations and protests, as well as sitting in and speaking out around campus;

**Whereas,** efforts by student, faculty, and employee groups to bring the issue of free expression and the right to protest to the forefront demand the support and promotion of our shared governance system and administration;



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**Whereas**, any kind of communication that attacks or discriminates against a person or a group based on who they are, such as their race, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability status, socioeconomic status, or national origin, always violates our values and Cornell's Code of Conduct, and should be condemned wherever and whenever it occurs;

**Whereas**, preventing individuals from expressing their views and opinions, regardless of popularity, political opinion, and personal identity, always violates our university's values, and should be condemned wherever and whenever it occurs;

**Whereas**, freedom of speech does not mean freedom from consequences for one's words, and any attempts to prevent students, faculty, and employees from holding others accountable for their words should be condemned wherever and whenever it occurs;

**Whereas**, in such settings, our community must learn to strike a delicate balance between the rights of those who wish to speak, and the rights of those who wish to protest;

**Be It Therefore Resolved**, the University Assembly completely and unequivocally supports free expression, organization, speech, representation, and the right to protest within the Cornell community;

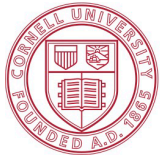
**Be It Therefore Resolved**, the University Assembly completely and unequivocally supports academic freedom and the freedom of expression in the classroom, at public events, and in all public spaces of Cornell University;

**Be It Therefore Resolved**, the administration, through words, actions, programs, and policies, should pledge to be a leader in safeguarding free expression and the right to protest on campus, and will work with the University Assembly to provide space and protection for the peaceful expression of all views and opinions.

**Be It Therefore Resolved**, the University Assembly's members, committees, and constituencies will engage in fact-finding in an effort to develop concrete plans to support and engage directly with these constituent-led efforts to keep free expression and the right to protest front of mind across the Cornell community;

**Be It Therefore Resolved**, the University Assembly wholeheartedly supports efforts to ensure accountability across the Cornell community for speech that violates our values and our Code of Conduct;

**Be It Therefore Resolved**, the administration, alongside the University Assembly and all institutions of shared governance at Cornell, must take a leading role in openly discussing



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the most difficult and pressing issues relating to free expression and the right to protest  
with all relevant constituencies, as well as creating spaces for intergroup communication;

**Respectfully Submitted,**

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