

24 American States Have Proposed Campus 'Free Speech' Laws

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At least 24 states have either introduced or passed legislation protecting freedom of speech on public college campuses. Eight states – Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona – already have passed those bills into law. [This raises the question of why these laws are necessary when freedom-of-speech already is guaranteed by the federal Constitution? The answer is that colleges and universities are not bound by the Constitution – only the federal government is. “Congress shall pass no law” to restrict speech. Schools are not bound by that. However, most colleges and universities receive federal money, so it would be an easy thing to require that they comply with the Constitution if they want the money – but federal politicians apparently are not interested in taking that stand. Here’s a comment from a wise reader: “Making “laws” about rights that already exist opens the door for “laws” to start eroding those rights.....just like all the [state] “gun laws” that erode the 2nd Amendment.” Food for thought.] -GEG

A total of eight states – Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Colorado, Utah, and Arizona – have already passed bills into law that designed to protect free expression in higher education, with lawmakers from 16 other states campaigning to pass similar legislation.

Florida was the latest to pass such a measure, with Gov. Rick Scott signing a bill banning “free speech zones” on campuses last week. The legislation also included a

“Cause of Action” mandate, allowing individuals to sue universities for violating their “expressive rights.”

Kentucky is the next state that could join the list, as the State Senate recently voted to pass a bill designed to protect the free speech of students and faculty alike.

“The problem with this free speech area is it’s not even close to a lot of activity on campus,” said Republican State Sen. Will Schroder, sponsor of the bill, [according to WEKU](#). “It really restricts individuals to a certain location.”

Not all of the free speech bills, however, have found the necessary support to successfully navigate the legislative process.

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