

When Others Try to Suppress Our Speech

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When others try to suppress our speech, it can be a violation of the First Amendment's protection of free speech, and in many cases, it may be legally actionable.

Legal Protections Under the First Amendment

The First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right to free speech, meaning the government cannot abridge this right. This includes the ability to speak, criticize, and assemble peacefully without fear of retaliation from government officials or law enforcement.

Source: Civil Rights Litigation Group

However, the First Amendment also prohibits the government from coercing third parties to suppress speech. For example, in *NRA v. Vullo* (2024), the Supreme Court held that the government may not use its power to threaten or pressure private entities to silence speech.

Source: Thomas H. Roberts & Associates, P.C.

When Suppression Is Not Protected

While the First Amendment protects speech, it does not protect coordinated efforts to shut down speech through disruption or threats of violence, often called the "heckler's veto." Courts have ruled that such actions are not protected speech and can be challenged legally.

Source: The Free Speech Center at Middle Tennessee State University

Psychological and Personal Impacts

Beyond legal rights, suppressing speech can have deep personal effects. Research shows that when people cannot express themselves freely, they may experience:

- Emotional distress and anxiety due to constant self-monitoring of speech.
- Loss of authenticity, as self-censorship can erode one's sense of self.
- Reduced cognitive processing, since speaking thoughts aloud helps organize and refine ideas.

Source: Thoughts on Life and Love

Practical Steps if Speech Is Suppressed

If you believe your speech is being suppressed unlawfully:

- Document the incident, including dates, witnesses, recordings, or written records.

- Consult a civil rights attorney to explore legal remedies, especially if government or institutional actors are involved.
- Seek support from advocacy groups or legal aid organizations that specialize in First Amendment cases.

Key Takeaway

Suppressing speech—whether by government, institutions, or individuals—can violate constitutional rights and harm personal well-being. In the U.S., the First Amendment is a strong shield against such suppression, but understanding your rights and documenting incidents is essential for effective action.

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A Heckler's Veto

A heckler's veto occurs when someone's speech is silenced because other people react—or threaten to react, with disruption, hostility, or violence.

For example, if a speaker is giving a lawful public speech and protesters become threatening, the government generally should protect the speaker and address the unlawful behavior—not cancel the speech merely to appease the hostile crowd.

The term usually concerns government action. A private individual disagreeing with, criticizing, blocking, or unfollowing someone online is generally not a heckler's veto in the constitutional sense.

If Someone Tries to Suppress Another Person's Speech, Would This Constitute a Heckler's Veto?

Not necessarily. A heckler's veto is a specific type of speech suppression: a hostile audience disrupts or threatens a lawful speaker, and the government responds by silencing or removing the speaker instead of controlling the disruptive audience.

Simply criticizing, reporting, blocking, talking over, or asking someone to stop speaking generally does not constitute a constitutional heckler's veto—especially between private individuals online.

Example: Protesters threaten violence at a lawful public speech, and police cancel the speech because of those threats. That may constitute a heckler's veto.

Protecting the Ability to Speak

People can protect their ability to speak by responding calmly, preserving evidence, and using the remedy that fits the situation.

- **Continue speaking through lawful channels.** Save your original post, publish elsewhere, submit a written statement, or request another opportunity to speak.
- **Document everything.** Keep screenshots, URLs, dates, names, messages, reports, warnings, recordings where lawful, and copies of removed content.
- **Separate disagreement from suppression.** Criticism, blocking, unfollowing, and private platform moderation generally are not First Amendment violations.
- **Use appeals and complaint procedures.** Appeal a platform decision or contact a school, employer, meeting moderator, union, or governing body in writing. Ask which rule was applied and request a written decision.
- **Address disruption, not viewpoints.** At a public event, ask officials to control threats or disruption instead of removing a lawful speaker solely because others object.
- **Report genuine threats or crimes.** Preserve the evidence and contact the platform, local law enforcement, or 911 if danger is immediate. The Department of Justice provides a central page for reporting crimes and civil rights complaints.
- **Consult a civil rights attorney.** This is especially important when a government official, public school, public employer, or law enforcement agency retaliates because of protected speech.

The central distinction is that the First Amendment primarily restricts government action; it does not guarantee access to another person's private page, audience, or privately controlled platform. It also does not require the government to answer or agree with someone. The federal courts provide an overview of what freedom of speech protects.

What U.S. Chooses to Do

1. Let them know that harassment and bullying are not allowed.
2. Remove their energy permanently and indefinitely. They no longer have access.
3. Cease and desist.
4. Obtain a no-stalking order.
5. Talk with the police.
6. Document everything and journal it all. Where necessary, file a civil rights complaint or speak with an attorney.
7. Go down to the courthouse and file a restraining order.

8. Speak up again. Share the same message as many times as it takes, multiplied by the number of speakers who sought to suppress the speech. Mark my words: Do not suppress American free speech, liberty, and truth. Any form of oppression and slavery at this time in history is addressed as such. No tolerance whatsoever for American spiritual trespass.
9. Cut through the harm and remove all channels of access. This means removing networks where necessary.
10. Stay above the hostile political Cold War. We know what happened. We looked deeply into it. We will not be gaslit like those who fell before us in history's past, and we will address the root cause, even if it means addressing the silencers.