



# THE PHILADELPHIA TRIBUNE

## Freedom of Expression is The First Amendment Right

Written by Robert Woodard

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This presidential election has been one of the most awkward elections of all times. Both candidates used their freedom to express themselves, mostly in defense of each other. My question is, "What about the right of their constituents who are citizens that are voters?"

Our freedom of expression is a right that all candidates should elect to address to all of their constituents. However, the continual fighting and name calling on behalf of the candidates did not allow the serious issues to surface. In the meantime, we as American voters suffered. Seemingly the candidates have had no problem instructing their constituents about the Second Amendment right. My question is, "What about the importance of the First Amendment right as a citizen in this country?" Remember, the right to vote is the greatest right we have, but what good is your right to vote if you can't express yourself to know who and what you are truly voting for. Both candidates who ran for president had no problem expressing themselves through bickering and fighting, but in the meantime, we as American voters felt cheated out of understanding the real issues.

America is known as "land of the free and home of the brave." However, in order to be brave and free, you first have to be able to exercise your First Amendment right. My question to the president-elect is, "How are you going to protect our First Amendment right?" because there has been much talk about the pros and cons of protecting the Second Amendment right to bear arms.

Being president is a big job, which entails intense concerns about health, foreign policy, human relations and ethnic differences, global warming, poverty, homelessness and the Middle East, just to name a few. Even the issue of homeland security becomes questionable when American citizens are being shot down in our streets in large numbers by other American citizens. Remember, these are just some of the issues that needed to be the focal point our candidates should have been addressing. Instead, the fighting went on between the two. As a result of this, violence is threatening the rights of our citizens to freely express many of the initiatives that they wanted to get out to the candidates. This disturbs the real issues that abound our country and went unnoticed because of the fighting. An example of this is has caused race haters, who are prejudiced against other people. There are shootings in this country that kill many citizens. My question becomes, "What about those who are wounded for life, as a result of being shot, that go without mention?" Many of these citizens have been left handicapped for life and the majority are not able to get the proper help, because they cannot read, write, count or spell well enough to get the proper help they need to survive.

Millions of our inner-city citizens who attended public schools did not get a proper education to become productive citizens in today's society. However, many have graduated public high schools with diplomas as receipts for services never truly rendered. My question to the president-elect is, "Who is responsible for the crime of graduating those students unprepared for life's many challenges and what are you going to do about it?" I say to you, president-elect, "educational discrimination" needs to be addressed, by reporting all inner-city public high schools that have given out diplomas to unprepared students into our society.

We as a country have the highest number of people in prison and the main reason that a majority of them are there is their lack of a proper education. Millions of these citizens cannot use their First Amendment right to express themselves without a proper quality education. Just that alone is causing most of the crime we are experiencing in our many of urban cities in our country today.

"Educational discrimination" equals poverty or prison. "Educational discrimination" is real and by eliminating it we will truly be helping this nation give every citizen the opportunity to exercise their First Amendment right. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. stated in many of his speeches, "... discrimination anywhere is injustice everywhere." I propose to our president-elect to not allow any prisoner to leave prison without a proper quality first- to sixth-grade education, without computers or calculators, just good old-fashioned reading, writing and arithmetic. This would help change American society and it would cut down on crime in our nation for years to come.

I, as a citizen of the United States of America, would like to see our new president get this job done. Remember, freedom of expression is a right that cannot be truly exercised without a proper education. Not just for some of the people, but all of the people. Race in our society has become one of the most challenging issues in our nation. As a result of this election, I am suggesting from this point on that all candidates, running for any office, to express to your constituents how you view race in America. Is it singular or plural? Take the "RACE Test" today at [www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org](http://www.BarbershopTalkHFD.org).

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