

Criminalizing Words: Global Governments Transform Blasphemy Into 'Hate Speech' Laws

Last year, Richard Stengel claimed that America “needs a hate speech law” in an article at *The Washington Post*.

During his time working as a government official, Stengel noticed that the United States had exceptional free speech laws. In allowing speech that others could disagree with, America’s free speech laws stand out in comparison with most other countries.

“Even the most sophisticated Arab diplomats that I dealt with did not understand why the First Amendment allows someone to burn a Koran,” Stengel wrote. “Why, they asked me, would you ever want to protect that?”

Should the First Amendment protect speech that we hate? Not if it’s “hateful,” Stengel argued. And he’s not alone.

Earlier this year, New York Sen. David Carlucci introduced a bill that would require social media networks to ban and silence speech deemed hateful, a practice they seem to have already adopted.

But are laws against hate speech benefitting other countries?

Outside of the United States, many people can’t speak freely without fearing punishment from the government.

Take Pakistan, for example.

Ten years ago, a Christian woman was sentenced to death by hanging because she was accused of having blasphemed during a

conversation with coworkers. She was imprisoned until 2019, when a Pakistani court acquitted her due to insufficient evidence.

Even in the West, the liberty to speak your mind or live according to your conscience is being eroded by “hate speech laws.” Just last year, a Finnish politician was placed under criminal investigation for “hate speech” because she shared an image of a Bible passage on Facebook.

You’d think that these examples would cause proponents of hate speech laws in the U.S. to think twice. But some university professors claim that free speech is used as a tool of oppression and therefore must be reined in by laws against hate. Many students agree.

Writers at *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* claim that free speech is tearing us apart, and hate speech laws protect citizens from discrimination.

That’s not what the stories from abroad tell us.

Americans have a priceless liberty in the First Amendment: the freedom to speak your mind without fearing the government will punish you for your opinion. But support for free speech is dwindling.

In America, we’re facing two choices when it comes to speech: Guard our free speech for all, or follow the rest of the world and allow speech to be restricted based on the whims of the powerful. When you think about it, that’s no choice at all.

For more information global views of free speech, watch this 5-minute video.

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