

LIBERTY & LAW CENTER NEWSLETTER JULY 2025



Dear Friends of the Liberty & Law Center,

As we reflect on this past academic year, we'd like to thank you for being part of the Liberty & Law Center efforts. Your support keeps our work moving and our conversations growing.

Over the past year, we hosted the second annual Voices for Liberty Initiative Symposium, which was covered live by C-SPAN, published numerous op-eds, hosted a civil discourse event for students immediately following the contentious November 2024 elections through our Public Discourse Project, published six in-depth research papers, and trained another group of students to defend the First Amendment by working on active free speech litigation through our Free Speech Clinic.

Your generous support makes our work possible and helps us grow. We hope you'll continue to stand with us and make an even greater impact. Thank you for being an essential part of our work. You can support our projects by making a donation [through this link](#).

With Warm Regards,

David E. Bernstein
Executive Director
Liberty & Law Center

JoAnn Koob
Director and Free Speech Clinic Fellow
Liberty & Law Center

PROGRAM AND EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

Voices for Liberty Initiative



The Voices for Liberty Initiative explores how free speech contributes to the advancement of civil rights in America, especially for historically disadvantaged and socially marginalized communities. The Initiative incubates in-depth research, host public events, and runs a nationwide college speakers bureau. Since the launch of our speakers bureau two and a half years ago, we've held over 100 events on college campuses, working with speakers and schools to encourage open conversations on topics like censorship, discrimination, and racism. Our annual symposium, most recently held in November 2024 was broadcast on C-SPAN. The symposium brought together experts to talk about how free speech affects people around the world, including its role in women's rights, religion, and racial equality. A recording is available for viewing [at this link](#).

[Watch the November 2024 Symposium panels here](#)

We recently published four op-eds that originated from papers presented at our second annual Voices for Liberty Symposium. The papers are available on the Liberty & Law Center's [SSRN page](#).

The first op-ed, "[*Hate Speech is Bad, but Censorship is Far Worse*](#)," by Claudia Williamson Kramer, is based on her research paper [Spewing Hate or Speaking Tolerance: How Free Speech Affects Social Norms and Minority Rights](#). The second op-ed, "[*The Jewel of the Delta Proves the Upside of Free Speech*](#)," by David Beito, draws from his paper [Freedom's Outpost: Mound Bayou and the Fight for Free Expression in Jim Crow Mississippi, 1887–1941](#). The third op-ed, "[*Growing Consensus on Religious Freedom Benefits Everyone, Religious or Not*](#)," by Josh McDaniel, originates from his paper [Religious Minority and Secular Rights](#). Lastly, the fourth op-ed "[*Free speech, antisemitism and the fight for America's campuses*](#)," by David E. Bernstein and David L. Bernstein is based on their paper [Supporting Free Speech and Countering Antisemitism on American College Campuses](#).

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We recently welcomed Jacob Mchangama to the VFLI Speakers Bureau. Mr. Mchangama is the Founder & Executive Director of The Future of Free Speech. He will bring his knowledge and expertise to discuss important topics around free speech with college students. Learn more about Jacob and our other speakers, and reach out to VFLI@gmu.edu to host a conversation about free speech and civil rights at your university.



In the latest episode of Higher Ed Now, American Council of Trustees and Alumni's podcast, host Bryan Paul sits down with JoAnn Koob, Assistant Professor of Law and Director of the Liberty & Law Center, and Debi Ghate, Director of the Center's Voices for Liberty Initiative. The conversation delves into how the Center cultivates an environment where students tackle diverse legal and political viewpoints through thoughtful dialogue and robust, civil debate. Listen to the [full episode here](#)

Public Discourse Project



Launched in Spring 2019, the Liberty & Law Center's Public Discourse Project continues to bring students together across divides. Last fall, just a week after the election, we hosted *Discussion Over Division: Election Edition* to help students reflect on a historically divisive election and practice civil discourse. We also hosted events on topics such as *Current Issues in Law and Policy* and *Free Speech on College Campuses*, drawing strong participation and positive feedback. By creating space for respectful debate, the program strengthens democratic values on campus.

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Free Speech Legal Clinic

The Free Speech Clinic just completed its seventh year of operations. This past year, the Clinic trained seven students to defend First Amendment rights by engaging in real-world litigation. In January, it hosted an event with Nadine Strossen for students from nine First Amendment clinics nationwide. To date, nearly 50 students have completed the program, with 13 obtaining positions working in free speech and public interest litigation, 13 in the federal government, and 18 securing judicial clerkships.

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