



2021 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 27

April 21, 2021 - Introduced by Senator JACQUE, cosponsored by Representative MURPHY. Referred to Committee on Senate Organization.

- 1 **Relating to:** declaring April to be Freedom of Expression Month across Wisconsin.
- 2 Whereas, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution protects the
- 3 right of free speech; and
- 4 Whereas, freedom of speech is a cornerstone of liberty, ensuring that public
- 5 debate is necessary for any healthy republic; and
- 6 Whereas, freedom of speech is under constant threat from those wanting to
- 7 silence debate; and
- 8 Whereas, recent surveys by the Knight Foundation of college students, who
- 9 represent our nation's future, show deeply concerning views about freedom of speech,
- 10 including the belief that speech that makes them feel uncomfortable should be
- 11 restricted; and
- 12 Whereas, a survey conducted by the Thompson Center for Public Leadership
- 13 in October and November of 2020 found that 63 percent of University of
- 14 Wisconsin–Madison students believed hate speech should be punished by the
- 15 government; and

1 Whereas, our state and nation currently face challenges to free speech that
2 have never emerged before, including speech codes, cancel culture, and corporate
3 technology giants who censor the primary outlets for most Americans to express
4 themselves; and

5 Whereas, in September 2019, the Chief Judge of the Eastern District of
6 Wisconsin, United States District Court, ruled that Northeastern Wisconsin
7 Technical College had violated a student’s First Amendment rights; and

8 Whereas, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit ruled in March 2021
9 that University of Iowa officials could be held personally liable for violating
10 free-speech and expressive-association rights of students, noting that
11 administrators were either “plainly incompetent or they knowingly violated the
12 Constitution”; and

13 Whereas, the United States Supreme Court ruled 8 to 1 in March 2021 in favor
14 of two former Georgia public college students who sued the public institution over
15 restrictive campus speech policies, noting in the opinion that the student
16 “experienced a completed violation of his constitutional rights when respondents
17 enforced their speech policies against him”; and

18 Whereas, taxpayer dollars spent on public colleges and universities that
19 proliferate negative views of freedom of expression and religious liberty represents
20 a diminishing return on investment; now, therefore, be it

21 ***Resolved by the senate, the assembly concurring, That*** the members of the
22 Wisconsin Legislature declare April to be Freedom of Expression Month across
23 Wisconsin.

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(END)