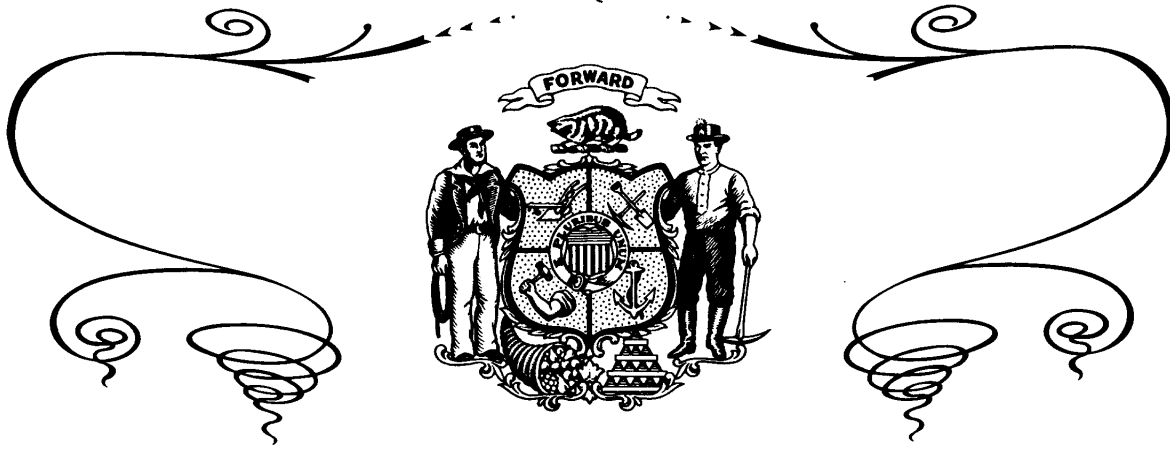


State of Wisconsin



2021 Assembly Joint Resolution 32

ENROLLED JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to: declaring April to be Freedom of Expression Month across Wisconsin.

Whereas, the First Amendment to the United States Constitution protects the right of free speech; and

Whereas, freedom of speech is a cornerstone of liberty, ensuring that public debate is necessary for any healthy republic; and

Whereas, freedom of speech is under constant threat from those wanting to silence debate; and

Whereas, recent surveys by the Knight Foundation of college students, who represent our nation's future, show deeply concerning views about freedom of speech, including the belief that speech that makes them feel uncomfortable should be restricted; and

Whereas, a survey conducted by the Thompson Center for Public Leadership in October and November of 2020 found that 63 percent of University of Wisconsin–Madison students believed hate speech should be punished by the government; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

Senator Chris Kapenga
President of the Senate

Representative Robin J. Vos
Speaker of the Assembly

Date

Edward A. Blazel
Assembly Chief Clerk