

citizenship Quiz

Can you pass the U.S. Citizenship Test? See how well you know the content in this chapter covered on the citizenship test required of foreign born candidates for naturalization.

1. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?
2. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?
3. What is freedom of religion?
4. What is one reason colonists came to America?

(1) The Bill of Rights (2) Speech/religion/assembly/press/petition the government (3) You can practice any religion, or not practice a religion (4) Freedom/political liberty/religious freedom/economic opportunity/practice their religion/escape persecution

Source: United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

has the same effect. Truth is an absolute defense in a slander or libel suit; a true statement cannot injure or defame.

The Court made it much more difficult for public officials and public figures to win defamation suits against their critics with its opinion in *New York Times Company v. Sullivan* (1964). In this case, the Court introduced the new **Sullivan rule**, which required that a public official in a libel or slander case not only prove the statements in question are false but also that the defendants wrote or spoke the words with malice. The Court defined *malice* as (1) knowledge the statements were false or (2) reckless disregard for whether the statements were false or not. The Court felt that this higher standard of proof was necessary to avoid self-censorship by critics of public officials, who may not have the ability to guarantee the truth of all their assertions.

Hate Speech

Hate speech involves prejudicial and hostile statements concerning characteristics such as race, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, or religion. Many communities and college campuses have adopted laws and policies banning hate speech. Does your campus have such rules? Although they may be based on good intentions, do you believe they impede free speech in any way? In a related manner, are you comfortable discussing controversial topics in class? Does any reluctance to do so indicate a lack of support for free speech among you and your peers? In contrast, the Supreme Court has been reluctant to ban hate speech. The justices voted 8 to 1 to allow members of the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas, to express their message that God is punishing the United States for its tolerance of homosexuality in the military by picketing at a military funeral. The Court ruled that such speech was permissible under the First Amendment even though the church's signs contained such hate messages as "Fag Troops," "God Hates You," and "Thank God for Dead Soldiers."⁶⁰

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS

Because both freedom of speech and freedom of the press deal with expression, similar principles underlie each. Both forms of communication are essential to democracy due to their role in transmitting information. As we learned, the Founders knew and stressed the importance of an informed public in creating a successful democracy. The press protections they incorporated into the Constitution reflect those beliefs.

Sullivan rule Standard requiring public officials and public figures in defamation suits to prove that allegedly libelous or slanderous statements are both false and made with malice.

hate speech Prejudicial and hostile statements toward another person's innate characteristics such as race and ethnicity.