

# OCPA FaxLine Report

a public policy information service for members of the Oklahoma Council of Public Affairs, Inc.

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Dear OCPA Member:

Thursday, April 22, 2010

Well, the Tea Party protestors were out in full force last week and I have little doubt that if our nation's first tea partiers were still around today they would be joining in. I went to a Tea Party in Oklahoma City on the South Capitol steps to listen to the speakers for myself. I must admit I found nothing incendiary in their gathering. Many other peaceful Tea Parties were held in communities throughout the state. One Tea Party held in Enid last week was even organized by some of the town's most notable community leaders.

Contrary to what the national news media implied leading up to these events, there hasn't been a single hint of violence at any of the Tea Parties. All I witnessed was people of different ages and races peacefully assembling to use their freedom of speech. But violence? Come on now, get real. The national news media is attempting to label law abiding, hard-working Americans, who want to peacefully assemble to show their concern for the direction of our country, as new domestic terrorists. That's shameful and despicable. When will the nation's news media stop such reckless sensational propaganda and start providing us with objective journalism?

Part of the reason for the idea of freedom of the press, freedom of speech and the freedom to peacefully assemble was that the Founders knew that a society where all points of view can be shared creates a safeguard against tyranny. They reasoned that a free press would be responsible enough to report the facts, holding those in elected office to account for their actions, and believed the people would do so too. They trusted their fellow citizens' intellect and common sense to be able to separate flaky rhetoric from sound reasoning.

If the only acceptable speech in the future becomes politically correct speech, we eventually risk no free speech at all. You see, politically correct speech is continually changing on the whims and wiles of those in power and always for their own political benefit. In fact, the very term "politically correct speech" is a misnomer. It should be called what it really is, "censorship." Most reasonable people know there's not much serious and substantive dialogue on issues that won't offend someone at sometime. In fact, exceedingly popular conservative talk radio and Fox News have been favorite targets of the "progressives" who want new restrictions on freedom of speech, that is, unless it is their own speech.

To preserve your freedom of speech, first, use it; second, defend it both for yourself and for others. You have an obligation to do so. Our Founders were men and women who sacrificed far more than the average citizen today. Many risked their lives and the lives of their families, their fortunes, their property and their sacred honor to provide future generations with the opportunity to enjoy the fruits of the freedoms that God has blessed us with. So how could such freedom loving people ever permit the dissolution of one of our most precious freedoms, that being, free speech?

Until next time . . . Brett A. Magbee, Vice President for Operations

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