



Free Expression and Democracy in America: A History

Stephen M. Feldman

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From the 1798 Sedition Act to the war on terror, numerous presidents, members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and local officials have endorsed the silencing of free expression. If the connection between democracy and the freedom of speech is such a vital one, why would so many governmental leaders seek to quiet their citizens? *Free Expression and Democracy in America* traces two rival traditions in American culture—suppression of speech and dissent as a form of speech—to provide an unparalleled overview of the law, history, and politics of individual rights in the United States.

Charting the course of free expression alongside the nation's political evolution, from the birth of the Constitution to the quagmire of the Vietnam War, Stephen M. Feldman argues that our level of freedom is determined not only by the Supreme Court, but also by cultural, social, and economic forces. Along the way, he pinpoints the struggles of excluded groups—women, African Americans, and laborers—to participate in democratic government as pivotal to the development of free expression. In an age when our freedom of speech is once again at risk, this momentous book will be essential reading for legal historians, political scientists, and history buffs alike.

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