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Legally Speaking, What Is Censorship? A Brief Dive Into the First Amendment

The First Amendment has been the centerpiece of a contentious debate about what can legally be posted (and deleted) on social media like Twitter and Facebook. But before we can define "censorship," we need to know what is defined as "free speech." What exactly does the First Amendment say about free speech? What are the boundaries for what people can and cannot do?



The Freedom to Speak — Without Obscenity or Inciting Violence

The First Amendment covers the freedom of speech, press, and religion. It's arguably one of the most fundamental amendments to American democracy, but its interpretations can vary significantly. This is how the full First Amendment reads:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

Why is it that the Ku Klux Klan and Westboro Baptist Church have gotten into legal trouble for expressing their opinions? Their groups often promote acts of violence against another group, which violates the "peaceably" qualifier to the people's right to assemble.

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Less Time ≠ Less Impact

Father's Day Is for Divorced Dads, Too!

Every June, families across the country honors great fathers, stepfathers, grandpas, and other paternal figures. As someone who works with all kinds of families, I want to celebrate the enormous positive impact that having an active, loving, and involved father can make in the life of a child. While the living arrangement between fathers and their children frequently change in divorce, the positive impact a father can have does not.

When I am handling a divorce, I love working with good fathers whose largest concern is their children and doing what is best for them. Reaching an agreement as to how to parent a child after divorce is difficult under the best of circumstances, and very few parents are dealing with the best circumstances. And yet, time and again, I see dads stepping up to care for and protect their children. I love that we have a holiday to celebrate fathers like these.

The role of the average father has changed a lot over the past few decades. But the most basic tenets of being a good dad — involvement in your child's life, being emotionally and physically available to them, modeling responsibility and adult male behavior — remain the same, and so do their benefits. Numerous studies show that children whose fathers are active participants in their lives are more likely to graduate high school, attend college, achieve good grades, and become a high-wage earner and less likely to become sexually active at a young age, use illegal drugs, or have a child out of wedlock.

Interestingly, one thing that does *not* seem to matter is whether the father spends the same amount of time with the children as their mother. Children of divorce who live primarily with either the mother or father show the same increase in good behavior and decrease in bad behavior as children in two parent families. The key is not whether the parents are married or even where the child lives. The key factor is how involved the father is with the child's life. You may have seen some of these studies with headlines like "Children in Joint Custody Arrangements are More Successful." This may leave you with the impression that the studies are examining 50/50 custody cases. That is NOT the case. A dad having possession of their child under a Texas Standard Possession order is counted as "Joint Custody" or "Shared Custody."

These 50/50 arrangements are rarer than most people think. Studies show that even when the court orders a 50/50, or when the parents agree on one, in most cases, one of the parents voluntarily allows the child to spend more time at the other parents' home, and the family eventually follows a schedule not too different from a standard Texas



order. That is because cutting your life in half between two homes is difficult for a child. It takes a highly organized child and a high level of cooperation between the two parents for a 50/50 custody arrangement to be successful.

For this reason, I rarely recommend a 50/50 custody split. I have had some people assume that this means that I don't want fathers to have time with their children. I actually favor fathers getting custody more often than most family law attorneys do. In most families, even when the parents live together, there is one person who is a primary parent. That is the parent that takes responsibility for making sure that homework is done and that the child has appropriate clothing. It is the person that the child wants to speak with when they are upset about something, and the parent who has their child's best friend's parent's phone number already on their telephones. If parents are getting divorced, and there is a primary parent, THAT is the parent with whom the child should live. If the father is the primary parent, he should not be looking for a 50/50 custody agreement. He should be looking for custody.

No matter what the living situation between the child and the father is, I am happy to have a time to celebrate great fathers this month. To all the dads out there, stay involved in your child's life. Go to their events. Call and text them when you aren't there in person. Let your children know that they are important to you. They will grow up to be happier, better adjusted adults who raise more successful children themselves because they had you as an example.

-Ruby Bolton

The Super Benefits of Yoga

June 21 is International Yoga Day, which makes it a great time of year to talk about the unique benefits of yoga — the “superfood” of fitness. As a mixture of exercise and mindfulness, yoga is not only challenging but also has myriad health benefits.

Many people assume yoga is mainly useful for increasing your flexibility. However, it’s also excellent for further developing your strength, mobility, and balance. These can be key benefits for living a healthier lifestyle, whether you’re an athlete or concerned about aging.

Kaitlyn Hochart, a yoga instructor from San Diego, California, writes on Healthline, “During yoga, your body goes through a full range and variety of motion that can counteract aches and pains associated with tension or poor postural habits.” Yoga can help you become more aware of these habits, “[allowing] you to fix these imbalances and improve overall athleticism.”

Many forms of exercise are useful against depression and cardiovascular disease, but in yoga’s case, you don’t have to break a sweat to start benefiting from its stress-relieving properties. “The breathing exercises you practice during yoga can help lower your heart rate and shift your nervous system into a more relaxed state. It also promotes better sleep and increased focus,” Hochart writes.



Multiple studies agree: Yoga can significantly decrease the secretion of cortisol, the primary stress hormone. In one study, 64 women with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) participated in a 10-week program, performing yoga at least once a week. By the end of the 10 weeks, 52% of participants no longer met the criteria for PTSD at all.

As with starting any new hobby or regular exercise, it may help to set clear goals for yourself. By doing yoga regularly, there are several physical improvements you can look forward to, such as:

- Improved range of motion or ease of movement
- A reduction in pain, discomfort, or other symptoms
- An increase in physical strength and endurance
- Less weight fluctuation
- Changes in the way your clothes fit
- Better-quality sleeping habits and increased or stabilized energy levels

One of the best qualities of yoga is that you can be of any age or fitness level. So, pull up a YouTube video, find a soft surface, and give it a try!

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However, more restrictions have come up. In *Miller v. California* (1973), the U.S. Supreme Court found that the First Amendment’s freedom of speech doesn’t apply to obscenity.

How does the court define obscenity? There are three things they’ll take into account:

1. Will the average person (applying contemporary “community standards”) find the work appealing to the overly sexual interests?
2. Does the work depict or describe, in an offensive way, sexual conduct or excretory functions as defined by state law?
3. Does the work, when taken as a whole, lack serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value?

Certain types of hate speech are legal, so long as they don’t incite violence and cannot be categorized as obscenity as described above. But what about more ordinary political opinions? Can those be legally censored?

The First Amendment’s Boundary

Corporate censorship and censorship by private entities are legal because the First Amendment only applies to government censorship. That’s why when Twitter bans an account or Facebook



deletes a post, these actions don’t count as violations of free speech. Could that change?

According to legal experts, the big question now is how to treat large social media platforms. Clay Calvert, professor of law at the Levin College of Law, asks, “Should we treat them differently and regulate them more closely? Have we reached that stage where we need antitrust litigation, perhaps, and say they have such powerful platforms, they’re like near-monopolies that we should do some trust-busting and break them up?”

Would it be a good idea for the First Amendment to apply to private entities? We’ll leave that to the future debates that are sure to come.

TAKE A BREAK



Inspired by [FeastingAtHome.com](https://www.feastingathome.com)

A spice-filled marinade and time do all the work in this recipe that features Middle Eastern flavors.

Ingredients

- 2 tbsp ground coriander
- 2 tsp allspice
- 2 tsp kosher salt
- 8 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- 6 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp turmeric
- 2 lbs boneless, skinless chicken thighs
- 1 tsp ground ginger
- 1 tsp ground black pepper

Directions

1. To create marinade, whisk all spices with the garlic and olive oil in a medium bowl.
2. Add chicken to the bowl, coat well with marinade, cover, and let sit in the fridge for at least 20 minutes — or up to 48 hours. Strain off excess marinade before cooking.
3. Preheat grill to medium-high heat. Grill thighs for 10–12 minutes on each side, or until a meat thermometer reads 165 F.
4. Serve with rice, vegetables, or pita bread with tzatziki.

ARE GROCERY SUBSCRIPTION BOXES WORTH IT?

June is National Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Month, so let's explore one popular way to get more fresh produce into our lives: subscription-based delivery services like Full Circle and Imperfect Food. Are these services actually worth it? Do they save money and provide what they promise? Here's what the research turned up.

Can they save you time?

The Verdict: Yes, without a doubt. Subscription-based grocery delivery services appeal to consumers because they save time. With somebody else doing your grocery shopping, you don't have to think about when you're making a trip to the grocery store this week. Someone else is doing it for you!

Plus, some services even offer meal kits if you can't decide what to make. There's no argument here — these services definitely save you time.

Can they save you money?

The Verdict: Sometimes, since it depends on your existing shopping habits. If you find yourself making impulsive purchases while strolling down the aisles at the grocery store, then a set (but customizable) weekly list of delivered groceries might be a great way to stick to your budget. Unfortunately, not many grocery subscription-box delivery services offer nonfood items like toilet paper or cleaning products, so you may still have to make a trip to the store every once in a while.

Is the food quality great?

The Verdict: Yes, but it depends on your area. You have a higher chance of getting better grocery items if you buy from an organic grocery box service, like Imperfect Foods or Farm Fresh to You, since these companies work closely with your local farms.

Keep in mind that some services, like Imperfect Foods, are designed to deliver fresh foods that are a little "imperfect" in size, shape, or color to help prevent food waste — but, as a benefit, it's more affordable! However, we've found some services, like Full Circle, will prepackage their boxes from warehouses that may not be local to you, so do a little research before picking one.

All in all, we've been pleasantly surprised to find that these boxes aren't such a bad idea. Consider looking into it if you're tired of the weekly grocery store time crunch!

