



CONNER HUNTING
Accounting

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL DISCOURSE AND FREE SPEECH?

Civil discourse is a key feature in the survival and maintenance of healthy democracy. In recent years, there has been a clear increase in the stakes of politics in the United States. Possibly due to the diffusion of ideas through social media or through interpersonal relationships, politics and social constructs have never been more prevalent. It's not uncommon to see echo chambers of information due to algorithmic searches of information. This lack of diversity in the information we as a society receive, has highlighted the issues of sticking to a set of beliefs and never having those beliefs challenged. By utilizing our First Amendment, Americans are able to be engaged, taking part, and increasing their efficacy.

Is its simplicity, civil discourse details the process of conversations and engagements on a variety of topics to better understand an opponent. This process doesn't necessarily focus on trying to sway your opponents to your side, but just get them to understand the reasoning for your beliefs. This creates a ground for commonality, as well as maintains a level of understanding and respect that promotes civility, even in the face of opposition. Dating back to the formation of the United States government, we can see a clear and prominent use of civil discourse while trying to decide what was best for the future of our nation. First, having discussions where there is opposition will either help you understand the faults of your standpoint, or strengthen your belief in it. Furthering this, civil discourse offers an opportunity to work towards a solution or commonality, more times

than not, a common goal is shared, but the means of achieving it is different. Civil discourse promotes a solution, or some commonality on a solution, something that cannot be achieved by arguments and disagreements alone.

As citizens of the United States, we also contain a right to free speech, a sentiment that cannot be reflected in many countries around the world. To suppress this right, or not utilize the value it holds reflects suppression of individuals ideas and understanding. Freedom of speech upholds civil discourse, without it, many movements would have never started. Freedom of speech is our country's foundation. It's the grassroots mobilization, the townhall meetings and rallies, the protest and petitions. It offers involvement, and improves political efficacy, all which lead to the health of our democracy, and aids as a facilitator of civil discourse.

The beauty of civil discourse lies within the name itself. The civility promotes a culture of respect and openness, sentiments that are extremely important when discussing sensitive matters. The aspect of discourse promotes understanding and challenges, either to your own beliefs or others. These challenges help work to create an understanding, utilizing our voices to create change and understanding. Change will only occur when there is respect and understanding, which is why civil discourse has never been more important to society.