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WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF CIVIL DISCOURSE AND FREE SPEECH?

Fundamentally, the freedom of speech and the ability for individuals to interact with each other in a calm and kind way are both the cornerstones of a democracy that is open and compassionate. Without these two items, democracy cannot and will not work. Period.

At the most basic level, democracy is about how ordinary citizens, without regard for prestige or wealth or anything else, are able to have a direct say in how government shapes their lives and what values make up the nation that they are apart of. This rich tradition of citizen participation can be traced back throughout antiquity, and this tradition is still a very large part of how our democracy in the United States functions today.

When citizens from different backgrounds, creeds, and walks of life get together to discuss the issues that affect them, civil discourse gives the opportunity for individuals to express their views and opinions, and it allows for the whole nation to get an informed perspective from all its citizens. Civil discourse revolves around the notion that all individuals treat each other with respect, and understand the importance of respect, and that the value of everyone sharing their ideas is a great advantage, and not a disadvantage, within the democratic process. By

ensuring the value of all ideas are brought to the table, we as a nation can come together to agree on what path we should be taking to reach our goals and to fully live up to our values.

Freedom of speech, which includes the capacity to perform a plethora of different actions, allows for Americans to feel as though they have a hand in how their government is operating. It allows for all of us to debate our worst problems. By giving anyone the platform to express ideas and views, we can work towards more concrete and effective solutions. Instead of looking at perspectives that don't take into consideration the totality of vast experiences of all members of this country, we can consider the different experiences and have this contribute to our understanding of how this nation should be run.

Civil discourse and the freedom of speech are vital to the functioning of this country, which relies so heavily on the input and perspective of all citizens, in order to create a "more perfect Union." Without these ideas, our country will cease to be its most true self. Discourse and the freedom to express oneself must be protected at all costs.