

## **Resolution Reaffirming Support for Freedom of Speech**

**WHEREAS**, the First Amendment values of freedom of thought and of speech, including the right to disseminate and to receive ideas without restraint, are the foundation of liberal democracy; and the willingness to consider challenging, unorthodox ideas, to discuss opposing viewpoints rationally and civilly, and to embrace, in the words of U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, “freedom for the idea we hate,” are at the heart of liberalism; and

**WHEREAS**, there has been an apparent erosion in American commitment to freedom of speech: for example, a November, 2015 poll shows that over a quarter of Americans believe that the government should be able to prevent people from making statements that are offensive to minorities; and a May, 2015 poll shows that half of Democrats favor making “hate speech” a crime; and

**WHEREAS**, President Barack Obama has deplored this trend, saying: “I’ve heard of some college campuses where they don’t want to have a guest speaker who is too conservative or they don’t want to read a book if it has language that is offensive to African-Americans or somehow sends a demeaning signal towards women. I’ve got to tell you, I don’t agree with that either. I don’t agree that you, when you become students at colleges, have to be coddled and protected from different points of view. Anybody who comes to speak to you and you disagree with, you should have an argument with them, but you shouldn’t silence them by saying you can’t come because I’m too sensitive to hear what you have to say;”

**THEREFORE IT IS RESOLVED**, that the Los Angeles County Democratic Party reaffirms its enduring commitment to First Amendment values, and to the right of every person to freely say what he or she thinks; endorses the importance of open, unconstrained debate and discussion; and rejects the notion that any person has a right to be protected from speech he or she finds offensive; and

**IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED**, that this resolution will be communicated to Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, members of the Los Angeles City Council, members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, Regents of the University of California, Members of the California State Universities Board of trustees, and to Dr. Brice W. Harris, Chancellor of California Community Colleges.

Submitted by Paul Kujawsky, AD 46

Adopted by LACDP 01/12/16