

The Young Americans for Liberty Case

Case Name: *Young Americans for Liberty v. University of Alabama*

Case Action: Filed in Alabama Circuit Court for the 6th Judicial Circuit on May 21 2021

Significance: Whether university officials can require students to request advance permission to speak on campus



Background: Young Americans for Liberty at the University of Alabama exists to promote the principles of individual liberty on campus by engaging with fellow students on important cultural and political issues. However, YAL at the University of Alabama is being prevented from speaking about these principles on campus because of burdensome speech policies that require students to obtain a permit to speak on campus at least five days in advance. The university's restrictive speech policy directly violates Alabama's campus free speech act, guarantees students on a public campus the ability to speak freely without restrictions and enables campuses to be a place where the marketplace of ideas can flourish. Students have the right to speak freely and engage with ideas from all sides of the political spectrum without restrictions, and that is why ADF has filed a lawsuit against the university.

Key Points

- All students—regardless of viewpoint—have the freedom to share their beliefs and engage in civil debate on campus without first asking college administrators for permission to speak.
- Public universities should be encouraging free speech, not stifling it with burdensome and illegal rules.
- Students don't need a permit to speak freely on a public campus. And they don't give up their constitutionally protected freedoms when they step onto campus or hold a specific viewpoint.

Key Facts

- The University of Alabama's speech policies violate express provisions of Alabama's campus free speech act and shut down free speech on campus.
- Alabama's campus free speech act expressly prohibits universities from placing burdensome restrictions on speech, and all public universities in Alabama are required to follow this law.
- The campus free speech act ensures that public universities again become places where intellectual diversity flourishes and all students can engage in the marketplace of ideas. We commend Governor Ivey for signing this legislation and encourage other lawmakers around the country to do the same.

The Bottom Line: Alabama law is clear: students don't need a permit from college officials to speak on campus.