

The New War on Dissent: Sedition, Silence, and the Assault on Democracy

THE SEDITION ACT: DEAD SINCE 1801, YET RESURRECTED AS A THREAT

The Sedition Act of 1798 expired in 1801 and has NEVER been ruled on by the Supreme Court. Why? Because even in the early republic, leaders knew it wouldn't survive constitutional scrutiny. Modern First Amendment doctrine makes it unmistakably clear: resurrecting the Sedition Act or even invoking its spirit against political opponents, comedians, journalists, or members of Congress is completely baseless, profoundly unconstitutional, and fundamentally incompatible with American democracy.

A government official swearing to uphold the Constitution twice yet threatening critics with a law that no longer exists and was widely condemned even in its own time, is not merely reckless, it is a betrayal of the oath of office. Using expired and discredited sedition rhetoric to attack opponents is an attempt to chill speech through fear, not law.

THE DANGER OF FALSE SEDITION ACCUSATIONS

Threatening people for warning the military about ILLEGAL orders is one of the most disturbing trends of all. These warnings don't encourage defiance—they uphold the law. Members of the military are REQUIRED to disobey illegal orders. Reminding them of this is not sedition. It is civic responsibility.

To suggest that such speech is criminal is to turn the Constitution upside down.

A FREE PRESS THREATENED BY INTIMIDATION

The intimidation of Stephen Colbert, Jimmy Kimmel, newspapers, and television networks, often through veiled threats of politically motivated mergers or regulatory retaliation represents a direct attack on the First Amendment's guarantee of a free press.

The message is unmistakable: "Speak out, and you may be punished."

This is the exact abuse the First Amendment was written to prevent.

A CLIMATE OF FEAR FOR ORDINARY CITIZENS

When citizens feel that questioning government actions might put a 'target on their back,' the problem is not the citizens — it is the culture of intimidation coming from those who view dissent as a threat rather than a constitutional right.

I write this editorial with the full understanding that people raising valid legal or constitutional concerns may fear retaliation. That fear is itself proof of how urgently this conversation is needed.

PROTECT YOUR RIGHTS

Document everything. Share concerns with trusted people. If you ever feel threatened, contact appropriate authorities and civil rights organizations. Your right to speak freely is protected by law, no matter who attempts to intimidate or silence you.

Democracy requires citizens who refuse to bow to fear. And the First Amendment is not just a right. It is the cornerstone of the American promise.

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES IN WASHINGTON AND URGE THEM TO SUPPORT OUR FIRST AMENDMENT RIGHTS

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