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SPEECH FIRST

Speech First Condemns Pennsylvania Lawmaker's Coercive Tactics

Washington, D.C. (March 22, 2023) – Today, the Executive Director of Speech First, Cherise Trump put out a statement condemning recent [comments](#) from Pennsylvania State Representative La'Tasha Mayes during an Appropriations Committee hearing addressing university funding, where Mayes demanded that the University of Pittsburgh disinvite speakers like Michael Knowles.

[Cherise Trump](#), Executive Director of Speech First, issued the following statement:

“This is a situation where the state is saying that if the university doesn’t violate its students’ First Amendment rights, then their funding could be at risk. Said more plainly, this is obvious state-coercion. Lawmakers shouldn’t be using veiled threats to hold funding over universities simply because they don’t like a person who was invited to speak. By twisting Michael Knowles’s comments to fit her narrative and inciting outrage, Mayes is purposely exacerbating an issue that simply isn’t there. Furthermore, she is clearly targeting speech that is protected under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution as well as in the Commonwealth’s State Constitution. We are seeing these tactics nationwide. With the recent Charlie Kirk protests at UC Davis and the Judge Duncan protests at Stanford, this is their playbook: shut down and silence anyone you disagree with. Mayes’ attempts to bully a university into submission is an abuse of power. We will not be bullied, there will be consequences for censorship, and that starts with holding lawmakers and administrators alike accountable for their actions.”

To schedule an engagement with Speech First, please contact Michael Hensley at Michael@athospr.com and info@athospr.com.

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