

A Road Map to

FREE SPEECH

As you explore your First Amendment freedom of speech know that it isn't limitless. Consider these six specific limits on speech to determine whether you are on the right track or need to hit the brakes.



OBSCENITY

Speech that is contrary to public standards of sexual morality. This lacks any serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.



INCITEMENT TO CRIME OR VIOLENCE

Speech that is advocating for people to break a law AND giving them the means and/or directions to immediately act on that message.



DEFAMATION

Speech that damages the reputation of someone by making untrue and harmful statements that expose that person to contempt, ridicule, hatred or social ostracism.

Spoken (but not broadcast)= slander
Printed/broadcast by media= libel



TRUE THREATS

A statement that communicates a serious expression of an intent to commit an act of unlawful violence to a particular individual or group of individuals. The speaker need not actually intend to carry out the threat, as long as they mean to intimidate the individual or know that the communication will be viewed as a threat.



FIGHTING WORDS

Speech that inflicts injury or tends to incite an immediate breach of the peace. It does not convey ideas and is of minimal social value.



MATERIAL SUPPORT TO FOREIGN TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS

Knowingly provide "any service, training, [or] other specialized knowledge" to a group the Secretary of State designates to be a foreign terrorist organization.

