

"Writing the truth
as I see it;
trying not to
offend
those who will
disagree."

The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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Even military critics enjoy free speech

February 25, 2008

Thomas Jefferson said, "My God! How little do my countrymen know what precious blessings they are in possession of, and which no other people on earth enjoy!" Proof of this statement echoes from the Berkeley, California city council chambers. They approved sending a letter to the Marine Corp Recruiting office, informing the marines they were "not welcome" in Berkeley. The council added, "If recruiters choose to stay, they do so as uninvited and unwelcome intruders." During that council meeting they also derided the marines with statements like "trained killers" and "the president's own gangsters". How should we respond to this anti-military, anti-American behavior? Is it acceptable for elected officials to behave this way? Should there be consequences for their choices? In the aftermath of the Berkeley council's statements, U.S. senators introduced legislation to rescind \$2.3 million of federal transportation funds to Berkeley. Following the news of the proposed legislation, the Berkeley city council voted to not send the letter while the mayor of Berkeley, Tom Bates, said the city did not mean to offend anyone in the military. Does he really expect us to believe their statements were not intentionally offensive? The city council believed they were taking a very principled, difficult position. But as soon as they learned of potential consequences resulting from their actions, they quickly abandoned their position suggesting their principles are negotiable! However, they still refused to apologize to the Marines, saying they were only "clarifying their position", and statements like "trained killers" did not warrant an apology!

Across the country, the mayor of Toledo, Ohio, Carty Finkbeiner, added to this blatant anti-American sentiment when he ordered the marines to leave his city and canceled the training

exercise his own chief of police had approved. In anticipation of the marines visit, the police had issued a press release notifying its citizens of the upcoming, downtown urban combat exercise. Despite this, the mayor said the exercise would surprise and frighten people, contradicting a police statement that the unit's presence would have a minimal impact on the city. Following a four hour bus trip, the marines arrived at 3:30 p.m. greeted by a city employee explaining they were to be out of town by 6:00 p.m. When the mayor's actions surfaced on the Internet, his principled stand shifted just as quickly as Berkeley's mayor and city council. He hurriedly held a press conference explaining what he didn't know and when he didn't know it, blaming both the people who failed to inform him the marines were coming and the people who failed to understand how frightening this would be for his community.

Watching video of the aged 'hippies' at the Berkeley city council meeting answers the question of what happened to the lunatic fringe of the sixty's, that anti-everything group whose base was Berkeley? Well, I found them. They are alive and well in Berkeley, California with a few setting up an outpost in Toledo, Ohio!

Unacceptable seems too mild a term to describe their treatment of our military in such an egregious, demeaning way. The military personnel they are mistreating are the very men and women who are willing to risk their lives in combat. These marines do not make the decision to go to war; they simply go to war when ordered to do so. Isn't it ironic that the Berkeley city council is unwilling to risk losing money for their values while the marines they slander and liable are willing to risk losing their lives for their values?

Do Berkeley and Toledo have any idea of the military's purpose? Do they understand why our freedoms continue to exist? Do they believe The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights protect our freedom? They fail to understand these documents only provide commitments and promises, while the United States armed forces pay the price to guarantee the survival of our nation. "We have enjoyed so much freedom for so long that we are perhaps in danger of forgetting how much blood it cost to establish the Bill of Rights", said Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Felix Frankfurter.

How can I consider the aberrant behavior of the lunatic fringe of Berkeley and Toledo to be good news? I believe they have defiantly expressed a lack of loyalty to their country and their military along with a failure to appreciate the sacrifices of the military for their freedom. Yet, every time I hear the lunatic fringe offering these types of glaring un-American sentiments, I am pleased. Why? Because their freedom to express their absurd ideas, however distasteful, demonstrates again that the hundreds of thousands of military personnel who have died for our freedom did not die in vain. I adamantly disagree with the lunatic fringe, but their free speech rights are the very proof of the magnificence of our country, the magnificence of this experiment we call democracy.

And for this reaffirmation, I am always grateful.

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