



# **The Right's First Amendment: The Politics of Free Speech & the Return of Conservative Libertarianism (Stanford Studies in Law and Politics)**

*Wayne Batchis*

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Not so long ago, being aggressively "pro-free speech" was as closely associated with American political liberalism as being pro-choice, pro-affirmative action, or pro-gun control. With little notice, this political dynamic has been shaken to the core. *The Right's First Amendment* examines how conservatives came to adopt and co-opt constitutional free speech rights.

In the 1960s, free speech on college campuses was seen as a guarantee for social agitators, hippies, and peaceniks. Today, for many conservatives, it represents instead a crucial shield that protects traditionalists from a perceived scourge of political correctness and liberal oversensitivity. Over a similar period, free market conservatives have risen up to embrace a once unknown, but now cherished, liberty: freedom of commercial expression. What do these changes mean for the future of First Amendment interpretation?

Wayne Batchis offers a fresh entry point into these issues by grounding his study in both political and legal scholarship. Surveying six decades of writings from the preeminent conservative publication *National Review* alongside the evolving constitutional law and ideological predispositions of Supreme Court justices deciding these issues, Batchis asks the conservative political movement to answer to its judicial logic, revealing how this keystone of our civic American beliefs now carries a much more complex and nuanced political identity.

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