

By: katia awad

Politics, Democracy



By: Katia Awad The Negatives of Absolute Free Speech Absolute freedom of speech opens the door to possible chaos. Apart from the concrete realities, freedom of speech is greatly desired and is vital to our way of life. History shows us, that we advance when our beliefs are challenged by the free exchange of ideas. Who can argue against this? One cannot argue against the benefits of freedom of speech, it brings diversity to personal, social and government situations. Look at Nelson Mandela — an anti- apartheid activist who was the first to be elected in a fully representative democratic election. What about Martin Luther King? “ I have a dream" he once said! They all share a universal ground; they paved the path of freedom for countless others to follow. But where do we draw the line between the protection of free speech and our civil rights? This freedom becomes problematic when it is used as a manipulation tool that ends up harming others. Social media forums have been used for bullying and victimizing, public media have often presented stories that seek to obtain strong reactions from their audience without divulging all the facts and often distorting them. This can frighten people and cause them to react in self defense. Take advertising for example. Children spend on average about 32 hours a week watching television. Free speech does not apply solely to political opinions but to commercial ones as well. I'd like to think that, the majority of us would agree that advertising aimed at young children has its limits. Imagine a world with no filter; where anything and everything has the power to work for or against you. People have the potential to say whatever they please without suffering the consequences. A greatly admired reputation can be shattered within

seconds of a click. Realistically, freedom of speech cannot be infinite. Ask yourself, when does free speech become harmful?