



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on March 5, 2014

Freedom Is Not Free

There may be something to the claim that all people want to be free. But it is a demonstrable fact that freedom has been under attack, usually successfully, for thousands of years.

The Federal Communications Commission's recent plan to have a "study" of how editorial decisions are made in the media, placing FCC bureaucrats in editorial offices across the country, was one of the boldest assaults on freedom of the press.

Fortunately, there was enough backlash to force the FCC to back off.

With all the sweeping powers available to government, displeasing FCC bureaucrats in editorial offices could have brought on armies of "safety" inspectors from OSHA, audits from the Internal Revenue Service and many other harassments from many other government agencies.

Such tactics have become especially common in this administration, which has the morals of thugs and the agenda of totalitarians. They may not be consciously aiming at creating a totalitarian state, but shameless use of government power to crush those who get in their way can produce totalitarian end results.

The prosecution of Dinesh D'Souza for contributing \$20,000 to a political candidate, supposedly in violation of the many campaign finance laws, is a classic case of selective prosecution.

Thugs who stationed themselves outside a polling place in Philadelphia to intimidate white voters were given a pass, and others accused of campaign finance violations were charged with misdemeanors, but Dinesh D'Souza has been charged with felonies that carry penalties of years in federal prison.

All of this is over a campaign contribution that is chicken feed, compared to what can be raised inside of an hour at a political fundraising breakfast or lunch.

Could this singling out of D'Souza for prosecution have something to do with the fact that he made a documentary movie with devastating exposures of Barack Obama's ideologies and policies? That movie, incidentally, is titled *2016: Obama's America*, and every American should get a copy of it on a DVD. It will be the best \$10 investment you are ever likely to make.

It doesn't matter what rights you have under the Constitution of the United States, if the government can punish you for exercising those rights. And it doesn't matter what limits the Constitution puts on government officials' power, if they can exceed those limits without any adverse consequences.

In other words, the Constitution cannot protect you, if you don't protect the Constitution with your votes against anyone who violates it. Those government officials who want more power are not going to stop unless they get stopped.

As long as millions of Americans vote on the basis of who gives them free stuff, look for their freedom — and all our freedom — to be eroded away, bit by bit. Our children and grandchildren may yet come to





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see the Constitution as just some quaint words from the past that people once took seriously.

The arrogance of arbitrary power is not confined to the federal government. An egregious case in Massachusetts involves a teenage girl from Connecticut named Justina Pelletier, who was being treated for a rare disease by doctors at Tufts University in Medford, Massachusetts.

When her parents brought this 15-year-old girl to an emergency room in Boston, the doctors there decided that her problem was not medical but psychological. When the parents objected, and sought to take her back to the doctors who had been treating her at Tufts University, the Massachusetts Department of Children and Families charged the parents with “medical child abuse,” and were granted legal custody of the teenager.

Once given arbitrary power over Justina, the DCF bureaucrats kept her all but isolated from her parents for more than a year. To add insult to injury, a judge issued a gag order, forbidding the parents from discussing the case publicly.

Only after Megyn Kelly on the Fox News Channel brought this case to national attention did the Massachusetts bureaucrats back off and turn the teenager’s medical care back to the doctors at Tufts University. Whether her parents will get to see their daughter freely again is still up in the air.

Arbitrary power is ugly and vicious, regardless of what pious rhetoric goes with it. Freedom is not free. You have to fight for it or lose it. But is our generation up to fighting for it?

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