

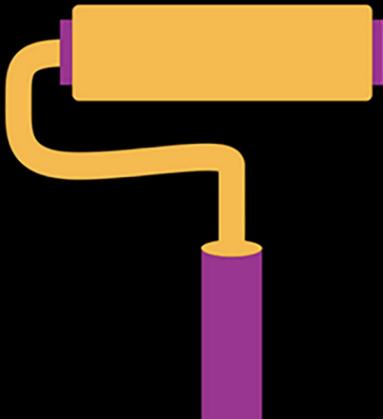
Artistic Freedom

SHOULD ART BE PROTECTED REGARDLESS OF SUBJECT MATTER?

28 VOTES

YES- 22

NO- 6



Student Painting Should Not Be Too Controversial For U.S. Capitol

Staff Editorial

In early January, David Pulphus' award-winning painting was removed from a congressional wall by California Rep. Duncan Hunter. Pulphus, a recent high school graduate, won a congressional art contest with a painting depicting protesters in Ferguson after the Michael Brown shooting. Shortly after the painting was removed, Lacy Clay, his district's representative, rehung it.

The painting contains a scene portraying Ferguson, MO after the Michael Brown shooting. In the painting are two police officers painted as pigs.

The way Pulphus chose to show cops aligns with his community's experience dealing with them. He had every right to paint them any way he chose; someone saved by a cop could look at them as a heroes, and a cop who caused someone pain could be seen as a pig. It all intertwines with personal experience.

Hunter's chief-of-staff, Joe Kasper made a few statements defending the removal of the painting.

"The U.S. Capitol, especially in this corridor ... is not a modern art museum," Kasper said. "It's not the right place to have anything that calls attention to police officers as swine.

Sometimes you have to do things like that to draw attention of people and get it taken down. Mission accomplished."

The painting had been hung in a congressional hallway for six months prior to anyone taking notice. After the attention Hunter drew to the painting, many called it "disgusting" along with other derogatory terms.

After the painting was rehanged by Clay, it was once again taken down by Colorado Rep. Doug Lamborn. The controversy over a painting, alongside hundreds of others, draws attention to a right that for some, goes unnoticed: the freedom of expression.



Nathan Tyson

Should the capital be a place of freedom or a place of censorship?

Clay defended Pulphus in a statement: "David Pulphus' remarkable artwork will be relocated and displayed in a place of honor in my Capitol Hill office," he said.

But this is now about something much bigger than a student's painting, it is about defending our fundamental First Amendment

freedoms which include the right to free expression; even when that creativity is considered objectionable by some, and applauded by others."

Lacy's dedication to defend the freedom of expression evokes another unnoticed question: Should the capital be a place of freedom or a place of censorship?

According to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; which

includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to process information and ideas through any media, regardless of boundaries.

Under this right, the capital is the perfect place to display such a painting. Respecting the opinions of others by leaving it displayed upholds this Constitutional right, as well as showcases concerns from every American, not just those approved by authority.

Anyone who supports the removal of the painting should step back and reevaluate.

Hunter and Lamborn should look for real issues to address, rather than

making up their own. Pulphus' painting shows what he sees as injustice, and the unconstitutional actions of Sen. Hunter and Lamborn have

The congressional art contest is not about pleasing politicians & the police force.

infringed on Pulphus' freedom of expression. The congressional art contest isn't about pleasing politicians and the police force, it's about showcasing art from the entire country.

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THE TALON POLICY

The Talon provides students with an opportunity to discuss information related to Nation Ford High School. The paper's objective is to notify the school community of the news in a timely and informative manner and to entertain them through articles and columns.

The staff encourages letters to the editor. Nation Ford High School students, staff members, and the public can express their opinions and reactions to the articles in *The Talon*.

Letters should be signed and should not exceed 150 words. Letters submitted may be published in the paper at the discretion of *The Talon* staff and will be edited for accuracy, length, and grammar, as well as offensive or inappropriate content.

The staff may permanently keep all unpublished letters for reference or guidance for future writing. All submissions should be submitted to Mrs. Swann, room D517, or via email to swanne@fortmillschools.org.

Please keep in mind that opinions voiced in the articles and personal columns are not those of the Nation Ford High School newspaper staff or Nation Ford High School's administration, faculty, or staff; opinions are solely those of the author who submitted the article.

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