

Steven Pinker: Free Speech Should Not Be a Partisan Issue

In a speech given at a recent forum, Harvard University scientist Steven Pinker described the decline of free speech at colleges and universities.

The prominent psychologist and author was asked why intolerance seems to come more often from the left on campuses. He offered a simple answer.

“Because surveys show that overwhelmingly professors and students at the elite colleges and universities lean quite leftward,” Pinker responded. “I think it’s a disappointing and sad commentary that free speech has gotten the brand of a right-wing issue. Why should that be? There’s no definition, it’s just free speech, whether it’s from the right or from the left.”

Pinker said this runs counter to what has historically been the purpose of the university.

“You know this is a tremendous irony because it’s supposed to be the reason that taxpayers support these institutions.”

As a current college student, I can attest to Pinker’s point that college campuses lean to the left. But I agree with him that free speech should not be a partisan issue. It is in the interest of all

sides to be able to freely express their beliefs without fear of retribution.

If free speech is not allowed on a college campus that is supposed to facilitate learning, growth, and understanding for all students, then what precisely is its purpose?

—

[Image credit: Youtube]