

# Michigan Moves to Make 'Hate Speech' a Felony

A mind-boggling piece of legislation that passed through the Michigan House of Representatives is set to bolster the state's hate crime laws: Michiganders could soon be [charged with a felony](#) if they say the wrong pronouns toward someone.

As someone who reluctantly lives in Michigan, I am not at all surprised by the draconian actions on the part of the Democratic government here. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Gretchen Whitmer installed one of the [strictest lockdown orders](#) across the United States. And now her government believes that it is the right move to hamstring free speech, thus making it a crime to hurt someone's feelings.

I wish I were kidding. The legislation in question, [HB 4474](#), has made it a potential felony—and punishable with up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine—to make someone “feel terrorized.” Of course, it goes without saying that someone should be able to navigate the world without feeling terrorized. However, it is easy to see that this law's wording is vague enough to make the concept of “feel” a very elastic one. What is the distinction between “feeling terrorized” and merely being offended? Is there a clear difference? How do we know the difference? How do we measure the difference? This is not clear from HB 4474.

The issue with legislating against different types of speech is that accurate descriptions need to be drawn out. It is not enough to merely say “feeling terrorized” in a proposed law because there is too much room for interpretation. In order for a law to be honest and effective, it must provide specifics of what constitutes a violation of said law. The legislation in Michigan does not do that; it uses vague

language that lacks productive definitions.

Attorney David Kallman, of the Great Lakes Justice Center (GLJC), told [The Epoch Times](#) that “words are malleable,” adding that “they can be redefined by whoever is in power.” Kallman is exactly correct here.

“Under the proposed statute, ‘intimidate and harass’ can mean whatever the victim, or the authorities, want them to mean,” he said. “The focus is on how the victim feels rather than on a clearly defined criminal act. This is a ridiculously vague and subjective standard.”

It is not unreasonable to suggest that this piece of legislation could easily be used as a political weapon against conservatives and Christians. This suspicion is made even more plausible by the fact that Democrats have legislative *and* executive control of Michigan for the first time in [40 years](#). There does not seem to be anything bipartisan about this bill.

Conservatives have been barred from social media platforms at a [disproportionate rate](#), and Catholics have even been [monitored by the FBI](#) over [unfounded alleged ties to white supremacy](#). Meanwhile, transgender ideologues, such as [Dylan Mulvaney](#), have been celebrated by corporations for nothing more than merely identifying as transgender. It is clear that there is a double standard present throughout the country.

It appears we in the United States have developed thin skin and an inability to listen to the opposing view. We do not want to be told that our ideas are wrong or that the actions we are partaking in might not be the most beneficial. And when we allow this intolerant mindset to take over, we inevitably find ourselves attempting to shut the other side down.

It was not always like this, but if we look back, it is clear that many of the issues surrounding free speech today have to do with being offended and having our feelings hurt. This, I submit, is normal. It is normal to feel offended and hurt

sometimes. But it is antithetical to a democratic society to be [wholly guided by those feelings](#), ultimately resulting in the censorship of other people's right to say what they think and feel.

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