

# Political Correctness on Campus vs The Right to Free Speech

## *What Do Campus Experiences Teach Us in Our Community?*

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## 1.0 Introduction

**Freedom of speech** is the right to articulate one's opinions and ideas without fear of government retaliation or censorship, or societal sanction. The term **freedom of expression** is sometimes used synonymously, but includes any act of seeking, receiving and imparting information or ideas, regardless of the medium used.<sup>1</sup>

From my personal perspective, freedom of expression is an essential part of business, social and community development. Freedom of expression with a purpose seeks to inspire, motivate and result in beneficial action for both individuals and communities. It is rooted in the Christian and Democratic view that “bodies follow minds.” For good to result from free expression, it requires speaking, listening, thinking, feeling and acting.

These perspectives drove my quest to write this paper from both an academic and community perspective and to provide opportunities for thought and action in our community using the tool of free expression. It was an unexpected and complicated journey.

### 1.1 Fundamental Challenges to Freedom of Expression

Freedom of expression is not easy or free. Information and ideas can be misunderstood, miscommunicated, and provoke strong positive and negative emotions. Positive emotions can

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<sup>1</sup> From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

inspire, motivate and develop common goals. Negative emotions can stop participation in expression, or worse, to oppression of the speaker by individuals or by the majority opinion:

- Alexis de Tocqueville predicted in 1831 that “the majority’s moral power makes individuals internally ashamed to contradict it, which in effect silences them, and this silencing culminates in a cessation of thinking”
- John Stuart Mill wrote in 1869 that “The fatal tendency of mankind to leave off thinking about a thing when it is no longer doubtful, is the cause of half their errors”<sup>2</sup>

## 1.2 Scope of this Paper

This paper includes literature and discussion related to the political debate of Political Correctness and suppression of freedom of expression on college campuses – the original assigned topic. As this story developed, however, I was drawn to focusing on the relatively small impact of this national debate on our local campuses and the intrigue of applying campus free speech criteria to our community. What resulted is a position that freedom of expression could be a powerful tool to approach community barriers that limit our success. A recommended strategy is offered for your thoughts.

## 2.0 Research

Research for the paper included US and Indiana history related to freedom of expression. It also includes selected student comments from unpublished Indiana Purdue Fort Wayne (IPFW)

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<sup>2</sup> On Liberty, Chapter II – The Liberty of Thought and Discussion. John Stuart Mill. 1869

surveys, summaries of conversations in my neighborhood and recent community events that characterize the present campus and community situation.

## 2.1 Free Speech: A Brief History<sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> - Foundation for Individual Rights in Education (FIRE) and “Hoosiers. A New History of Indiana” (2014)

Battles over free speech have been a continual theme throughout our history as a country and a State. These battles have been fought by those who might appear to us today unlikely heroes and censors. Many groups have taken turns being the censored and the censors. This is likely to continue on campuses and in our society as politics and speech are inseparable.

During the writing of this paper, I had the opportunity to re-visit both China and to wear my white thobe in Saudi Arabia. These experiences provided me with a living laboratory on prohibition of criticism of government, “truth” as both an offensive and defensive political weapon and the impact of religious police and absolute rulers on social discourse. I choose America! – but wish I could say that restrictions in other countries are absent here.

### 1791 – 1798 US Constitution Amendment 1 & The Alien and Sedition Acts

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

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<sup>3</sup> FIRE’s Guide to Free Speech on Campus. Harvey A. Silverglate, David French, Greg Lukianoff. Foundation for Individual Rights in Education 2012

<sup>4</sup> Hoosiers. A New History of Indiana. James H. Madison. 2014

In 1798, Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, statutes that banned any criticism of the government or the president. It was up to the *accused* to prove their statements true.

Politicians and newspaper editors were sent to jail for failure to prove the truth of their opinions.

#### 1816 - Indiana Statehood

Indiana Constitution Section 9. No law shall be passed, restraining the free interchange of thought and opinion, or restricting the right to speak, write, or print, freely, on any subject whatever: but for the abuse of that right, every person shall be responsible.

#### 1865- 1918 : Censorship by Mob and Prudishness

After the Civil War, the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment was passed in 1868. In addition to verifying citizenship of freed slaves, the First Amendment was applied to the states. Some states did not include freedom of speech in their constitutions.

During this period, speech was limited for recently freed slaves by mobs and so-called “black laws”. Also pressure for moral purity prompted the passage of laws that banned “immoral speech” of many different kinds. Women’s suffragists, atheists, advocates of birth control and divorce laws, were censored, charged with crimes, and sometimes sent to prison.

#### 1917 Espionage Act

A new period of free speech began during World War I and with the passage of the Espionage Act of 1917. Frightened of revolutionaries, anarchists, and communists at home and abroad, the government clamped down on speakers who opposed the government or advocated revolution, or, in some cases, who simply were pacifists or reformers. From the first Red Scare

of the 1920s to the second Red Scare of the 1950s, political beliefs and statements were often punished directly through laws against “sedition,” “espionage,” and unionism. Many radicals and activists (including union activists) had their lives and careers ruined. Some lost their jobs, others were deported, and still others were sent to jail.

### 1920s Indiana’s Klan

It is estimated that one quarter of Indiana’s white men joined the Indiana Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s and many women too.<sup>5</sup> They were focused on moral decay through the enforcement of Prohibition and Americanism – “we have determined that the time shall come when there will be no place in America for people who cannot think in terms of Americanism”. Americanism was defined to exclude Catholics, immigrants, Jews and African Americans.

While not violent, intimidation was the strategy. White robes and crosses were symbols of core values of protestant Christianity and patriotism. Burning crosses in a front yard served as a warning.

The Fort Wayne Journal-Gazette consistently condemned the Klan as early as 1923. The story of the modern history of the Klan was “broke” in 1980 by the Allen County – Fort Wayne Historical Society when a robe was displayed.

### Expansion of Speech Protections from the 1950s to the 1990s

As the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s spread across the nation, seeking to eliminate racial segregation and discrimination, the Supreme Court made clear that free speech protection

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<sup>5</sup> Hoosiers. A New History of Indiana. James H. Madison. 2014. Pages 244-251

extended even to speech that was vulgar, offensive, and more emotional than rational. The Court strongly institutionalized a notion that had been expressed decades earlier in a dissent by Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, namely that the First Amendment embodies “the principle of free thought—not free thought for those who agree with us but freedom for the thought that we hate.”

## 2.2 Freedom of Expression on College Campuses<sup>6</sup>

Changes to civil rights law fueled an influx of students from different races and religions and of women and openly gay students. Unfortunately, college administrations—claiming to assist the peaceful coexistence of individuals in their more diverse communities—began looking for ways to prevent the friction that they feared would result from these changes.

One part of this trend was the imposition of codes against “offensive speech.” The codes generally did not bar *all* offensive speech. Rather, they sought to prevent, and to punish, speech that would offend one’s fellow students on the basis of the listener’s race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. Thus far, courts have agreed on constitutional grounds, striking down speech codes when they have been directly challenged.

### 2.2.1 Foundation for Individual Right in Education (FIRE) Standards for Campus Speech Policy

The Foundation for Individual Right in Education (FIRE) publishes speech ratings for many campuses. The Speech Code Rating System applies equally to public and most private universities.

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<sup>6</sup> FIRE’s [Guide to Free Speech on Campus](#). Harvey A. Silverglate, David French, Greg Lukianoff. Foundation for Individual Rights in Education 2012

### *Green Light*

If a college or university's policies do not seriously imperil speech, that college or university receives a "green light." A green light does not indicate that a school actively supports free expression.

### *Yellow Light*

A "yellow light" institution is one whose policies restrict a more limited amount of protected expression or, by vague wording, could too easily be used to restrict protected expression.

### *Red Light*

A "red light" institution has at least one policy that substantially restricts freedom of speech. The threat to free speech at a red-light institution is obvious on the face of the policy and does not depend on how the policy is applied. For example, when a university restricts access to its speech-related policies by requiring a login and password, it denies prospective students and their parents the ability to weigh this information.

### *2.2.2 Policy Does Not Always Control the Process*

Many of us are probably aware of rioting in February that occurred on the campus of UC Berkeley in response to a controversial conservative speaker<sup>7</sup>. Demonstrations to obstruct messages that are objectionable is not a direct violation of freedom of expression as there is no right to have a ready audience. Demonstrations to disrupt presentations is a political strategy

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<sup>7</sup> Berkeley Riots: How Free Speech Debate Launched Violent Campus Showdown. Matt Saincome. Rolling Stone. February 6, 2017



called “No Platform.” However, taking a demonstration to include violence and property destruction are crimes. Speech intended to incite violence is also a crime.

Private venue holders themselves also have the right to free speech and to exercise it by not promoting speech they dislike. At public universities, student groups and academic departments are under no obligation to provide a platform for any viewpoint.<sup>8</sup>

### 2.2.3 FIRE Ratings for Indiana Campuses

FIRE rating criteria were used in 2015 to evaluate IPFW and other Indiana university standards. When FIRE began working with IPFW, it had two “yellow light” speech codes, relating to “personal” and the reservation of space on campus for student expressive activity. FIRE advised IPFW administrators as to how they could change both policies to fully protect students’ freedom of expression. “I’m very pleased that IPFW is joining FIRE’s green light list.”<sup>9</sup> said IPFW Chancellor Vicky L. Carwein

Ratings for some other Indiana-based universities are:

#### *Green Light*

- Purdue University – All Campuses

#### *Yellow Light*

- Ball State University
- Indiana State University

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<sup>8</sup> [http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/No\\_platform](http://rationalwiki.org/wiki/No_platform)

<sup>9</sup> Indiana University – Purdue University Fort Wayne Earns FIRE’s Highest Free Speech Rating, Press Release, August 24, 2016

- Indiana University – All Campuses

### *Red Light*

- DePaul University
- University of Notre Dame
- University of Southern Indiana

## 2.3 IPFW Student Comments on Free Expression

A “green light” on restrictions does not guarantee free expression. Relevant comments from students on the question of “How would you describe the campus culture at this Institution?” were examined to explore the health of freedom of expression on the campus.<sup>10</sup> This was a voluntary survey and may or may not be representative of the broader campus community.

My assessment is that the student experience with freedom of expression is a “yellow light” on my scale. Views on specific subjects vary. Some people are talking, some are listening and some are afraid or disengaged and do neither. There is a diverse set of opinions on the topics of race, religion, LGBT, and abortion – not a surprise and consistent with the broader Fort Wayne community and freedom of expression. Selected comments:

- The campus has three types of people:
  - The majority are people who never interact with others. They never have meaningful conversations.
  - The next group is too busy to do anything.

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<sup>10</sup> Unpublished survey 2016. IPFW. 624 responses. Only selected comments on freedom of expression are included

- The third group is afraid to interact with people. This makes the campus anti-social.
- There are a few who want to change the social aspects of the campus, however they lack the ability
- I am generally treated as an outsider by students, staff, and administrators for being atheist, liberal, bisexual, and female.
- The campus culture places too much emphasis on equality and not enough on religion. If campus is going to lift up on thought process, they need to lift up all of them.
- As a white male, I spent my entire college career feeling as though I was not part of a social group that was welcomed at this University. Had I expressed this belief, I would have been demonized by both my fellow students and the IPFW faculty. This is not a free and open discussion.
- I feel that it is diverse in some ways but the students don't see what cultures are really on campus. They just hear, they don't see or listen.
- All my problems with the campus culture here are just extensions of my problems with the culture of this state.

#### 2.4 Freedom of Expression in the Fort Wayne Community – A Red Light

My quest took a new direction to explore the current health of free expression in our community after being sensitized to freedom of expression in academic settings, IPFW student comments and events in the community that occurred during the writing of the paper.

Relative to community development using the FIRE criteria, my conclusion is that we get a “red

light” rating due to the process being managed by membership organizations.<sup>11</sup> Relative to exercising freedom of expression on issues that are barriers to community wellbeing, I judge that we also get a “red light” due to low engagement, speaking and listening as I will discuss further.

I recognize there could be strong disagreement with my red light on free expression. To test my observation, I talked to about a dozen of my Huntertown neighbors with the objective to get (unscientific) data for the paper. My neighbors are doctors, lawyers, executives, business owners, and other professionals. A socially, racially and culturally diverse group. Some own businesses in the City of Fort Wayne and some in downtown Fort Wayne. Some grew up here and some didn’t. Most have been living here for several years.

As introduction, I told them about the Quest Club and that I am writing a paper about free speech in Fort Wayne. I then asked them: Do you think there is free speech in Fort Wayne?

The responses were as follows:

- 100% answered, to my surprise, No!
- They felt that the community leaders are not listening
- Some expressed concern that speaking up would result in damage to their business or social connections
- Others saw few opportunities to contribute to the community vision as they had different interests or were not members of economic development organizations

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<sup>11</sup> Downtown Blueprint 2016 Update. City of Fort Wayne 2016

- One woman with school age children pulled out her phone and waved it like a pistol saying that “We beat Fort Wayne’s sneak attack on my children’s school with social media and would do it again.” Although not part of the Fort Wayne annexation<sup>12</sup> attempt in 2016, it would have affected schools attended by their children in Hometown.

The similarity of the comments from my neighbors and the IPFW students suggested to me that the issue bridges the community and campus.

#### 2.4.1 The Red Light on Freedom of Speech and Expression Relative to the Community Vision

Freedom of Expression for community development has declined in the past decade. In 2007, Plan-It Allen<sup>13</sup> was a process for development of a community vision.<sup>14</sup> Key features of the plan related to public expression were:

- Throughout every step of the process, Plan-it Allen! was shaped by the people of Allen County, its cities, towns and communities; and Fort Wayne. In hundreds of community meetings, open houses, workshops, speaking engagements, focus groups and surveys; through the Web site, personal conversations and media coverage. Ideas and insight of the public were incorporated into this Plan.

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<sup>12</sup> Fort Wayne planning to annex 23 square miles on north edge. WANE-TV. <http://wane.com/about-us/>. March 14, 2016

<sup>13</sup> Plan-It Allen! <http://www.planyourcommunity.org/>. 2007

<sup>14</sup> Indiana Code Title 36. Local Government IN CODE § 36-7-4-501

- Investment in downtown Fort Wayne was only one of ten findings for economic development. Downtown Fort Wayne was one of 14 potential opportunity areas in the County.
- 5 year updates to the plan, an implementation task force and an implementation action matrix appear to have not been completed.

#### 2.4.2 Is Anyone Listening?

In the absence of broad public participation, some communities use public surveys as a listening tool to test new ideas and get feedback on the ongoing initiatives. Surveys are particularly useful for issues that are not highly visible and to get input from members of the community that are not members of the community organizations. Key aspects of surveys in Allen County and Fort Wayne:

- In the Plan-it Allen! Survey released in August of 2005, 56 percent of the respondents stated that creating and keeping jobs was the issue that would have the most important impact on the quality of life in Fort Wayne and Allen County. That topic garnered more than five-times-higher the percentage of responses than any other issue.
- Dr. Andy Downs at the Mike Downs Center for Indiana Politics provided me with what he knew to be the last publicly available survey that addressed community goals. It was completed in November 2011.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> 2011 Fort Wayne Mayoral Election By the Numbers, page 3. November 17, 2011  
<http://www.mikedownscenter.org/surveys/>

The Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University conducts a state-wide poll each year and provides the results to the Legislature.<sup>16</sup> Issues with most interest continue to include jobs, reducing crime and schools. You might be surprised that, despite the election year drama of the Indiana legislature and public proclamations, most Hoosiers support social issues in similar ways to the rest of the nation. For example:

- Abortion should be legal in all or most cases (52%) (2012)
- Background checks for firearm purchases should be made – 80% (2013)
- Making marijuana a regulated substance like alcohol and tobacco - 52% (2013)
- Expand Pre-K for all Hoosiers – 82% (2014)
- Expansion of school vouchers – 39% (2015)
- Expansion of needle exchange – 72% (2015)
- Amendment for LGBT Civil Rights – 61% (2016)

#### 2.4.3 Acts Against People and Organizations Engaging in Free Expression

Several acts of repression of freedom of expression have taken place in our city during the writing of this paper. The following three events are relevant to this discussion. All are related to abortion rights.

*Citilink's ad denial ruled unjustifiable - Court sides with pro-life organization*<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Hoosier Survey. The Bowen Center for Public Affairs at Ball State University. Multiple years

<sup>17</sup> Citilink's ad denial ruled Unjustifiable - Court sides with pro-life organization. Rebecca S. Green. The Journal Gazette. Fort Wayne IN. June 23, 2016

The 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that an advertisement by a local woman's health group opposed to abortion rights can be displayed inside Fort Wayne's Citilink buses - "(Citilink's) refusal to allow Health Link's ad to be displayed is an unjustifiable, because arbitrary and discriminatory, restriction of free speech." Citilink's policy allowed public service announcements, but it could reject an ad if it "advocates opinions or positions on political, religious, or moral issues."

*A Fort Wayne woman kicked out of a summer arts festival for carrying protest signs<sup>18</sup>*

A silent rally in support of Planned Parenthood was held, August 29, 2015 during the United Arts Festival. They were greeted "by a festival attendee who yelled and swore at them," They claim that they were blocked from "continuing to walk peaceably and silently" through the park, that they had to leave the area because Arts United had "reserved the space not for you to protest in" and that did not want children to encounter the word "abortion."

*Smaltz's picketers bring up bad old days<sup>19</sup>*

On January 31, 2017 20 members of an anti-abortion group picketed Rep. Ben Smaltz's home in Auburn for several hours and attempted to demonstrate at his church using posters of bloody fetuses. The protest came after his decision not to hear a bill banning abortion in Indiana. Another group, Hoosiers For Life, has urged abortion opponents to contact Smaltz over his decision – giving out his personal email account and cellphone number.<sup>20</sup> These acts struck me

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<sup>18</sup> Protester sues Arts United over park encounter. Rebecca S. Green. The Journal Gazette. Fort Wayne IN. February 26, 2016

<sup>19</sup> Letter to the Editor. The Journal Gazette. Fort Wayne IN. February 26, 2017

<sup>20</sup> Besieged Auburn lawmaker defended. Niki Kelly. The Journal Gazette. Fort Wayne IN. February 1, 2017



as being pro-life equivalents of burning crosses and reminiscent of the bad old days of the Indiana Ku Klux Klan.

#### 2.4.4 Are enough people speaking?

The Supreme Court of Indiana, Indiana University, the Indiana Bar Foundation, and the National Conference on Citizenship released the Indiana Civic Health Index in 2015<sup>21</sup>. The report describes how Indiana residents engage in civic activities such as voting, volunteering, and interacting with neighbors. Overall, the report found that Hoosiers have close family connections, but struggle to engage with neighbors or take many broader political actions.

Compared to the 50 states and DC, Indiana ranked:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> for frequently eating dinner with household members
- 4<sup>th</sup> for seeing or hearing from family and friends frequently
- 38<sup>th</sup> for voting in the 2012 election
- 46<sup>th</sup> for attending a public meeting
- 47<sup>th</sup> for working with neighbors to fix or improve something in the community.

The National Conference on Citizenship<sup>22</sup> concluded that “A community with strong civic health is more resilient, is more effectively governed, and is a better place to live. Our civic health increases both our individual and collective well-being. A low level of civic health can lead to dysfunctions in communities that make it harder to address pressing public problems.

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<sup>21</sup> 2015 INDIANA Civic Health Index

<sup>22</sup> [http://ncoc.net/What\\_is\\_Civic\\_Health](http://ncoc.net/What_is_Civic_Health)

## 3.0 Discussion

Several studies of Indiana and Fort Wayne were released during the development of this paper that suggest that lack of community participation is damaging our health and happiness. The question is if we believe these studies and that increased expression would help to address the issue.

### 3.1 Is limited freedom of expression bad for our health?

Alexis de Tocqueville's observations and the Citizenship survey imply, people who are not engaged are not thinking and less successful than those who are. Fort Wayne and NE Indiana has wonderful strengths and engagement in jewels of the community related to education, art, redevelopment and others. Yet little is heard from the broader community despite modern communication technology and numerous voluntary opportunities to participate. National community surveys and local experience suggest this could be impacting our health.

One well known survey is the Gallop-Healthways Well Being Index.<sup>23</sup> The Index covers about 189 communities, the 50 states and is based on five factors:

- **Purpose:** Liking what you do each day and being motivated to achieve your goals
- **Social:** Having supportive relationships and love in your life
- **Financial:** Managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security
- **Community:** Liking where you live, feeling safe and having pride in your community
- **Physical:** Having good health and enough energy to get things done daily

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<sup>23</sup> <http://www.well-beingindex.com/>

With my experience in public surveys, I am uneasy on topics that are subjective. However, the results are based on a subset of 354,473 telephone interviews with U.S. adults across all 50 states and the District of Columbia, in 2016. Gallup estimates that the survey is representative of 95 percent of all U.S. adults.

The data are broken into quintiles. I have converted them to A-F letter grades to make them more clear in this setting. For Fort Wayne and the state of Indiana in 2016, the following results were published:

|   | Fort Wayne -2016 | Indiana -2016 |
|---|------------------|---------------|
| <b>Overall Rank:</b>                    | D – 129/189      | F-47/50       |
| <b>Purpose:</b> Liking what you do -    | D                | F             |
| <b>Social:</b> Having love -            | F                | F             |
| <b>Financial:</b> Stress and security - | B                | C             |
| <b>Community:</b> Community pride -     | D                | D             |
| <b>Physical:</b> Health and energy -    | D                | F             |

Additional hard health evidence is readily available to consider if we need to be concerned:

- **Drug overdose deaths up 93%** - 418 total overdose deaths between 2008 and 2015.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Drug overdose deaths up 93% In 2008-15. Dave Gong. The Journal Gazette. October 25, 2016

- **A record 48 homicides were committed in In Allen County, in 2016.**<sup>25</sup> The previous homicide record was 45 in 2013. Arrests had been made in less than a fourth of the incidents as of January 2017

Dan Buettner, *New York Times* bestselling author, observed in 2014 that “In communities with higher well-being, we have found that people live longer, happier lives and business and local economies flourish. A reliable well-being metric provides community and business leaders with the data and insights they need to help make sustained transformation a reality. After all, if you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it.”

***I conclude from the wellbeing surveys and drug and homicide data that part of our community is “On Fire!”***

### 3.2 Are current expressions of issues actionable with increased community dialog?

The following comments by public officials appear to validate lack of engagement as a cause of lower wellbeing, but do not call for a broad public discourse.

**Wellness Surveys and County health ranking** - Dr. Deborah McMahan, Allen County health commissioner:

“I was pleased to see that we improved in the well-being index (in 2016 from 2015) but our weakness remains the same – social support. The feeling of social support and

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<sup>25</sup> A close to city's deadliest year. Ron Shawgo. The Journal Gazette. January 01, 2017

community and purpose can be influenced by government services, but by and large it is really a function of the strength of families, neighborhoods, social organizations and the faith community.”<sup>26</sup>

“But I have found in my practice of medicine that ... Folks who feel a lack of purpose often feel a lack of connection to others and do not feel particularly good physically either...these results reveal we have more work to do to ensure people have access to the resources they need to realize their purpose and potential and feel part of our community.”

Ranked against the state’s 92 counties, Allen slipped in nearly every health measure from 2016.<sup>27</sup> “Well this is a sad day indeed,” We simply have to do better than this to remain a bright, productive community in which young people will want to live and thrive.”

**Record Homicides in 2016:** Fort Wayne Police Chief Steve Reed:

“It’s my opinion, I think we’re seeing years of neglect of our youth, especially of our at-risk youth, a failure of our community to engage these youth, who sometimes feel like there’s no other way out. They have to turn to drugs or gangs.”

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<sup>26</sup> City still lacking in social health. Ron Shawgo. The Journal Gazette. March 11, 2017

<sup>27</sup> County’s health rankings drop. Ron Shawgo. The Journal Gazette. March 29, 2017

***I don't hear a fire alarm being sounded yet as no actions are discussed. The fire continues to burn.***

## 4.0 Recommendations – Run to the Fire!

In the nuclear navy, there is a response to problems that can be summarized as “Run to the Fire”. It originated from experience that nuclear problems only get worse – particularly when you are confined in a ship or submarine. This culture was brought to the US nuclear power and weapons programs by veterans and applied to competitive situations where there can be few or only one winner. I used to work in this competitive world and find it a good motto to keep me engaged after retirement. I think it very applicable to Freedom of Expression here.

I do not represent that Free Expression is the way to put out the fire in our community, but suggest that it is an actionable, non-threatening and potentially game changing approach of engagement and solution development that has the potential to improve both the community wellbeing and economics in a short time and at a reasonable cost. This is broader than law enforcement, health and social services. Given that challenges to wellbeing and population growth are state-wide, this is also a leadership opportunity for our community.

To excite and access those who are currently unexcited, disengaged or uninvolved, a comprehensive conversation must include the following types of organizations:

- Community Health
- Education at all levels
- Arts

- Businesses
- Social Services
- Law Enforcement
- Community Planning
- Faith Community

The approach to a comprehensive community conversation must be open to all without membership, make extensive use of public survey and social media techniques to access those who are not currently active and have enough rigor to document and share results. The code of the conversation requires speaking, listening, thinking, feeling and acting. Given the potential to impact young and adult people directly, perhaps our universities, school districts and the Allen County Health Department could be the founders. The Plan-it Allen experience could be a partial model of the approach.

My perspective is that a distinctive signature exists for Fort Wayne that could be motivational for the community and citizen wellbeing and is currently incomplete or undocumented. Like my approach to competitive contracts, the community signature must explicitly include people, places and things that are interconnected and inspire community pride that informs, inspires and gets people thinking, feeling and acting. Conversation starters could include:

- 1. Things. What do we do best now and want to do best in the future?** This is not intended to be only business outcomes, but social, art, educational and health outcomes that are understandable and actionable by individuals and organizations. In my experience, the answers will surprise even those who have been here a long time.

- 2. People. Who and How Many People do we need to accomplish our purpose and mission?** Key elements of this answer could inspire students to fields relevant to the community, illuminate career paths across industries, large and small businesses, and provide a basis to seeking domestic and international talent and keeping them here.
- 3. Places. What should the community look like?** This is a topic that has had the most attention in the community, but is a trailing metric to items one and two. Results of Plan-it Allen might be a starting point, but a broader regional engagement that aligns with questions one and two would likely bring forward other new ideas.

In closing, Elie Wiesel - a Nobel Peace Prize winner, Holocaust survivor and author said “I swore never to be silent whenever and wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must always take sides.” One of the Quest Club founders, Charles B. Fitch predicted in his 1917 paper that “Fort Wayne of Tomorrow” would have a population of 200,000, that we would be a “A beautiful city of happy and contented home owners”.<sup>28</sup> Much of this vision has been accomplished, but continued Free Expression is needed to finish all the goals.

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<sup>28</sup> Fort Wayne of Tomorrow. Charles B. Fitch. Quest Club. 1917 cited in email from John Beatty dated September 9, 2016.