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SB 50 Proponent

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Chairman Thompson and Members of Committee,

I am a proponent of SB 50, as censorship needs to stop.

Your bill addresses a different form of the 'winners and losers' that, in the past 3 years, related to which businesses could stay open or closed during the pandemic. This is the 'winners and losers' as it relates to information. The people at the top decide what is true and what is misinformation. As it turns out, all or most of what was considered 'true' by the people at the top with regards to 'everything pandemic' these recent years was false false false, and yet people got kicked off Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, all because an unnamed powerful few were calling the shots. This needs to be stopped.

In my case, we know who the "powerful" ONE is with regards to the Board of County Commissioners. The new Chairman, Mike Kelly, has started off his term with a terrible BANG by censoring the weekly meetings. As I'm sure you know, he has decided to stop the live streaming/recording of public comments AND he has decided to no longer allow the public to speak via ZOOM. You must be present in person to speak or hear the public comments. Thanks to Commissioner O'Hara, a vote was forced to get all the commissioners 'on record' as to where they stood on this subject. The vote was 4-3, shaking out as follows: those FOR this form of censorship: Commissioners Fast, Hanzlick, Allenbrand and the Chair; those AGAINST this form of censorship: O'Hara, Ashcraft and Meyers.

Many, MANY Johnson County residents have either spoken in person or via email, asking the Chair the same question: What are you trying to hide? Why are you doing this? What is the purpose? He continues to come back with the tired responses of keeping decorum, civility, not getting kicked off YouTube and, most "BECAUSE I CAN".

I've attended many of these meetings and I've watched many online. While many of our residents clearly disagree with the Chair on this (and last year re the lockdowns, schools, vax requirements etc etc etc), no one got out of line. Voices were raised but so what? We're all adults. Listening to the current Chair say "going once, going twice" as he waits for the next speaker to approach the podium, is a loss of decorum in my book. He needs to look in the mirror.

I may have gotten kicked off Facebook a time or 2 for violating their precious policies (they usually didn't go into great detail as to what policy I violated) but I know many of my good friends have gotten kicked off frequently, and simply for providing "the other side". Since when have we lost free speech? If you don't like what I post on FB, skip and keep scrolling. I have as much right to voicing my opinion as the next guy. The examples of the categories listed in your bill that need to be censored, I would agree with. The average run of the mill information and opinion, whether "they" agree with it or not, needs to left alone.

I like your bill and hope it gets passed out of committee.

Thank you!

Most sincerely,

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