

# VIEWPOINTS



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## USC VOICES

### What do you think about political correctness?



"I would much rather someone address me for who I am than what they are supposed to call me. The real meaning behind words is lost when people speak in politically correct terms."

Tricia Banks  
English senior



"I don't view this as a big issue."

Clinton White, Jr.  
Criminal justice  
sophomore



"You change the name, but you don't change the way you treat people."

Kenrick Ford  
Psychology freshman



"I think it is important to be truly sensitive to what other people feel. Offensive terms should be avoided. Call people whatever makes them feel comfortable."

Shannon Meyers  
Elementary education  
junior

## Control

### Politically correct language inhibits understanding of individual differences

Vertically challenged instead of short. Handicapped instead of handicapped. African-American instead of black. Now more than ever, it's easy to avoid offending each other. We have political correctness, a method of changing the way our perceptions are relayed. All one must do is use the politically correct term to keep the levels of offense at a minimum. At the same time, though, true feelings are disguised. Emotions and opinions as they translate into words are kept in check.

The person and groups addressed and labeled by fancy words aren't helped by this system. But the speaker is. Face it, some people just aren't tactful when addressing one another, especially when the person addressed is of a different background or culture. And true, it's much nicer to hear a fancy term to describe another than a slang or derogatory one.

But is it possible that political correctness has gone too far? Conflicts are anesthetized instead of solved. The correct words we say by no means change how we act. Political correctness is the newest information control mechanism. This "correct" language system truly undermines any goals of changing people's motives.

Ideally, political correctness is supposed to help us get along and understand differences by minimizing offense. Unfortunately, this doesn't happen.

People will feel prejudices, biases and hatred no matter how they are taught to speak and write. Motives are unchanged despite glossed-over terms. And the condition of those who are supposedly offended doesn't change. At USC or any other college in the nation, political correctness merely presents the opportunity for all to speak the same language without emotions. However, this only cures the symptoms, not the disease.

Fifty years from now, there will be another term to describe a certain group or individual. The term used in 1993 will be considered harmful. Thus, the need for a new, improved one will arise in the next century. Then, a few years later, people will still be offended, and an even newer, creative term will emerge.

In the meantime, a culture remains divided, and people still can't tolerate each other's differences. In essence, political correctness tells us to forget learning how to actually like another human being for who they are. Just learn what to label them.

## Removal of flag would assist healing process

As a Yankee, I find myself divided on the issue of whether the Stars and Bars should fly over the Capitol. Many consider the flag a symbol of bigotry and prejudice, and they have a point. They see the flag not as a battle cry of people defending state's rights against federal intrusion but as a symbol used by the KKK and other hate associations against blacks, Jews and Catholics.

Others regard the Stars and Bars as their link with the Old South and their ancestors. They argue most Southerners didn't fight for slavery and that most Confederate soldiers didn't own slaves, which is correct. They argue that it's a symbol of pride in their heritage and deserves to fly unfurled over the Capitol.

I disagree that the flag as a symbol of state's rights deserves to be mothballed even though I disagree with the South's position during the civil war. I agree that for Southerners, the flag is a symbol of pride, but it belongs in a museum or in another arena where it can be the subject of many heated discussions. I believe those who support the flag provide the strongest reason for



Stephen King

its removal.

While I sympathize with respecting one's heritage, I realize that many people who fought for the Stars and Bars didn't prevent its meaning from being perverted by hate organizations such as the KKK.

It isn't as a wartime symbol that most people want the Stars and Bars removed from the Capitol. If this was the crux of the removers' argument, then their arguments would have died out long ago. No, it's a symbol of racism and prejudice in the years following the Civil War to the present day.

The descendants of the gray legions fail to prevent their symbol from being desecrated by acts of wanton terror, and it's for this reason

that those who want the flag to remain atop the Capitol are wrong. Those who use the flag for hatred must allow the healing process to begin by taking the flag down.

However, I ask those who want the Confederate flag furled and never flown again to consider their position. It would be a great symbolic gesture of atonement for the supporters of the flag to fold it for the last time on top of the Capitol. In the quest to remove the flag, remember that one act of healing requires the other party to help in the process.

The Stars and Bars as a symbol of both pride and hatred could have an excellent effect on removing the divisiveness that the flag now engenders. Students of all ages could learn about how a symbol of pride to one group can become a symbol of hatred to another. The flag belongs in a museum or above the home of those people who see it as the state's linkage with the past. It doesn't belong atop the Capitol.

Stephen King is a columnist for The Gamecock.

"WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO INSTEAD OF PROVIDING GOOD DELIVERY SERVICE?"



## LETTERS

### Truth isn't relative to individual

To the editor:  
This is in response to Shannon Wiley's letter titled "Religious freedom shouldn't be violated." This isn't a personal attack but an attack on her statement, "When it comes to religion, truth is relative to each individual."

This statement defies all logic. Sure, it sounds good in this day and age, but there's a big problem in her reasoning. I believe that when it comes to religion, truth isn't relative to each individual.

If I'm correct in what I believe, then truth isn't relative to the individual. If I'm incorrect in what I believe, then truth isn't relative to the individual. Either way, you must come up with the same conclusion: Truth isn't relative to the individual. Is this too hard to comprehend? It's true that individuals have the freedom to worship and believe as they want. If someone chooses to worship the paper this is written on, then so be it.

But why worship a god that is no god at all, and why believe in something that can't save? Also, to say that an individual is the ultimate authority on matters of morality or immorality is to say that the individual is a god unto himself. There's too much that individuals don't know, don't understand and can't control to actually say that we are gods.

Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Also, Jesus claimed to be God. Not a god, but the God. He claimed that he would be the final judge of every person. He foretold of everlasting torment for those who rejected Him versus everlasting life for those who

believed in Him.

If Jesus was a liar, then it doesn't matter anyway. But based on the fact the He performed miracles too numerous to count and resurrected from the dead, which more than 500 people witnessed, to reject Him and His teachings would be unwise.

Joey Davis  
Accounting junior

### Flag should honor old, new traditions

To the editor:  
The two extremes of the flag debate stand firm: "The Confederate battle flag represents pride in Southern heritage. Thus, it should fly over the State House." and "No, it stands as a symbol of the slavery and the repression of old as well as the racism of today. Thus, it should come down."

As in most issues, I'm stuck in the middle. I agree the Confederate battle flag has been associated with racist groups and racial injustices. To many, it has come to represent the worst of black and white relations in America. I also agree that there's nothing wrong with nostalgically looking back at the honorable parts of Southern history and culture.

I support the replacing of the Confederate battle flag with the Stars and Bars as a compromise to the flag debate. I ask that the Stars and Bars become a symbol for South Carolinians today with a combination of meanings.

First, let it remind not only South Carolinians but all Americans that racial relations will improve only with constant effort and compromise between the two extremes. Tensions between races

remain even today and will never disappear. Inequalities will always have to be guarded against.

But this doesn't mean that people of different races can't live and work next to each other as well as respect each others' ways. At the very least, people can be just and respectful toward one another while at the same time not allowing themselves to be taken advantage of.

Second, let it represent the fact that almost 500,000 Americans died fighting each other in a bloody war.

Third, let it represent respect to those dead as well as honor what was and is good in Southern culture. This doesn't mean that one also embraces the evils of an era but only that one reminisces about the good of old today.

Jon Andreski  
History junior

### Censoring media cures symptom, not disease

To the editor:  
This is in response to J.T. Wagenheim's Nov. 1 editorial, "TV is scapegoat for violent society." As a Christian and a health care provider, I strongly agree with Wagenheim's premise that society embraces the victim mentality and denies the idea of personal responsibility and accountability.

With regard to this premise, the determination of causality between violent TV and societal/personal irresponsibility is much more obscure than a prima facie observation suggests.

Wagenheim scornfully criticizes people who have been negatively influenced by violent acts depicted

in the entertainment media. His solution to the problem of personal responsibility assumes people have some internal ability to control their actions and overcome their personal circumstances.

Common sense and personal responsibility aren't inborn gifts that all have but rather are traits born out of an environment in which responsibility and common sense are taught and internalized through discipline.

People so afflicted lack an internal template from which personal responsibility and selflessness are grounded. In our society, personal freedom is well-grounded in a humanistic and egocentric doctrine. The individual and society can't help but act in accord with their feelings and passions of the moment.

My work as a home health nurse bears this out time and time again. I have worked in homes where poverty and abuse find their definitions. I see why people have such difficulty rising above their circumstances.

Where such perversion of personal freedom exists, society is obliged to protect itself. A paternalistic state will exist where the rules and responsibility are externalized in the form of laws, punishment and censorship in lieu of an internalized set of morals. This internalization of morals originates by the power of Christ.

The controlling of media entertainment is a feeble attempt to keep our society alive. What a price that we are already paying for unlimited freedom. Our children are paying the highest price through divorce, abuse and general insecurity.

Michael Whitaker  
Nursing graduate

### LETTERS POLICY

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