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January 10, 2014: Conservative Hypocrisy on Free Speech

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Title: Conservative Hypocrisy on Free Speech

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1/10/2014—I was embarrassed by the suspension of Phil Robertson by A&E over his public comments that homosexuality is a sin. You might as well say that all religious traditionalists are outside the pale. The Bible implies in several places that homosexuality is wrong. That view is mistaken and the verses can be interpreted differently, but religious believers are sort of stuck with the text. So, I thought the suspension was overly sensitive. It was not, however, a matter of free speech per se. The Constitution binds government, not a private entity like A&E. But as a fan of free expression, I still did not like this censorship. Meanwhile, my conservative friends had a field day over the censorship of the left. And so did the media in general. So, why not much mention of the more grievous example of censorship that has occurred with regard to Dick Metcalf, former columnist of Guns & Ammo Magazine, who was fired after writing a column supporting compromise over gun control? Unlike Phil Robertson, who was reinstated, there is zero tolerance on the right even for questioning the ethos of free guns for all. Of course this episode is also not a matter of free speech per se. Guns & Ammo, like A&E, is a private entity. But it is disheartening all the same. How is discussion of issues to go forward in an environment like this? And that is the real point. It's fun to point out the hypocrisy of one's political opponents. But the real problem is the desire to limit expression to what one already agrees with. That is the habit we all have to break.