

Oppose the attempt to silence freedom of speech at Carroll Community College!

International Youth and Students for Social Equality at Carroll Community College
22 April 2026

The following statement was issued by the IYSSE at Carroll Community College, located in Westminster, Maryland, about an hour's drive northwest of Baltimore.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE) at Carroll Community College (CCC) denounces the college's recently instituted policy restricting students' and faculty members' freedom of expression by placing bureaucratic control over the voicing of political perspectives on campus. As the youth organization of the Socialist Equality Party in the United States, we also strongly denounce CCC's effort to bar our supporters from its campus on unconstitutional grounds.

This policy and others like it represent a violation of free speech against an entire generation politicized by a world historic crisis. Youth have witnessed in real time the genocide of the Palestinian people backed by American weaponry; ICE agents terrorizing cities and abducting immigrants without due process; and a fascist president, Donald Trump, with open aspirations to dictatorship. Now an unprovoked war on Iran, launched in flagrant violation of international and domestic law, is devastating civilian populations.

As the American ruling class prepares the next phase of war on Iran and confrontation with Russia and China, the foundation is being laid for the reimposition of the draft—clearing the way for bloodshed unseen in generations.

Students are being politicized. They are enthusiastic to engage with the world around them and need an outlet to do so on their own campus. The policy recently enacted at CCC seeks to throttle that healthy impulse. The policy, misleadingly titled the “Freedom of Expression and Public Assembly,” places restrictions on where, how, and when students, staff, and community members may conduct activities on campus. It proclaims full adherence to students' rights and freedoms while systematically undermining them in practice.

The policy opens with the following declaration:

Carroll Community College supports the rights of the College community to exercise their First Amendment right to freedom of speech, freedom of expression, and the right to peaceful assembly according to the U.S. Constitution.

No sooner does the administration state these words than it begins to walk them back, carving out caveats and exceptions to this fundamental right. It continues:

At the same time, the College must maintain a safe and secure campus environment that optimizes college resources, supports college activities, and maintains respect for all community members.

Elsewhere it states:

Freedom of expression at the College does not allow individuals to express their views any time, at any place, and/or in any manner. Expressive activity must not disrupt college operations.

What the college refers to as “disruptive,” however, is an overly broad and undefined category. Nowhere does the policy clarify what actually constitutes a disruption of “college operations.”

Would a student demonstration against ICE deportations qualify? A sit-in over tuition increases? A petition drive to

overturn this very policy? The language is elastic enough to prohibit all of these. It is a blank check for authoritarian overreach, and it is being used that way.

At CCC's spring Club Fair on February 10 of this year, community supporters invited to help promote the campus's newly-formed IYSSE chapter were ordered to leave on the flimsy grounds that they were "non-students." This was a direct violation of the campus's own policy, which permits invited guests of a college-recognized student group to assist in promoting that club. There was nothing "unlawful" in their presence—whatever discomfort the administrators may have felt at seeing students engage with socialist ideas.

The Freedom of Expression and Assembly policy is, in fact, an extension of CCC's earlier suppression of a student club's Child Victims of War display in the spring of 2025. The display—two tri-folds documenting child deaths in Palestine, Israel, Sudan, and Congo—underwent full administrative vetting, including a source review by a college librarian. In the brief time it was up, it generated immediate and enthusiastic student engagement, with multiple students leaving written responses debating its content. After just one school day, the administration removed it without citing any policy—and then moved swiftly to ensure such political expression could not occur again.

The most glaringly repressive aspect of the gag order is its requirement that students who wish to express their political perspective submit proposals at least four weeks in advance. These proposals must be approved by a slew of executive members and administrators in order for students to engage in any organized expressive activity.

This rule makes timely political response in the form of leafleting, tabling, and other demonstrations impossible. It prevents students from organizing activities around rapidly transpiring events such as police brutality, layoffs at workplaces and international crises, instead having to work around the calendars of school administrators. By preventing the mobilization of students in response to current events, this policy inhibits the political education of students and their ability to form independent opinions about or take action over the major social and political events of our time.

CCC's policy is not an isolated incident. A wave of anti-democratic restrictions has swept colleges in the wake of mass student opposition to the Gaza genocide. The University of Maryland enacted a similar policy following historic campus protests. In 2024, the Northern Virginia home of two students in the George Mason University

chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine was raided by the FBI, the club was banned for a year, and the students were effectively expelled.

Across the United States and internationally, administrations have moved to suppress free speech on campus, hiding behind distorted claims of "disruption," unfounded allegations of "antisemitism" leveled at anti-genocide protesters, and other pretexts.

These developments cannot be separated from the Trump administration's accelerating drive toward dictatorship. Having already established the precedent of slashing federal funding to universities that resist its directives, the administration cut grants, froze funds, and imposed punitive measures in 2025 to force compliance with its "national priorities."

Carroll Community College depends on state and federal funding, as well as investment from local wealthy donors, to operate. Its administration understands that permitting genuine free speech on campus—speech that challenges the existing order—could have financial consequences.

The "Freedom of Expression and Public Assembly" policy is the result: a mechanism granting CCC administrators final authority over what political views may be expressed on campus, dressed up as a measure to protect student safety and institutional operations. It does not protect students or workers. It protects the class of billionaire criminals ruling society, increasingly opposed by students and workers.

The IYSSE at Carroll Community College calls for the outright rejection of this policy. We call on students and faculty to organize in active opposition, demanding the removal of these unconstitutional restrictions on free expression. We further call for the rejection of the college's February 10 removal of our supporters from a campus-sanctioned student event to which they had been invited.

Join us. Organize in solidarity with youth, students, and workers internationally by getting involved in the IYSSE and the Socialist Equality Party.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact