



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 18, 2017

NYU College Republicans Cancel Conservative Speaker Citing Fears of Violence

The Left has become enormously powerful on college campuses and is winning its war against free speech at these institutions once dedicated to higher learning. The latest example of this can be found at New York University (NYU), where the College Republicans were forced to cancel a visit by conservative opinion writer James Merse because of safety concerns and pressure from the school's administration.



James Merse is a former establishment liberal LGBT member who has since become conservative, the *Daily Caller* reports. He writes op-ed pieces for numerous publications including the *Washington Examiner* and the *Daily Caller*. He offered to appear at NYU to speak to students pro-bono and a date had been set for Merse's appearance. But on Monday, students with the College Republicans felt compelled to send Merse an e-mail cancelling his visit.

The College Republicans cited fears that Merse may be affiliated with groups considered to be controversial by leftist activists who could use those affiliations as an excuse to engage in violence. "Hey James, unfortunately as we have a lot of press on our ass right now, along with the administration (due to recent white nationalist events held on campus) and upon review of one of your group memberships (ACT for America) we thought it would be safer to not go through with this speaker event," read the e-mail.

ACT for America, the group to which the e-mail refers, is an SPLC designated extremist group with alleged connections to white nationalist groups, an NYU College Republicans representative told the *Daily Caller News Foundation* (DCNF). The SPLC defends its designation by claiming that ACT for America's anti-Shariah and anti-radical Islam stances are simply masks for the group's Islamophobia.

But the group's founder, Brigitte Gabriel, a Lebanese Christian who grew up in Lebanon during the civil war, is considered a terrorism expert who even gave a lecture to the Defense Department's Joint Forces Staff College as part of a course on Islam in 2007.

Merse vehemently denies that the organization is a white nationalist group. "Standing against Islamist terror does not make someone a white nationalist or neo-Nazi.... I'm pro-Israel and anti-Sharia," Merse told the DCNF in an e-mail.

The organization's official policy statement disavows bigotry and discrimination:

ACT for America has never, and will never, tolerate any bias, discrimination, or violence against anyone, based on their religion, gender, race, or political persuasion. Freedom to practice one's religion in peace is afforded to each of us by the U.S. Constitution and we will defend it vigorously.

Through our advocacy and activism, we will continue to address the threat presented by those who seek to destroy our Western way of life through advocating violence or radical religious discrimination through hate groups, such as those represented by movements like radical Islam.



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Unfortunately, the NYU College Republicans fear that inviting any speaker affiliated with the group could provoke leftist protesters to engage in violence, even if the SPLC's designation of ACT for America is unfounded.

"You probably heard about Gavin McInnes at NYU, and that was a safety hazard to a lot of students and we're trying to avoid that this year," the e-mail to Merse elaborated. "Thank you so much for offering your time, and I apologize for leading you on," the e-mail concluded.

The e-mail refers to an incident that took place at NYU in February, when conservative actor and Vice Media co-founder McInnes was pepper-sprayed by Antifa members.

Of course, even if Merse were a highly controversial speaker who espoused hateful ideologies, leftist groups should not be permitted to use scare tactics to impose on his First Amendment rights or the First Amendment rights of any individual interested in hearing him speak. Unfortunately, that is exactly what has happened.

And while this is a sad display of how powerful the violent Left has become, Merse contends it is also a sad display of right-wing submissiveness. "Leftist labels are meant to silence conservatives, and it's very clear the NYU College Republicans are taking the bait," Merse told the Daily Caller. "How quickly they cowered to the pressure of the mainstream media and the left's potential criticisms. I am very disappointed in the NYU College Republicans.... They are uninterested in preserving free thought on college campuses."

The Daily Caller notes that far more controversial speakers than Merse have appeared at NYU speaking events without incident, including Women's March and Sharia law advocate Linda Sarsour. Yet, an anti-Sharia law advocate is not permitted the same freedoms. "Letting leftists bully them and silence them on campus isn't acceptable anymore," Merse opined. "It's sorely disappointing to see a group that should be taking a stand to protect those rights cave in so easily — it's a shame."

Image: Screenshot of [NYU College Republicans logo](#)



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