



October 23, 2009

Letter: City's new curfew seems excessive

Your recent editorial "Permanent curfew makes sense" regrets that we do not live in a "perfect world." Democracies such as ours are by definition imperfect because they allow for the expression of different views, values and dissenting comments. The First Amendment guarantees this freedom of expression, and it applies to people under 18, as well older citizens.

It appears to us that the city's decision to impose a permanent curfew in the city center on anyone under 18 who is not accompanied by a parent may be an excessive and inappropriate response to a crowd-control problem. The ACLU has historically challenged blanket curfews for young people because such curfews often violate protected freedoms of the youth and their parents. We hope that city officials will reconsider the potential restrictions on constitutional freedoms that the curfew represents.

Further, the ACLU is always concerned when citizens are arrested for peacefully protesting against a government policy. We trust that the powers that be in Greenville know that limitations of the First Amendment apply to them.

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