

NOVA

A BRIGHT STAR KEEPING CALIFORNIANS AWARE

2007

Carol Sobel

Carol A. Sobel has for years been among the handful of go-to civil liberties defense lawyers in Southern California, and perhaps the most active litigator here and nationwide for the defense of speech and related activities protected by the First Amendment. She has sued on behalf of:

- anarchists' rights to hand out their literature from tables in a Long Beach city park on the Fourth of July;
- peaceable demonstrators' rights to be near enough to the Staples Center in Los Angeles to communicate with delegates and public officials attending the 2000 Democratic National Convention;
- those same protesters' complaints against the Los Angeles Police Department for its alleged misconduct at the Democrats' convention, ranging from surveillance and infiltration to the imposition of no-speech zones, the use of excessive force and inappropriate, pretextual administrative searches, the illegal dispersal of public free speech events, the illegal blocking of pre-authorized, fully permitted marches, and the deliberate misuse of batons, concussion grenades, rubber bullets, and other projectiles to disperse and intimidate crowds;
- the rights of people to solicit contributions for their own needs or for their charitable causes near Los Angeles restaurants and bus stops;
- the rights of community college students to hold peaceable demonstrations or distribute literature on campus in locations other than prescribed "free speech areas," and on topics other than those sponsored by established student clubs; and
- the right of a California State University student to post notices on a multicultural center bulletin board promoting an on-campus speech on a topic that other students find offensive without being cited, tried and forced to apologize to the offended students on pain of expulsion.

This small but representative sampling of Ms. Sobel's free speech advocacy over the past quarter century gives some sense of her range and nonpartisan integrity – taking a leadership role in the civil liberties litigation of not only the American Civil Liberties Union and the National Lawyers Guild but also the conservative Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, a group fighting speech codes and other excesses of political correctness on the university scene.

Californians Aware salutes Carol Sobel as a remarkable champion of free speech rights against any effort to suspend them – by those right, left or center who think they are the best judges of what the people may say and hear.



JW August
President, Californians Aware

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