

# Free Speech or Disruption?

## *Balancing the Rights to Speak and to Hear*

*A Panel Discussion – Free and Open to the Public*

**Presented by: The Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression  
and Piedmont Virginia Community College**

**Sunday, Nov. 15, 2009, 3-5 p.m.**

**PVCC's V. Earl Dickinson Building, 501 College Drive, Charlottesville**

**Why this topic? Why now?** Several times during the July 4, 2008 naturalization ceremony at Monticello, protestors disrupted President George W. Bush's address to the crowd of brand new U.S. citizens, guests and visitors. During President Barack Obama's Sept. 9, 2009 address to a joint session of Congress, U.S. Representative Joe Wilson yelled, "You lie!" in response to one of the President's comments. In late summer 2009, town hall meetings across the country organized by elected representatives to discuss health-care reform reportedly became shouting matches between those holding different views. Do these incidents represent a new tone in political discourse or are they simply recent examples of a national tradition? Is this how the marketplace of ideas is supposed to function? Should one person's right to speak be limited by another's right to hear?

**MODERATOR – Coy Barefoot**, Host of the *Charlottesville Right Now* program on WINA-AM

### EXPERT PANELISTS

**Bob Gibson**

*Director, Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership; former political reporter*

**Elaine Jones**

*Retired Director-Counsel, NAACP Legal Defense Fund*

*First African-American woman to graduate from the University of Virginia's School of Law*

**Dahlia Lithwick**

*Senior Editor for Slate.com and Contributing Editor for Newsweek*

*Named one of the "Top 20 Legal Thinkers in America" by Legal Affairs magazine*

**Robert M. O'Neil**

*Director, the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression*

*Former President of the University of Virginia*

**John Whitehead**

*Founder and President of The Rutherford Institute; author of The Change Manifesto*

**Questions from the audience will be encouraged.**

**A free copy of the book, *The Bill of Rights, the Courts, and the Law* – an expert treatment for the non-expert, with a chapter on the judicial history of free speech – will be provided to each member of the audience courtesy of the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.**



For additional information, contact:  
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