

The End of Civility?

A viral video of a woman publicly admonishing Gov. Rick Scott showcases the decline of political civil discourse.



We must push back against the idea that the right to exercise one's free speech only applies to the aggrieved.

A shocking [video](#) showing Florida GOP Gov. Rick Scott on the receiving end of a tirade launched by a woman unhappy with his record already has more than 2 million hits on the Internet. What makes this so unusual is that it occurred inside a Gainesville-area Starbucks where the governor had stopped to get a cup of coffee.

Gov. Scott has compiled a consistently conservative record. He's been a job creator, reformed state government and recently signed a measure cutting off state funding for Planned Parenthood after it was accused of selling aborted baby body parts for medical research.

Scott supporters were quick on the draw in response. An [ad](#) responding to her charges that no one in the area has a good job because of the governor's program quickly went up on the Internet after the incident. It explains that despite what the woman said, there have been nearly 10,000 new jobs created in the immediate vicinity of that one Starbucks alone, and in that area unemployment has been cut in half since Scott assumed office.

Most of the news accounts have focused on what the woman alleged as she shouted across the coffee shop and whether or not she was right. What they should be focusing on is how wrong she was to act the way she did.

It is one thing for citizens to exercise their constitutional right to petition the government and its representatives for the redress of their grievances. It's quite another to make a public spectacle of oneself in someone else's place of business, disrupting the peace and quiet of everyone else there enjoying an iced latte or an espresso macchiato.

Her's is not an example to be replicated. Our society is grounded in the concept of civil discourse between differing parties. Shouting doesn't make you right – it just makes you loud and obnoxious. From what you can hear on the tape Scott tried to reply in a civil manner, but she was having none of it so strong apparently was her urge to shame.

Our system is not perfect. It was flawed when it was created, as it is today, perhaps not to the same degree but flawed nonetheless. We won't fix things by shouting, especially when those who have their voices raised are wrong on the facts.