

Dear Alumni for Free Speech,

Thank you for contacting me regarding the critical issue of freedom of speech at the University of Cambridge and my candidacy for the Chancellorship.

For me, freedom of speech is not merely an intellectual ideal; it is the vital heartbeat of democracy and the cornerstone of our humanity. Justice Benjamin Cardozo rightly described it as *"the matrix, the indispensable condition, of nearly every other freedom,"* while Benjamin Franklin poignantly reminded us *that "Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom; and no such thing as public liberty."*

If elected Chancellor of the University of Cambridge, I will passionately uphold and champion the University's Code of Practice on Freedom of Speech, recognising that robust and respectful discourse is essential not only to academic excellence but also to the health and progress of society itself.

Yet, I am also keenly aware of the complexities involved in defending free speech. History has shown us repeatedly that freedom can be weaponised, twisted into a shield for intolerance, division, and hatred. It is therefore imperative that we remain vigilant and unwaveringly clear about our values. For me, freedom of speech must nurture vibrant debate, challenging orthodoxies, and welcoming dissent, while never becoming a refuge for deliberate bigotry or harmful incitement.

Today, we stand at a crossroads marked by profound global transformations, rapidly evolving social norms, and urgent reassessments of our core societal values. Against a backdrop of rising authoritarianism, populism, and nationalism, the very principles that underpin democracy - including freedom of expression - face unprecedented threats. It is precisely during such volatile times that our unwavering commitment to these freedoms must be strongest.

My commitment to freedom of speech and academic liberty is deeply personal and borne out of profound experiences. I arrived in the UK from my birthplace, Guyana, precisely because the freedom to speak and disagree openly was denied under an oppressive regime. My father risked his career, his freedom, and indeed his life, alongside the courageous scholar Walter Rodney, to challenge tyranny, oppression and advocate for open discourse. Rodney paid the ultimate price - his assassination underscoring the immense dangers faced by those who dare speak truth to power. Due to my father's courage and sacrifice, I was sent to Britain for safety, stepping from suppression toward freedom, determined to use my voice fearlessly to speak for others, challenge injustice, and uphold intellectual honesty throughout my life.

I have done so through not just my words but actions that have often exposed the status quo - on special needs education, modern day slavery, domestic violence, rip-off anti-consumer practices in financial services, two prime ministers attempting to put themselves above the law, and online safety.

As Chancellor, I would bring this same passionate resolve to defend freedom of expression, whilst aligning closely with Cambridge University's foundational commitment to free inquiry, which encompasses:

- **Foundations of liberty and democracy:** Embracing Justice Louis Brandeis' wisdom that the *"freedom to think as you will and to speak as you think are means indispensable to the discovery and spread of political truth."*
- **Advancement of truth and knowledge:** Upholding John Stuart Mill's assertion in *On Liberty* that silencing an opinion robs humanity of truth, and Nelson Mandela's conviction that truth emerges only from vibrant debates among diverse perspectives.
- **Personal fulfilment and human dignity:** Echoing Justice Anthony Kennedy's profound insight, *"The right to think is the beginning of freedom,"* and Noam Chomsky's imperative that true support for free speech requires defending even the opinions we most vigorously oppose.
- **Social progress and justice:** Honouring Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy by recognising that the ability to speak out and protest is central to the pursuit and achievement of justice.
- **Academic freedom:** Affirming Albert Einstein's insight that academic freedom is essential to innovation, societal advancement, and the pursuit of truth through fearless exploration and rigorous debate.

The younger generations today face both immense challenges and unprecedented opportunities, shaped by rapid technological advances, societal fragmentation, and significant geopolitical shifts. As Chancellor, I would dedicate myself wholeheartedly to ensuring that Cambridge remains a bastion of intellectual freedom. A dynamic forum where ideas are freely explored, respectfully challenged, and passionately debated.

If I am fortunate enough to be elected and given the privilege to serve as Chancellor, I pledge to steadfastly champion the University's enduring role as a beacon of intellectual openness, innovation, and tolerance.

Together, let us boldly confront challenges through open, responsible, and respectful dialogue, safeguarding foundational freedoms essential for our collective intellectual and moral advancement.

Thank you once again for reaching out. Your commitment to freedom of speech is inspiring and indispensable.

Yours sincerely,

Gina Miller