

*Eric Heinze - Abstract – Free Speech as the Most Human Right*

Human rights charters and treaties have long been known to include, for example, rights not to be tortured, or arbitrarily killed, or imprisoned without trial, as well as rights to minimum levels of food, housing, health care or education. Once these lists have been agreed experts generally insist that we cannot prioritize some rights above others. They argue that all human rights must enjoy an equally high status, because no right can be fully enjoyed unless the others are fully secure. However, I will argue that this assumption makes no sense: free speech must by definition take priority because without it nothing else can even be called a right.