

Statement from Dylan Bloom furnished to Ashland.news on March 16, 2023:

To whom it may concern,

I have been made aware of questions being raised about some advocacy I did during my time at SOU. I figured it was best that I address it directly to all of you. Some 13 years ago while I was a student at SOU and a member of the Associated Students of Southern Oregon University, the University administration implemented a "Free Speech Policy". This policy restricted speech and demonstration to only the small courtyard outside of the Stevenson Union. I and other members of student government found this deeply troubling as it would have punished students from engaging in their protected first amendment rights at a public university; while not doing anything to prevent individuals and groups from outside of campus to spew their hate speech any where they pleased. In order to protect students rights and allow SOU students to combat this hate speech with counter protesting we decided to fight this policy.

It was at this time that we were approached by an organization called "Students of Concealed Carry" that offered legal support if needed to fight this policy. Being a young and poor college student, me and others agreed to "start" a club with that name in exchange for legal support. Within a month we were able to meet with the Provost and change the policy. That was the extent of any of our involvement with this organization of which I only found out later was part of the "Koch network". My only regret was that I didn't research this organization more deeply when agreeing to accept their legal support.

That said, I will not apologize or be ashamed of standing up for student rights and combating hateful speech anywhere and any time. We can not stop hate speech but we can fight it. If anyone has any questions or would like to know more about me and my positions, feel free to message me any time. I am deeply humbled to serve the community in which I grew up and look forward to making the full time commitment to being available to anyone that seeks information or engagement in the happenings of the city.

Dylan