Opinion
NCR Voices



Vice President JD Vance hosts an episode of "The Charlie Kirk Show" at the White House in Washington Sept, 15, 2025, following the assassination of the show's namesake. Kirk, a conservative activist who was co-founder of Turning Point USA, was shot and killed while speaking Sept. 10 at a Utah Valley University event in Orem. (OSV News/The New York Times/Pool via Reuters/Doug Mill)



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De mortuis nil nisi bonum. Don't speak ill of the dead. It was one of the first moral norms I recall learning and it could not be more straightforward. For all persons, the dead are no longer present to defend themselves, so it is unjust to speak ill about them. For Christians, the dead are before the judgment seat of God, a thought that should cause all of us to tremble, mindful that we, too, will someday stand before God. Speaking ill of the dead, then, is unjust and prideful.

Kirk's causes were not my causes, with one major exception: free speech. If Kirk was a champion of free speech, and he was, than it seems the worst way to honor his legacy is to silence anyone for what they said about him. Disinvite them from a party for speaking ill of the dead? Absolutely. Fire them from their job? That dishonors the legacy of anyone who championed free speech.

It comes as no surprise that our nation's vice president, JD Vance, wanted to have it both ways. "Well, I think I speak for every person in this room, and I think I speak for a majority of our fellow Americans, when I say: We do not attack or commit violence against people because we disagree with their ideas," he told a political rally in Michigan. The compassless Vance then filled in to host the podcast "The Charlie Kirk Show" where he said, "Call them out, and hell, call their employer. We don't believe in political violence, but we do believe in civility."

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Vance's career is pure opportunism. Can anyone doubt that if he thought it was in his interest to adopt the political positions held by Zohran Mamdami, Vance would do it?

I was traveling last week, so the news that Jimmy Kimmel's show had been canceled reached me in small bits over several hours. As I was boarding a plane, I thought, "What could he have said?"

When I deplaned, I found out that Kimmel did not say anything derogatory about Kirk. He called the murder "senseless" and chastised those who were celebrating it. Then, Kimmel criticized President Donald Trump for his failure to try and bring the nation together. "With all these terrible things happening, you would think that our president would at least make an attempt to bring us together, but he didn't. President Obama did. President Biden did. Presidents Bush and Clinton did. President Trump did not. Instead, he blamed Democrats for their rhetoric." For this, his show was pulled. Getting on another plane, I thought bad thoughts about the executives at ABC.

By the time I landed, it was being reported that Brendan Carr, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, had called on ABC to pull Kimmel's show. This elevated the issue from one of corporate moral sloth to a First Amendment concern. Even Sen. Ted Cruz, not known for standing up to Trump, expressed his concern that Carr's actions were "dangerous as hell." For once, I agree with Sen. Cruz!

ABC has announced that it is reinstating Kimmel’s show. I hope his opening monologue tears into ABC’s executives, Carr, and the president. They all deserve it.

By the time I returned home and got caught up on the news and subsequent commentary, a sad realization emerged: Everyone's response to the assassination was entirely predictable. Our politics are not just polarized, they are anemic.

This story appears in the **Charlie Kirk murder news and commentary** feature series. View the full series.