

The View

'THERE IS NO QUESTION THAT SOME OF THESE CHANGED DECISIONS WOULD IMPROVE OUR QUALITY OF LIFE.' —PAGE 34



A new wave of campus revolts and campaign speeches is fueling a dangerous war on words

NATION

The fallacy of 'free speech'

By Haley Sweetland Edwards

NEWTON'S THIRD LAW HOLDS THAT for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction, which may provide the best explanation for what is occurring simultaneously on the left and on the right, on America's campuses and the campaign trail. In both cases it's enough to make defenders of the First Amendment curl up in despair.

The campus revolts just keep coming, as students go to ever greater lengths to defend their right not to be upset. This has now gone well past administrators' labeling texts with "trigger warnings" to help students avoid having to read about difficult topics like racism or rape, or Mount Holyoke's canceling a performance of *The Vagina Monologues* for fear of excluding women who don't have vaginas.

Students at the University of Ot-

tawa protested a campus yoga class, charging that yoga was a form of "cultural appropriation." At Smith College in November, students associated with the Black Lives Matter movement asked visiting media to declare their support for their cause before they were admitted to cover a sit-in.

This wave of political correctness is born, essentially, of a noble idea. Minority students, facing bullying or belittlement, argue for the need to protect themselves, to create a safe space. As one Yale undergraduate put it, "It's about creating a home here." But in creating that space, these advocates risk walling themselves off from the unexpected, albeit sometimes ugly, reality of engaging in pitched debate with people with whom they do not see eye to eye. They are rejecting the