

## 50 YEAR TRIBUTE: WHAT CONA MEANS TO ITS DELEGATES

ASHLEY HATCH, CO ★ STAFF WRITER

The Conference on National Affairs is a meaningful experience whether it is one's first or last year. To honor the conference's 50th year, the media staff asked delegates what CONA means to them. A sampling of their responses follow:

"CONA means community. It means that no matter what your views are, you can come together and compromise on proposals and find a solution to that issue. Even though we come from all corners of the United States, we can come together, have a great time and get work done."

- Jannie Kamara, OH

"CONA means leaving. Leaving behind our old states and communities and biases and coming together here at Blue Ridge. Here, although we may carry our state around our neck, we become part of a larger community. We join a

community of intelligent, passionate, and most importantly, diverse individuals."

- Saxon Bryant, CO

"What CONA means to me is this heart-warming experience where people of different cultures and backgrounds can come here and argue for the rights of those that we serve in this country and, to me, that's really beautiful."

- DaVante Cole, MI

"Only at CONA can you understand, for example, why something like global warming is so important to someone in Florida. It really puts a face to the problems, which is what makes it so great."

- Blake Hirst, WA

For more on what CONA means, go to [ymcaonablog.org](http://ymcaonablog.org) to find quotes from other 2017 delegates. ★



SEEKING RECOGNITION ★ DELEGATES RAISE THEIR PLACARDS IN AN EFFORT TO SPEAK DURING DEBATE.

PHOTO BY ANNA OLSON, OK

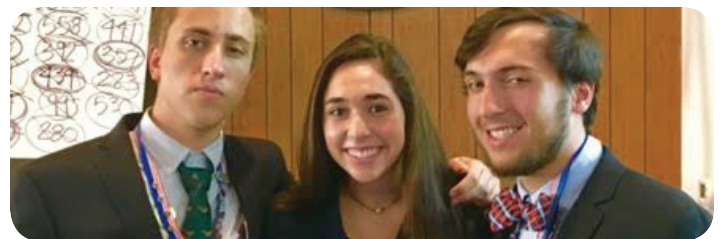
## PROPOSAL ON COLLEGE FREE SPEECH PASSES GA

TOMMY DANNENFELSER, VA ★ STAFF WRITER

The issue of expression is one of the most important debates for American youth. How does one deal with speech? To what extent does one tolerate differing opinions? With recent backlash to inflammatory speakers on college campuses, three CONA delegates felt it was an issue worth addressing. Their proposal, presented Wednesday in General Assembly, would eliminate a college's power to impose restrictive "free speech zones," and forbade colleges from disinviting speakers for their controversial political views.

The proposals sponsors, Maryland's Josh Karpatkin, Connecticut's Katherine Connolly, and South Carolina's Tanner Street, contend public colleges should be accepting of free speech. Karpatkin said that "controversial speech should be defended just like any other form of speech." He explained that it is important for people to express their views, no matter what they may be. If a person fails to communicate his or her views properly, they can become radicalized.

Many opposed Karpatkin, Connolly and Street's free speech proposal. Olivia Smith, PA, argued that some offensive views are "better thought and left unshared."



AUTHORS ★ KARPATKIN, CONNOLLY AND STREET  
PHOTO BY TOMMY DANNENFELSER, VA

She said free speech zones can prevent cases of harassment and through action taken by college administrators, students can be "protected from sexism and racism." Jordan Clements, TX, also objected to the proposal, saying, "colleges' responsibility is to their students' safety first."

The authors said their proposal would still grant colleges the power to keep order on campus. Street insisted, "a college can prevent any free speech activity that interferes with a class." A college could also crack down on any incitement of violence; in fact, there is a legal standard by which free speech can be limited: time, speech, and manner. The proposal passed by an overwhelming majority, and the authors hope to solve the free speech question on college campuses. ★

## DELEGATES KNOW MORE THAN PROPOSALS



**PARTY HARDY** ★ DELEGATES ENJOY THEIR TIME TOGETHER AT TUESDAY EVENING'S DANCE PARTY. PHOTO BY RYAN STRANZ, MA



**AT THE BILTMORE** ★ DELEGATES ENJOY AN AFTERNOON AT THE BILTMORE PHOTO BY VALORIE SHARP, OK



**4TH OF JULY SELFIE** ★ BEFORE HITTING THE DANCE, DELEGATES TAKE A SELFIE. PHOTO BY RYAN STRANZ, MA



**MUSCLE MAN** ★ A DELEGATE SHOWS OFF HIS TRUE 4TH SPIRIT WITH A ROCKY COSTUME. PHOTO BY RYAN STRANZ, MA



**WE MADE IT** ★ DELEGATES PAUSE AFTER REACHING THE MOUNTAIN TOP AT THE END OF THE HIKE. PHOTO BY ABIGAIL CONDIT, KY



**AIN'T NO MOUNTAIN** ★ DELEGATE TAKES IN THE VIEW AFTER REACHING THE TOP. PHOTO BY ABIGAIL CONDIT, KY



**DANCING QUEENS** ★ POS GET DOWN AT THE DANCE ON THE 4TH. PHOTO BY RYAN STRANZ

## BRINGING HOME BLUE RIDGE

**CAROLINE BELL, NC** ★  
 STAFF WRITER

We all know that terrible, gut-wrenching feeling when we leave our state's YAG/YIG for our boring, mainstream lives. Here are a few tips on how to bring the Mountain home with you and avoid the dreaded "Post CONA Depression."

### 1) Keep in Touch

You can stay connected with delegates from other states by getting everyone's snapchats, Twitters, instagrams, phone numbers, email addresses, etc. You can even go old fashioned and get mailing addresses to send them a letter.

### 2) Distract yourself

Delegate Kaleigh Hand of Alabama suggests watching cat videos on your way home as a possible cure.

**3) Relive your time** at CONA by visiting @BRJCONA on Twitter and Instagram and the other conference media products.

### 4) Be with family, friends, and pets

Cuddle up with your dog or other pet, grab some popcorn and have a movie night.

While these are great ways to avoid "Post CONA Depression," be aware that depression affects many individuals in various stages of their lives.

Below is a resource you can use if you need to talk to a professional about depression or any other mental health concerns:

Text "Connect" to 741741 to be connected to a trained crisis counselor.

SOURCE: [crisistextline.org](http://crisistextline.org)

If you need a listening ear more than professional help, you can always talk to the advisers of your state or school delegation. ★

## TWO OF CONA'S MEDIA SENIORS SAY GOODBYE

"Being involved with the press corps has truly made me appreciate the work ethic and determination that all media delegates have. Writing stories, collaborating and becoming a family are just a few things that happen in press during conferences. Overall, I couldn't be happier about the group of people in media and I've had an excellent time at the 50th Conference on National Affairs."  
**Managing Editor Caitlyn Villamaria, MI**

"Being a media senior was very special to me. When I learned that I was going to be attending CONA again I was excited to get a second attempt to complete media tasks that I didn't do in the previous year. I was also excited to be a mentor to the first-year delegates who needed guidance."

**Dontay Smithwick, DE**

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