

Golden Gate Bridge Speech Restrictions: Unconstitutional and Extreme

Several weeks ago, Golden Gate Waste [documented](#) the Bridge’s waste of tens of thousands of dollars on legal fees to fight the public’s right to free speech on the Bridge. Attempting to enforce unconstitutional rules, like those listed to the right, will surely cost the Bridge even more in legal fees in the future.

Recently, Golden Gate Waste surveyed other cultural and historical landmarks; bus, train and ferry terminals; and other large bridges to determine how their speech policies stacked up against the highly-restrictive policies at the Golden Gate Bridge and Golden Gate Ferry Terminals.

What we found was not surprising. The Golden Gate Bridge is the **ONLY** bridge or national landmark that we researched that restricts the length of protests and the hours of protests.

Golden Gate Bridge Free Speech Limits

1. You cannot carry a protest sign without first having filed a permit application at least 4 business days in advance.*
2. You cannot handbill or otherwise engage in free speech activities for more than two hours a day.
3. You cannot do any protest after 2pm on weekends.*
4. You cannot use a bullhorn or a sign with a handle.*
5. You cannot use a sign larger than 3 feet X 2 feet.
6. You are prohibited from holding a banner between two or more persons even if you are not in anyone’s way.

Location	Limits Protest Length?	Limits Protest Hours?	Limits Sign Size?
Golden Gate Bridge & Ferry Terminals	YES	YES	YES
Golden Gate National Recreation Area (Alcatraz and other)	NO	NO	NO
Golden Gate Park	NO	NO	NO
Union Square	NO	NO	NO
New York State Bridge Authority	NO	NO	NO
Thousand Islands Bridge Authority (NY/Canadian Border)	NO	NO	NO
The National Mall (Washington, DC)	NO	NO	NO
Boston Common	NO	NO	NO
Mount Rushmore	NO	NO	NO
Valley Forge	NO	NO	NO
Yellowstone	NO	NO	NO
New York Subway	NO	NO	NO
Chicago Transit Authority	NO	NO	NO
Staten Island Ferry	NO	NO	NO

The Golden Gate Bridge District could lower fares and tolls with the tens of thousands of dollars it has wasted so far on lawyers attempting to enforce its unconstitutional speech restrictions. The American Civil Liberties Union warned the District that its restrictions violate the First Amendment. The District, however, continues to ignore the Constitution and continues to waste our money.

In the past months, [Golden Gate Waste](#) has repeatedly shown the wasteful mismanagement of the Golden Gate Bridge under the leadership of its Bridge Manager, Kary Witt. Besides wasting tens of thousands of your toll dollars fighting freedom of speech, here a few other things happening under Witt's management:

- [Toll Increases](#): Golden Gate Bridge Tolls went up 100% in 2010 from \$3 to \$6, and carpoolers tolls went from \$0 to \$3 in 2010.
- [Costly Management Travel](#): Witt and other top managers have taken business trips world-wide on the District's dime. Witt's travel has cost the Bridge District \$20,000 just in the last three years alone.
- [Highly-paid Workers Asleep on the Job](#): Golden Gate Bridge painters, some of the highest-paid industrial painters in the nation, have recently been found sleeping on the job.
- [Lead Contamination](#): Golden Gate Waste has uncovered evidence that ongoing lead scraping projects on the Bridge have repeatedly failed to meet lead removal specifications, putting the public's health at risk.
- [Possible Recontamination After Costly Cleanups](#): In October 2011, eyewitnesses saw painters pouring or dropping contaminated materials off the northwest tower of the bridge, even after the bridge spent \$13.8 million for lead remediation.
- [Harassment of peaceful handbillers](#): At the Bridge's 75th Anniversary celebration in June, Witt shoved a videographer and urged him to take a swing back.
- [Demolished hundreds of families' memories](#): Earlier this year, the Bridge District demolished hundreds of commemorative bricks purchased by the public during its 50th anniversary in 1987. For many families, this callous action was devastating.

It is high time that Kary Witt and the Golden Gate Bridge District stop interfering with free speech rights and start managing the Golden Gate Bridge in a way befitting such a historic and well-known landmark. Bridge users are tired of our toll dollars being wasted and are ready for a change.

Please [read new articles](#) each week as we unfold the wasteful practices at the Golden Gate Bridge.

*While these limits are still in the District's ordinance, they were held unconstitutional by a federal district court, so are not currently being enforced by the District while it decides whether to appeal.