

# More journalists like Olbermann are needed

As noted in the Daily News this past weekend, Keith Olbermann is leaving "Countdown," the political forum he anchored on MSNBC.

His abrupt departure should concern all Americans – not because he is a liberal – but because he is an independent thinker who is not afraid to speak his mind.

Olbermann steadfastly refused to acquiesce to the constant insistence by his network to "tone it down."

Good for him.

We live in a world where it is increasingly risky to "tell people what they do not want to hear," as George Orwell so astutely put it.

Perhaps Edward R. Murrow said it even better: "We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. When the loyal opposition dies, I think the soul of America dies with it."

We are most in danger of losing the inalienable right to speak our minds during tough economic times or when the murky specter of national security is raised.

And those who claim we can't lose this fundamental freedom are fooling themselves.

As the monument outside the National Archives boldly exclaims: "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."

Whether you thought Olbermann was right or wrong is irrelevant.

The larger issue here should not be overlooked or diluted: The simple act of speaking your mind frightens many people – especially those in positions of power.

One of the hallmarks of weak, insecure leadership involves a constant campaign to discredit,

marginalize or silence opposing viewpoints.

Strong, secure leaders, on the other hand, are confident in their abilities and actively encourage alternative perspectives; i.e., they always see disagreement in a positive light.

To his immense credit, Keith Olbermann was never afraid to point out when the emperor was completely naked. For that, he deserves our utmost respect and admiration.

We need more like him.

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