In 2006, Garcetti v. Ceballos introduced a new refinement to First Amendment analysis of public employee speech: such speech is not protected if uttered in the employee’s role as an employee, rather than as a citizen. Garcetti has been considered a significant change, and a substantial reduction for protection of public employee speech. In this article, I suggest to the contrary that Garcetti is best understood as announcing a very narrow and quite straightforward principle: employees may be evaluated based on job performance, even if that performance takes the form of speech. Understood this way, Garcetti is not as troubling a decision as most commentators suppose. An analysis of the reasons for protecting public employee speech reveals that it does not threaten the speech that should be the core focus of First Amendment protection. The article goes on to suggest how some of the questions Garcetti leaves open—such as its application to the academic context—should be resolved.