

FIRST  LIBERTY

UNDENIABLE



The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America

Kelly Shackelford

Executive Editor

2017 SCHOOLHOUSE EDITION

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to Religion in America

2017 Schoolhouse Edition

Editorial Team

Kelly Shackelford
Executive Editor

Justin Butterfield
Editor-in-chief

Contributors

Abigail Doty
Mary Katherine McNabb
Stephanie Taub

Past Contributors

Michael Andrews
Bryan Clegg
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Candice Lundquist

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First Liberty Institute
2001 W. Plano Parkway, Suite 1600
Plano, Texas 75075
(972) 941-4444

WHAT IS FIRST LIBERTY INSTITUTE?

First Liberty Institute is the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious liberty for all Americans.

A non-profit law firm, First Liberty handles hundreds of legal matters each year at no cost to its clients and educates Americans regarding the first liberty in the Bill of Rights: religious liberty.

PRAISE FOR FIRST LIBERTY INSTITUTE

“When it comes to winning big cases for the religious liberty of Americans, First Liberty Institute shines. I have had the privilege of working as part of their team on just such cases. First Liberty Institute’s intelligence, quality, and strategy give people of faith the best representation. They care about results, not taking credit, and the result is victories.”

Paul Clement, former Solicitor General of the United States,
attorney with over 85 U.S. Supreme Court appearances

“[First Liberty] has litigated all across the country defending religious liberty. . . . In every one of those fights, my friend Kelly Shackelford has been front and center.”

Ted Cruz, U.S. Senator

“[First Liberty is] the best. Students, churches, and people of faith depend on them to stop those who would silence faith.”

Rick Perry, U.S. Secretary of Energy, former Governor of Texas

“I have enormous respect for the quality of First Liberty’s critical work and the results they’ve achieved.”

Allyson Ho, former White House Special Assistant and
U.S. Supreme Court clerk, appellate attorney with multiple
Supreme Court appearances

Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America

“First Liberty Institute and Kelly Shackelford are at the forefront of the intensifying battle to preserve our religious freedom. I’ve known of their work for years, and today it’s more important than ever.”

Mike Huckabee, former Governor of Arkansas

“First Liberty Institute’s one-of-a-kind legal strategy is indispensable to the survival of religious freedom in America.”

Tony Perkins, President, Family Research Council

“When it comes to defending religious liberty in America, especially for our military and veterans, First Liberty Institute is the tip of the spear. I know of no organization I’d rather have by my side. They are the best.”

Lt. Gen. (Retired) William G. “Jerry” Boykin, Executive Vice President, Family Research Council

“Because First Liberty does what it does, ministers like me can do what we do.”

Dr. Charles Stanley, In Touch Ministries

“First Liberty Institute is strategic. Their work liberates people of faith.”

Lt. Gen. (Retired) Mike Gould, USAF

“First Liberty is the critical place to invest in the future of religious freedom.”

Norm Miller, Chairman, Interstate Batteries

“The American Legion and First Liberty Institute both unapologetically stand ‘for God and Country,’ a stance that will never waver. We appreciate the outstanding work First Liberty Institute has done in protecting our nation’s veterans memorials.”

Michael D. Helm, National Commander, The American Legion

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Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America

THE TIME FOR DENIAL IS PAST

To deny that religious freedom is in crisis in America is to deny the obvious. And yet there are deniers. Ironically, they include those who launch the very attacks that have caused the crisis itself. The American people, however, deserve the truth.

For that reason, every year a team of legal researchers at First Liberty Institute—led by a Harvard-trained constitutional attorney—investigates and documents the rise in the number and severity of domestic attacks on religion. The findings are published in book form in *Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America*. In the latest full edition, the total number of documented incidents in this report increased by over 15 percent over the past year and now includes more than 1,400 religious liberty incidents.

Attacks on Religious Liberty



133% increase in 5 years

These figures include an increase in attacks in a key subsector of American life: Education. This “Schoolhouse Edition” constitutes that subsection of the larger version of *Undeniable* (the full edition of *Undeniable* also includes findings from other sectors of American society).

After years of providing this research—widely cited in the media—we are now seeing confirmation from a growing number of sources and directions.

International Christian Concern (ICC), a respected global watchdog that monitors persecution, listed the United States for the first time in its annual “Hall of Shame” report in January 2017, noting America’s alarming rise in hostility toward Christians. Their report stated, “While there is no comparison between the life of a Christian in the U.S. with persecuted believers overseas, ICC sees these worrying trends as an alarming indication of a decline in religious liberty in the United States.”¹

¹ International Christian Concern, “2016 Hall of Shame Report” (Jan. 2017).

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The ICC report dovetails with findings published by noted sociologist Dr. George Yancey. He and his team did extensive and careful research into the roots of American hostility to religion. He found what he called widespread “irrational” animus toward traditional Christian beliefs among those with higher educational degrees and privileged positions in society.

In fact, Dr. Yancey found that those with the highest degree of animosity toward traditional religion were those with the most money, education, and power to turn that irrational animus into action in the legal arena.¹

The significance of Dr. Yancey’s findings go beyond their implications for any one religion. They speak to the threat to religious liberty for all religions. Hostility that threatens to become unlawful suppression of any religion is a threat to all religions and our American ideal of a free marketplace of various faiths and ideologies.

Other confirmation comes directly from those promoting a negative view of religious activity and announcing their desire to suppress it.

In September 2016, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights sent a report entitled *Peaceful Coexistence: Reconciling Nondiscrimination Principles with Civil Liberties* to President Obama and Congress declaring that “the phrases ‘religious liberty’ and ‘religious freedom’” are nothing but “code words for discrimination, intolerance, racism, sexism, homophobia, Islamophobia, Christian supremacy, or any form of intolerance.” The report also denounced routine religious exemptions as infringing upon civil rights. In other words, people of faith should be forced to do what their faith says they cannot.²

Also in 2016, a noted Harvard law professor wrote that the “culture wars” were over, that people with certain religious beliefs had lost, and that they should be treated with no leniency, noting that “taking a hard line seemed to work reasonably well in Germany and Japan after 1945.”³

But the rise in hostility comes as no surprise to attorneys who specialize in this field, such as the legal team at First Liberty Institute (the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans). Each year we see hundreds of cases.

1 George Yancey & David A Williamson, *So Many Christians, So Few Lions* (2015).

2 U.S. Comm’n on Civil Rights, *Peaceful Coexistence: Reconciling Nondiscrimination Principles with Civil Liberties*, available at <http://www.usccr.gov/pubs/Peaceful-Coexistence-09-07-16.PDF> (Sept. 7, 2016).

3 Mark Tushnet, “Abandoning Defensive Crouch Liberal Constitutionalism,” *Balkinization*, <https://balkin.blogspot.com/2016/05/abandoning-defensive-crouch-liberal.html> (May 6, 2016).



The Time for Denial is Past

You can read about the cases pertaining to education in the pages of *Undeniable: 2017 Schoolhouse Edition*. And you can take heart that the vast majority of the hostility to religion you will read about is unlawful. It succeeds only because of its own bluff and the passivity of its victims. Hostility to religion can be defeated in the culture and the legal system—but only if challenged by Americans like you. The time for denying the crisis, however, is long past.

Kelly Shackelford
President, CEO, and Chief Counsel
First Liberty Institute

Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An age is called Dark not because the light fails to shine, but because people refuse to see it.

James A. Michener, Space

Abstract

Hostility to religion in America continues to grow at an alarming rate.

- In the **Public Arena** of public places, the government, and the workplace, religious individuals and groups are facing increasing demands to hide their faith or to sacrifice their beliefs in order to keep their jobs and their livelihoods.
- In the **Schoolhouse**, from kindergarten through graduate school, students and teachers face professional, personal, and academic threats for living out their faith and refusing to compromise their beliefs.
- In **Churches and Ministries**—an area in which one might expect hostility to be the least—religious leaders are censored, houses of worship are shuttered, and ministries have been told they must violate their religious beliefs or face crippling fines.
- In the **Military**, chaplains face courts-martial for providing religious counseling according to their religious beliefs, service members are told that they cannot express their faith, and veterans endure the defacement or demolition of their memorials because of religious imagery.

More than 1,400 cases are documented in the full 2017 edition of *Undeniable*, yet this is not an exhaustive accounting. Though this edition includes prior years' cases, the 16.7% increase demonstrates a growing expansion of hostility toward religious expression and conduct. Quantitatively and qualitatively, the hostility is undeniable. And it is dangerous.

The title of this survey, *Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America*, exemplifies its purpose: to bring to light the increasing acts of hostility to religion in such a way that even the most uninformed and skeptical person cannot deny that we in America are facing an unprecedented assault on our First Freedom. With each edition, *Undeniable* unfortunately continues to grow.

Here is a summary of the documentation of hostility to religion that you will find in the Schoolhouse section of the larger survey:

These cases primarily involve school officials prohibiting students or teachers from sharing their faith or exercising their religious free speech rights. Many of these cases arise because of the misinformation that secularist organizations send annually to school officials, threatening lawsuits unless the school officials stamp out all religious expression within the school. While this type of attack on religious liberty has been common for decades, these attacks are now occurring with increasing frequency. The following are some of the most significant recent attacks on religious liberty in the schoolhouse.

- *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District*

Coach Joe Kennedy was head coach for the Bremerton High School junior varsity football team and an assistant coach for the varsity team. After a football game in 2008, Coach Kennedy waited until the game ended and the players cleared the field. He then walked to the fifty-yard line, took a knee, and thanked God for his players. Coach Kennedy continued to do this for seven years. In 2015, however, Bremerton High School fired Coach Kennedy for giving a prayer after a football game. First Liberty Institute took action to defend Coach Kennedy's right to give a prayer under the First Amendment, federal law, and extensive legal precedent. In August 2016, Coach Kennedy filed a lawsuit against Bremerton School District to get his job back.

- *Substitute Teacher Fired for Handing a Bible to a Student*

Walt Tutka, a substitute teacher for the Phillipsburg School District in New Jersey, said that "the first shall be last, but the last shall be first" to a student coming last through a door. The student asked Tutka several times about the source of the quote. Tutka eventually used his personal Bible to show the quote to the student. At the student's request, Tutka gave the student the Bible. Upon learning that Tutka had given a student a Bible, the school district terminated Tutka for distributing religious literature on school grounds, even though the school had a Bible in its library. First Liberty Institute stepped in to assist Tutka and filed a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) asserting that the school district's firing of Tutka was religious discrimination. The EEOC agreed, determining that there was reasonable cause to believe that the Phillipsburg School District



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discriminated against Tutka “on the basis of religion and retaliation.”

- *Matthews v. Kountze I.S.D.*

The Kountze High School cheerleaders wanted to display encouraging messages to the football players of both KHS’s team and opposing teams. The cheerleaders decided that the best way to encourage the players was to write Bible verses on the banners that the football players run through at the beginning of each game. The Freedom From Religion Foundation discovered that the cheerleaders were writing Bible verses and sent a letter to Kountze I.S.D. demanding that the school district stop the cheerleaders. The superintendent of Kountze I.S.D. then banned any student group, including the cheerleaders, from bringing signs with religious messages to sporting events. The cheerleaders sued the school district to protect their free speech and religious liberty rights.

- *Morgan v. Swanson.*

Public school officials told Jonathan Morgan, a third-grader in Plano, Texas, that he could not include a religious message in the goodie bags that he was bringing to a “Winter Party” to share with his classmates. School officials prohibited other children at the school from distributing pencils that stated “Jesus is the Reason for the Season” and “Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so.” A school official ordered another student to stop distributing tickets to a Christian drama and to discard the remaining tickets. After a long court battle, Plano I.S.D. settled with Jonathan Morgan in 2016.

- *Pounds v. Katy I.S.D.*

A Houston-area school district banned religious items at Christmastime and also barred Valentine’s Day cards that contained religious content. These items were forbidden merely because they were religious. When one student was asked what Easter meant to her, she was told that she could not say “Jesus.” A federal court held that the Katy I.S.D. violated the students’ constitutional rights because of its hostility to religion.

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- *Schultz v. Medina Valley I.S.D.*

Angela Hildenbrand, the valedictorian of her class, wanted to say a prayer during her graduation ceremony from Medina Valley High School. A fellow student from an agnostic family filed a suit to prevent Hildenbrand from praying. The federal district court judge issued an order prohibiting Hildenbrand from using words like “Lord,” “in Jesus’ name,” and “amen.” The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit reversed the ruling and allowed the prayer. On June 6, 2011, Hildenbrand gave her speech, which included a prayer.

There Is Hope, If . . .

While this 2017 edition of *Undeniable: The Survey of Hostility to Religion in America* shows that attacks on religious liberty continued to increase in the United States throughout 2016, both in the frequency and in the severity of the attacks, this survey also shows that those persons and organizations who stand up for religious liberty win when they fight. In addition, many people argue that concerns about religious freedom and the future of the Supreme Court were also responsible for the dramatic outcome of the presidential election in 2016. As more and more Americans become aware of the growing attacks on religious liberty and learn about what their rights are, they can stand and turn back the tides of secularism and hostility that have so eroded religious liberty—America’s First Freedom.

ATTACKS IN THE SCHOOLHOUSE

FIRST  LIBERTY

Supreme Court Upholds Indirect School Tax Credits

Arizona Christian School Tuition Organization v. Winn, 131 S. Ct. 1436 (2011)
Arizona provides tax credits for donations to school tuition organizations that fund scholarships to Arizona private schools. A group of taxpayers sued the state, arguing the law violated the Establishment Clause because program funds were allotted to religious schools. The Supreme Court held that because the system was based on individual tax credits and only affected those directly participating in the program, the taxpayers had no grounds on which to sue the state. As a result, Arizona citizens' right to choose where to use their scholarship funds was upheld.

Christian Legal Society Denied Recognition at Hastings College of Law

Christian Legal Society Chapter of the University of California, Hastings College of the Law v. Martinez, 130 S. Ct. 2971 (2010)
In 2004, the Christian Legal Society (CLS) filed a lawsuit against Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco for not giving the CLS chapter at Hastings College official recognition due to the CLS's refusal to comply with the school's nondiscrimination policy. A district court ruled in favor of Hastings College. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld their ruling. In January of 2010, the Supreme Court agreed to intervene in the case. About eighteen organizations petitioned the Supreme Court to encourage them to uphold the right of religious organizations to determine the requirements for their own membership. The Supreme Court, however, affirmed the decisions of the lower courts.

Public School Bans Bible Club in Name of Nondiscrimination

Truth v. Kent School District, 129 S. Ct. 2889 (2009)
A public school prevented students from forming a Bible club, stating that the club's requirement that club members possess a true desire to grow in a relationship with Jesus Christ would exclude non-Christians and violate the school's nondiscrimination policy.

Scholarship Awarded for Any Career but Pastor

Locke v. Davey, 540 U.S. 712 (2004)
Josh Davey received a Promise Scholarship, which was awarded to academically gifted students with postsecondary education expenses to use at any college in the state. He decided to pursue a double major in pastoral ministries and business management and administration. Davey was told that he could use the scholarship for any major unless he was devoted to becoming a pastor. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled his scholarship could be withdrawn.

Lawsuits Challenge Voucher Program

Zelman v. Simmons-Harris, 536 U.S. 639 (2002)

An Ohio voucher program was enacted because the public school system was in a “crisis of magnitude,” and families were given voucher funds to use toward a school of their choice. Many families elected to use their vouchers for religious schools. As a result, a lawsuit was filed to challenge the program, claiming it was unconstitutional because parents are allowed to choose religious or secular schools. The Supreme Court held that the program was neutral and thus not a violation of the Establishment Clause.

Religious After-School Club Sues for Equal Treatment

Good News Club v. Milford Central School, 533 U.S. 98 (2001)

Milford Central School denied the Good News Club use of the school’s facilities after school. A lawsuit was filed to protect the religious group’s right to use the school’s facilities, as other organizations were permitted to do, without being discriminated against. A federal district court and the Second Circuit Court of Appeals both upheld the discrimination, but the Supreme Court reversed.

Lawsuit Attacks Prayer Before High School Football Games

Santa Fe I.S.D. v. Doe, 530 U.S. 290 (2000)

A lawsuit was filed to challenge a school district policy permitting student-led prayer prior to football games. The court struck down the policy, determining that it violated the Establishment Clause. In the lower court in this same case, the judge ordered students not to pray in Jesus’ name and told them that federal marshals would be on hand to take students to the county jail, saying, “Anyone who violates these orders, no kidding, is going to wish that he or she had died as a child when this court gets through with it.”

Lawsuit Attacks Public Support for Materials and Equipment for Public and Private Schools

Mitchell v. Helms, 530 U.S. 793 (2000)

Under the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act of 1981, government aid for materials and equipment was provided to public as well as private schools. A lawsuit was filed against the Act because it would allow private schools, which are religious schools, to receive a benefit. The Supreme Court held that this funding did not violate the Establishment Clause.

University of Virginia Discriminates Against Religious Journal

Rosenberger v. Rector & Visitors of University of Virginia, 515 U.S. 819 (1995)

The University of Virginia refused to provide funds to print a journal because

of the journal's religious viewpoint. The student filed a lawsuit to challenge the fund's disbursement guidelines that discriminated against religious viewpoints. The Supreme Court held that providing funds to publish the journal would not violate the Establishment Clause so the school could not discriminate against the journal because of its religious viewpoint.

School District Denies Sign-Language Interpreter to Deaf Student Who Attends Catholic School

Zobrest v. Catalina Foothills Sch. Dist., 509 U.S. 1 (1993)

Through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a deaf student was entitled to assistance from a sign language interpreter during the school day, and the student asked the Catalina Foothills School District to provide such an interpreter. However, the student attended Catholic school, and the district refused to provide an interpreter. A lawsuit had to be filed to uphold this religious student's rights.

New York School District Discriminates Against Religious Use of Its Facilities

Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches Union Free School District, 508 U.S. 384 (1993)

A New York school board denied a church after-hours access to a school to exhibit a film series about Christian family values because of a policy prohibiting use by any group for religious purposes. A lawsuit was filed to protect the church's right to have equal access to the school premises.

Prayer Prohibited at Middle School Graduation

Lee v. Weisman, 505 U.S. 577 (1992)

In Providence, Rhode Island, principals of a public school were permitted to ask clergy to give invocations and benedictions at graduation exercises, but when a middle school principal invited a rabbi to give a "nonsectarian" prayer, a student's parent got a temporary restraining order to prevent the prayer and sought a permanent injunction to prevent the practice of inviting clergy to perform prayers. The U.S. Supreme Court prohibited the prayer but noted that it was wrong of the school officials to attempt to censor the rabbi by requiring that a given prayer be "nonsectarian."

School Board Bans Students from Forming Religious Extracurricular Clubs

Board of Education of the Westside Community Schools v. Mergens, 496 U.S. 226 (1990)

A school board refused to allow students to form an extracurricular Christian club, claiming such a club would violate the Establishment Clause. A

lawsuit had to be filed to protect the Christian group from being unlawfully discriminated against by the school board.

Act Seeking to Ensure Both Sides of Origins Debate Are Taught Declared Unconstitutional

Edwards v. Aguillard, 482 U.S. 578 (1987)

A suit was filed to challenge Louisiana's Creationism Act. The Creationism Act provided that if evolution is taught in public schools, creation science must also be taught; and if creation science is taught, then evolution must also be taught. The suit sought to strike down the act as a violation of the Establishment Clause. The Supreme Court obliged, striking down the law.

Time Set Aside for Voluntary Prayer Challenged

Wallace v. Jaffree, 472 U.S. 38 (1985)

A resident brought suit to challenge the practice of having a period of meditation and voluntary prayer in schools in Alabama and won.

University Discriminates Against Religious Student Groups

Widmar v. Vincent, 454 U.S. 263 (1981)

The University of Missouri at Kansas City refused to allow a religious student group equal access to university facilities like other student groups. The students were forced to file a lawsuit in order to protect their rights to equal access and to stop the religious discrimination.

AHA Sues Texas School District for Opening Board Meetings with Prayer

American Humanist Association v. McCarty, No. 15-11067 (5th Cir., filed Oct. 28, 2015)

Despite the Supreme Court's repeatedly holding that it is constitutional for legislative bodies like school boards to open with a solemnizing prayer, the AHA filed a lawsuit against Birdville Independent School District in Haltom City, Texas, for opening its meetings with prayer.

FFRF Sues to Remove Ten Commandments Monument from Front of Pennsylvania School

Freedom From Religion Foundation, Inc. v. New Kensington-Arnold Sch. Dist., No. 15-3083 (3d Cir., Aug. 9, 2016)

The FFRF sued a Pennsylvania school district to remove a Ten Commandments monument from the front of a school. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit held that a parent had standing to sue the school district and sent the case back to the district court for further proceedings. The lawsuit is ongoing.

Teachers Sue to Stop Religious Private School from Operating Alternative School System

Smith v. Jefferson County Bd. of Sch. Com'rs, 788 F.3d 580 (6th Cir. 2015)

A public school in Tennessee decided to contract with a religious private school to run its alternative school system. Even though the decision was made for financial reasons and the private school did not mandate religious instruction, several teachers filed a lawsuit alleging that the contract violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The Eastern District Court of Tennessee held that the contract was unconstitutional. The Sixth Circuit, however, found that the school district's actions did not violate the Establishment Clause.

Humanist Group Attacks Public School Graduation Ceremony Held at Religious College

Am. Humanist Ass'n v. Greenville County Sch. Dist., No. 13-2502, 2014 WL 1979305 (4th Cir. 2014)

Mountain View Elementary School in Taylors, South Carolina, held its graduation at North Greenville University, a local Christian college. When the American Humanist Association (AHA) heard about the location and discovered that several of the students had led prayer as part of the graduation ceremony, they sent a demand letter to the elementary school superintendent and principal that called for the elimination of the prayers and a change in venue. The school responded that no changes would be forthcoming. Consequently, the AHA sued the school. A South Carolina district court found in favor of the school, but the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the decision and remanded it for reconsideration.

Eighth-Grade Class President Banned from Quoting Sentence from Old Testament

A.M. v. Taconic Hills Cent. Sch. Dist., 510 Fed. Appx. 3 (2d Cir. 2013)

An eighth-grade student, the president of her class, wanted to include a sentence from the Old Testament in her graduation speech. The school told the student that she could not include the sentence because it was "too religious." The Second Circuit upheld the school's censorship, stating that a reasonable observer might perceive the student's message as having been endorsed by the school. The Supreme Court refused to review the decision.

Public School Discriminates Against Invitations to Religious Parties

K.A. ex rel. Ayers v. Pocono Mountain Sch. Dist., 710 F.3d 99 (3rd Cir. 2013)

A Pennsylvania public school prohibited a fifth-grade student from handing

out invitations to a Christmas party at her church, even though the school permitted students to hand out invitations to other private parties. The Third Circuit upheld the student's right to hand out invitations to a Christmas party at her church and granted a preliminary injunction against the school's policy.

Evangelist Prohibited from Preaching on Campus by Unconstitutional Restrictions

McGlone v. Cheek, 534 Fed. Appx. 293 (6th Cir. 2013)

John McGlone, wanting to preach on campus, was denied access to the University of Tennessee's campus because student groups would not sponsor his message. A Tennessee federal district court held that the school policy requiring outside speakers to obtain an invitation from student, faculty, or staff before speaking on campus was constitutional. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit reversed, holding that the requirement was unconstitutionally vague and stopped its enforcement.

Parents Sue to Stop Other Parents from Allowing Their Children to Be Released for Religious Instruction

Moss v. Spartanburg County Sch. Dist. Seven, 683 F.3d 599 (4th Cir. 2012)

Parents of two Spartanburg County High School students sued Spartanburg County School District claiming that the school's release time program, which permits students to take religious instruction offered by private educators and receive up to two academic credits, violated the Establishment Clause. After the district court granted summary judgment to the school district, the parents appealed, and the Fourth Circuit held that the school's program is constitutional.

Professor Fired for Voicing Religious Views in a Newspaper Editorial

Dixon v. University of Toledo, 702 F.3d 269 (6th Cir. 2012)

University of Toledo professor Crystal Dixon was fired for writing a newspaper editorial about her religious views opposing homosexuality. The district court and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit held that Dixon's speech was not protected.

University Student Expelled from Counseling Program for Refusing to Affirm Sexual Conduct Outside of Marriage

Ward v. Polite, 667 F.3d 727 (6th Cir. 2012)

Julea Ward was expelled from Eastern Michigan University's (EMU) graduate counseling program because she would not affirm homosexual conduct or heterosexual conduct outside of marriage to clients that she saw during the clinical portion of her program, instead referring these clients to another

counselor. A federal district judge ruled against Ms. Ward, but the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed. Following the Sixth Circuit's ruling in Ward's favor, the case settled with EMU reinstating Ms. Ward and providing financial compensation to her.

Tennessee Public School Bans Fourth-Grade Student from Having Bible Studies with Peers

Whitson v. Knox County Board of Education, 468 Fed. Appx. 532 (6th Cir. 2012) L.W., a fourth-grade student at Karns Elementary School in Tennessee, was stopped by school officials from holding Bible studies with his peers during recess. A jury found for the school, and the Sixth Circuit affirmed.

Evangelist Sues for Right to Share the Gospel and Distribute Religious Tracts at University

McGlone v. Bell, 681 F.3d 718 (6th Cir. 2012)

John McGlone wanted to share the Gospel and distribute religious tracts in the public areas of the Tennessee Technological University. The university demanded that McGlone first receive a permit to share the gospel and distribute the tracts. A district court ruled in the university's favor, but the Sixth Circuit overturned the district court, holding that the university's requirement was unreasonable.

Lawsuit Stops Public School from Using Church for Graduation Ceremony

John Doe, 3 v. Elmbrook School District, No. 10-2922 (7th Cir. 2012) (en banc) Plaintiffs sued the Elmbrook School District in Wisconsin, claiming its practice of using a Christian church as the locale for the high school's annual graduation ceremony violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The district court granted the school district's motion for summary judgment. The plaintiffs appealed to the Seventh Circuit, which held that the practice of holding the ceremony in a church "did not constitute governmentally coerced participation in religion," did not qualify as an endorsement of religious practices or beliefs, and did not entangle the state with religion. The Seventh Circuit then granted en banc review, however, and reversed the lower decisions, holding that holding graduation in a church violates the Establishment Clause.

Ex-Teacher Sues Private School for Discrimination After She Is Fired for Having Pre-Marital Sex

Hamilton v. Southland Christian Sch., Inc., 680 F.3d 1361 (11th Cir. 2012)

A teacher was fired from a Christian school because she engaged in pre-marital sex. The teacher sued the school under Title VII, claiming that she

was fired because she was pregnant. The district court dismissed the case, but the Eleventh Circuit reversed, holding that the teacher may sue the school. The Eleventh Circuit acknowledged *Hosanna-Tabor* and the ministerial exception but noted that the school did not raise the ministerial exception until the appellate level, which was too late.

Lawsuit Bans School Board from Opening Meetings with Prayer

Doe v. Indian River School District, 653 F.3d 256 (3d Cir. 2011)

Since 1969, the School Board of the Indian River School District had a practice of opening their public meetings with a moment of prayer. Until 2004, the president of the board would designate one person at each meeting to give the prayer. After 2004, the Board adopted a policy that created a rotating basis that allows one member of the board to offer a prayer or request a moment of silence. No one was required to participate in the prayer, and no school employee could be involved in the prayer. Mona and Marco Dobrich filed a suit individually and as the parents of their two children to challenge this practice. The court of appeals held that because students regularly attended school board meetings, the opening prayer violated the Establishment Clause.

University Professor Denied Promotion Because of His Religious Beliefs

Adams v. The Trustees of the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, 640 F.3d 550 (4th Cir. 2011)

A professor at the University of North Carolina-Wilmington was denied a promotion based on the religious and political views he expressed in his columns and speeches. The Fourth Circuit overturned the lower court by holding that the professor's speech was constitutionally protected private speech.

Public School Prohibits Third Grader from Sharing Goodie Bags with Religious Content

Morgan v. Swanson, 659 F.3d 359 (5th Cir. 2011) (en banc)

Jonathan Morgan, a third-grader in Plano, Texas, was told that he could not include a religious message in the goodie bags that he was bringing to the "Winter Party" to share with his classmates. Other children at the school were prohibited from distributing pencils that stated "Jesus is the Reason for the Season" and "Jesus Loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so." Another student was ordered by a school official to discontinue distributing tickets to a Christian drama and to discard the remaining tickets. In a fractured en banc opinion, the Fifth Circuit stated that the students are protected by the First Amendment but that their protection was not clearly enough established to award damages against the school officials involved.

High School Valedictorian Sues for Freedom to Express Her Faith in Valedictorian Address

Schultz v. Medina Valley I.S.D., No. 11-50486 (5th Cir. 2011)

Angela Hildenbrand, the valedictorian of her class, wanted to say a prayer during her graduation ceremony from Medina Valley High. A fellow student from an agnostic family filed a suit to prevent Hildenbrand from praying. The federal district court judge issued an order prohibiting Hildenbrand from using words like “Lord,” “in Jesus’ name,” and “amen.” The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the ruling and allowed the prayer. On June 6, 2011, Hildenbrand gave her speech, which included a prayer.

Athletic Association Rules Single Out Catholic Schools for Additional Restrictions

Seeger v. Kentucky High School Athletic Association, 453 Fed. Appx. 630 (6th Cir. 2011)

The Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a bylaw of the Kentucky High School Athletic Association that said Catholic schools could not offer students more than a twenty-five percent scholarship for athletics. Parents filed suit claiming that the bylaw was discriminatory based on religion because the rule grouped Catholic schools together. The court rejected this argument and found that the bylaw merely grouped the schools together because they were similar for reasons other than religion.

Students Forced to Sue for Right to Wear Shirts Opposing Day of Silence

Zamecnik v. Indian Prairie School District #204, 636 F.3d 874 (7th Cir. 2011)

A school prohibited two students in Naperville, Illinois, from wearing T-shirts that stated, “Be Happy, Not Gay,” to protest the Day of Silence, a day intended to draw attention to discrimination faced by homosexual students. The two students wished to wear the shirts to show their religious beliefs. The Seventh Circuit held that the school could not prohibit the students from wearing the T-shirt because of the potential for “hurt feelings.”

Lawsuit Blocks Charter School from Including Religious Texts in Curriculum

Nampa Classical Academy v. Goesling, 447 Fed. Appx. 776 (9th Cir. 2011)

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit affirmed a district court’s holding that Nampa Classical Academy, a charter school in Idaho, could not use religious texts as part of its curriculum because the school is technically classified as a governmental entity. The plaintiffs, Nampa Classical Academy; Isaac Moffett, a minor; and Maria Kosmann sued the Idaho Public Charter School Commission on the grounds that its decision to prohibit the use of

sectarian or denominational texts in public schools violated the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution. The Ninth Circuit held “[b]ecause Idaho charter schools are governmental entities, the curriculum presented in such a school is not the speech of teachers, parents, or students, but that of the Idaho government.”

Public School District Orders Teacher to Remove Classroom Decorations Mentioning God

Johnson v. Poway Unified School District, 658 F.3d 954 (9th Cir. 2011)

Bradley Johnson, a public school teacher, sued the Poway Unified School District in San Diego, claiming the district violated his right to free speech, the Establishment Clause, and his right to Equal Protection under the law when the district forced him to remove banners referring to God from his classroom. The case made it to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which held that the Poway Unified School District’s decision to force the removal of the materials did not violate any of the constitutional rights asserted by Johnson.

History Teacher Allowed to Make Derogatory Remarks About Religious Beliefs

Farnan v. Capistrano Unified School District, 654 F.3d 975 (9th Cir. 2011)

History teacher James Corbett of Mission Viejo, California, was accused of violating the Establishment Clause by making derogatory comments about religious faith in the classroom. The dispute arose after he called creationism “superstitious nonsense.” The Ninth Circuit held that Corbett was entitled to qualified immunity because whether such comments violate the Establishment Clause is not clearly established. The Ninth Circuit refused to decide that issue.

Counseling Student Threatened with Expulsion for Biblical Beliefs

Keeton v. Anderson-Wiley, 664 F.3d 865 (11th Cir. 2011)

Jennifer Keeton, a graduate student in counseling at Augusta State University, was asked to complete a remediation plan that included diversity training and a recommendation to attend the Augusta Gay Pride Parade. According to the university, Ms. Keeton’s Christian beliefs did not align with the department’s professional guidelines. As a result, Ms. Keeton faced the remediation plan or expulsion from the program. Ms. Keeton sued the university to protect her religious freedom but lost in court.

University Forced to Treat Catholic Group Equally with Other Student Groups

Badger Catholic, Inc. v. Walsh, 620 F. 3d 775 (7th Cir. 2010)

Badger Catholic, a student organization at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, was denied reimbursement for religious events. Badger Catholic filed a lawsuit. The Seventh Circuit held that the University of Wisconsin-Madison was engaging in viewpoint discrimination and must allow reimbursements for religious events as well as secular.

Lawsuit Opposes Mandatory Period of Silence in Illinois Schools Because It Could Be Used for Prayer or Meditation

Sherman v. Koch, 623 F.3d 501 (7th Cir. 2010)

Illinois passed a statute mandating a period of silence in public schools. The period of silence could be used for meditation, prayer, or silent reflections on the day's activities. Students filed a suit claiming that the statute violated the establishment of church and state. The district court held that the statute was unconstitutional, but the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit held that the statute did not violate the constitution.

Professor Threatens Student for Speech About Faith and Marriage

Lopez v. Candaele, 630 F.3d 775 (9th Cir. 2010)

Jonathan Lopez, a student at Los Angeles City College, gave a speech about his faith and his traditional view of marriage. Lopez's professor stopped the speech, refused to grade it, and threatened to have Lopez expelled. Lopez sued the professor, a dean of the school, and the school for violating his First Amendment rights. The district court sided with Lopez, but the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals held that Lopez did not have standing to sue because the teacher's statements are not a credible threat of harm.

University Rejects Class Credit for Religiously Motivated Classes

Association of Christian Schools International v. Stearns, 362 F. Appx. 640 (9th Cir. 2010)

The University of California's admissions policy does not accept high school courses that focus on one religion's viewpoint. The Ninth Circuit upheld the policy, rejecting First Amendment and Equal Protection claims.

School Covers Religious Content in Kindergarten Student's Work

Peck v. Baldwinsville School District, 351 Fed. Appx. 477 (2nd Cir. 2009)

Antonio Peck's kindergarten teacher instructed her class to draw a poster about how to save the environment. Antonio's first poster contained several religious figures and the statement: "The only way to save the world."

The poster was rejected. Antonio's second poster included cutout figures of children holding hands around the world, people recycling trash, and children picking up garbage. On the left side of the poster was a picture of Jesus kneeling, with his hands stretched toward the sky. The poster was displayed along with eighty other student posters; but, unlike the other posters, school officials folded Antonio's poster in half so that the figure of Jesus could not be seen.

School Rejects Student's Selection of the Bible to Have Read to Class

Busch v. Marple Newtown School District, 567 F.3d 89 (3d Cir. 2009)

Elementary school students in the Marple Newtown School District were asked to select their favorite book, which their parents would then read to the class. Donna Busch's son chose the Bible. Busch selected a few verses that she often read with her son, being careful to select a Psalm because it omitted references to Jesus Christ. The school's principal refused to allow Busch's son to fully participate because "reading the Bible to the class would be against the law" by "promoting religion," despite numerous other presentations about Hanukkah, Passover, Christmas, and Easter being permitted in the classroom. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the restriction.

New Jersey School District Bans Religious Holiday Music

Stratechuk v. Board of Education, S. Orange-Maplewood School District, 587 F.3d 597 (3d Cir. 2009)

A New Jersey School District prohibited celebratory religious music at school holiday events. The Third Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the school district's policy as constitutional, rejecting claims that it violated the First Amendment.

Lawsuit Attacks Minute of Silence in Texas Schools

Croft v. Governor of Texas, 562 F.3d 735 (5th Cir. 2009)

An atheist sued the State of Texas because of a Texas statute that allows a minute of silence for students to pray, meditate, or reflect. The statute was upheld by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Lawsuit Stops Thirty-Year Tradition of Gideons Distributing Bibles to Students

Roark v. South Iron R-1 School District, 573 F.3d 556 (8th Cir. 2009)

For thirty years, South Iron Elementary School had permitted the Gideons to distribute Bibles to the students. A student sued, claiming that the distribution of Bibles in school violated the Establishment Clause. The district court prohibited the distribution, and the court of appeals affirmed.

School District Censors Valedictorian's Address

McComb v. Crehan, 320 Fed. Appx. 507 (9th Cir. 2009)

School officials at Foothill High School in Las Vegas, Nevada, told valedictorian Brittany McComb that she could not mention God or Jesus in her valedictorian address. When McComb did so anyway, the school officials turned off her microphone. McComb sued the school for violating her free speech rights, but the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals found that the school district did not violate her constitutional rights.

School Bans Instrumental Music Associated with a Religious Song

Nurre v. Whitehead, 580 F.3d 1087 (9th Cir. 2009)

A California high school banned a student from playing an instrumental version of a religious song at its graduation ceremony. The Ninth Circuit held that this prohibition did not violate the student's free speech rights.

Valedictorian Told She Would Not Receive Diploma Until She Apologized for Her Religious Speech

Corder v. Lewis Palmer Sch. Dist. No 38, 566 F.3d 1219 (10th Cir. 2009)

Erica Corder, class valedictorian, made a short speech during her graduation in 2006. The official policy of the school for school speeches did not mention religion but prohibited speech that "tends to create hostility or otherwise disrupt the orderly operation of the educational process." Corder gave a speech that referenced her personal faith. At the conclusion of the ceremony, a teacher escorted Corder to speak with a school official. The official informed Corder that she would not receive her diploma until she made a public apology for her speech. A federal district court found for the school district because Corder did not submit her speech for pre-approval as she had been instructed, and the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed.

Christian Fraternity Refused Recognition for Limiting Admission to Christian Men

Beta Upsilon Chi Upsilon Chapter at the University of Florida v. Machen, 586 F.3d 908 (11th Cir. 2009)

Beta Upsilon Chi, a Christian fraternity whose members and officers profess faith in Jesus Christ and adhere to a Code of Conduct, was denied official recognition by the University of Florida. The university rejected the fraternity's application because the group allowed only males to join and restricted membership based on religious belief. After being sued, the university modified its policy to allow an exception for religious organizations, and Beta Upsilon Chi was recognized as an official student organization.

Lexington School District Teaches Students About Sexual Orientation Without Notifying Parents

Parker v. Hurley, 514 F.3d 87 (1st Cir. 2008)

Two sets of parents from Lexington, Massachusetts, sued after the school district refused to provide the parents with prior notice that their children would undergo instruction recognizing differences in sexual orientation. The parents argued that forcing their children to undergo the education violated due process and free exercise of religion. On January 31, 2008, the court found that the due process clause was not implicated, and the instruction did not infringe on either the parents or children's free exercise of religion.

Parents Challenge Restrictive Pennsylvania Homeschool Law

Combs v. Homer-Center School District, 540 F.3d 231 (3d Cir. 2008)

Pennsylvania passed the Pennsylvania Home Education Law in 1988. It is the most restrictive homeschooling law in the United States, requiring that families submit a teaching log, submit a portfolio of the child's work for review, and meet the requirements for the minimum number of days and hours in certain subjects. Six homeschool families sued to protect their right to educate their children after being subjected to truancy proceedings and social service investigations. The court ruled that the law did not substantially burden the parents.

Football Coach Seeks Declaration that His Silent Prayer Is Permissible

Borden v. School District of the Township of East Brunswick, 523 F.3d 153 (3d Cir. 2008)

Marcus Borden, the head football coach at East Brunswick High School, often engaged in silent acts of prayer such as bowing his head to say grace prior to eating or taking a knee with his team during a locker-room prayer. He filed a suit to declare that he was allowed to engage in the silent behavior despite the East Brunswick School District's policy prohibiting faculty participation in student-initiated prayer. The district court found that Borden's acts did not violate the Establishment Clause, but the Third Circuit found that Borden's activities would lead a reasonable observer to conclude that Borden was endorsing religion.

Teacher Forced to Remove Religious Decorations and Material from Classroom

Lee v. York County School Division, 484 F.3d 687 (4th Cir. 2007)

A teacher was made to remove religious materials from his classroom including a picture of George Washington praying, an article showing religious

differences of political candidates, and an article dealing with missionary activities of a student. The district court awarded summary judgment to the school district. The appellate court ruled that the teacher was not protected by the First Amendment and affirmed the district court's ruling.

ACLU Sues to Stop Prayers Before School Board Meetings

Doe v. Tangipahoa Parish School Board, 494 F.3d 494 (5th Cir. 2007) (en banc)

The ACLU sued a Louisiana school board for allowing prayers before school board meetings. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, en banc, found that the plaintiffs did not have standing to challenge the school board prayers.

Ex-Teacher Sues Catholic School for Firing Her After She Publicly Supports Abortion

Curay-Cramer v. The Ursuline Academy of Wilmington, Delaware, Inc., 450 F.3d 130 (3d Cir. 2006)

Michele Curay-Cramer, a teacher at Ursuline Academy, was fired from her position at the Catholic school after she signed her name to a pro-choice ad in a local newspaper. School officials asked Ms. Curay-Cramer to withdraw her support for the pro-abortion position (one that was in direct opposition to Catholic teaching) or lose her job. Ms. Curay-Cramer refused and instead took the school to court. The courts ruled in favor of the Academy, however, and affirmed the school's First Amendment rights.

School District Attempts to Charge Religious Club Extra Fee to Use Facilities

Child Evangelism Fellowship of South Carolina v. Anderson School District Five, 470 F.3d 1062 (4th Cir. 2006)

Child Evangelism Fellowship was charged a fee to use school facilities, although the district waived fees whenever deemed "in the best interest of the district." After filing suit, the district changed its policy and sought to "grandfather" free use to the previously authorized groups.

Lawsuit Attacks Christian Prayer Before the Indiana House of Representatives

Hinrichs v. Bosma, 440 F.3d 393 (7th Cir. 2006)

Four taxpayers brought suit seeking an injunction to prohibit opening the Indiana House of Representatives with Christian prayer by saying it violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The district court ruled that the historical opening prayer at the House was unconstitutional because of its sectarian nature and enjoined further sectarian prayer (e.g. praying in Jesus' name). The appellate court denied a stay.



Cosmetology Instructor Accused of Sexual Harassment for Distributing Religious Material

Piggee v. Carl Sandburg College, 464 F.3d 667 (7th Cir. 2006)

A student at Carl Sandburg College complained when cosmetology teacher Martha Louise Piggee gave him tracts that called homosexuality a sin and called for people to read the Bible and be baptized. Piggee was told she could not hand out the material and that her action qualified as sexual harassment. Piggee went to court against the college, the board of trustees, and five college administrators for violating her due process rights and her constitutional rights to free speech. The suit said that the college's sexual harassment policy was not clear. A lower court ruled against her, and the case was appealed to the Seventh Circuit. The appellate court ruled that the college had a right to insist Piggee refrain from proselytizing while serving as an instructor because her expression of religious beliefs was unrelated to her job of teaching cosmetology.

Christian Legal Society at Southern Illinois University Revoked as an Official Student Group

Christian Legal Society v. Walker, 453 F.3d 853 (7th Cir. 2006)

Southern Illinois University revoked the Christian Legal Society (CLS) student chapter's registration and all of the associated benefits because the group's "Statement of Faith" and sexual morality policy for its voting members and leaders violated the university's policy prohibiting discrimination on the basis of religion or "sexual orientation." A lawsuit was filed to reestablish CLS's official recognition.

Public School Student Banned from Expressing Opposition to Homosexuality

Harper v. Poway Unified School District, 445 F.3d 1166 (9th Cir. 2006)

Poway High School had a special day to celebrate homosexuality. A Christian student who wore a T-shirt that had an opposing view and that mentioned God was banned from wearing the shirt. The district court ruled that the student's speech was not protected because it offended the "identity" of another person. The Ninth Circuit affirmed.

County Employee Banned from Expressing His Religious Beliefs at Work

Berry v. Department of Social Services, 447 F.3d 642 (9th Cir. 2006)

A county social services employee was prohibited from discussing religion with clients, displaying religious items in his cubicle, and using the conference room for voluntary employee-only prayer meetings. The district court ruled that since he was an employee of a public entity, the employer could restrict

his exercise of religion so the employer would not appear to endorse religion and thus violate the Establishment Clause. The appellate court affirmed.

Religious Employee of the Police Department Singled Out for Discriminatory Treatment

Shrum v. City of Coweta, 449 F.3d 1132 (10th Cir. 2006)

An employee of the police department was scheduled to work on Sunday because the police chief knew that it conflicted with the employee's religious convictions and the chief wanted the employee to resign. The district court ruled that the mere refusal to accommodate the employee's religious scheduling needs did not establish a constitutional violation. The court did rule in favor of the employee since the police chief's decision was not neutral but singled out the employee. The appellate court affirmed the district court ruling in this regard.

Parents File Lawsuit Challenging Sticker on Textbooks Stating that Evolution Is a Theory

Selman v. Cobb County Sch. Dist., 449 F.3d 1320 (11th Cir. 2006)

A Georgia school district decided to place a sticker in new science textbooks explaining that evolution is theory rather than fact and encouraging students to study with open minds and critical thinking skills. A handful of parents complained that the sticker restricted teaching evolution and promoted creationism and filed a lawsuit claiming that the sticker violated the Establishment Clause.

Speaker Banned from Speaking at Middle School Solely Because of His Affiliation with a Religious Organization

Carpenter v. Dillon Elementary School District 10, 149 Fed. Appx. 645 (9th Cir. 2005)

Jaroy Carpenter, a motivational speaker, was prevented from speaking at an assembly in the Dillon Middle School because he was affiliated with a Christian organization, despite the fact that he had previously spoken in over 200 secular schools and that he agreed to omit discussions of his religious faith and references to a youth rally being held nearby. The district court held that Carpenter was not harmed, thus there was no First Amendment violation. The court of appeals affirmed.

Religious Student Club Forced to File a Lawsuit for Equal Treatment with Other Clubs

Child Evangelism Fellowship of New Jersey, Inc. v. Stafford Township School District, 386 F.3d 514 (3d Cir. 2004)

Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) was denied permission to post flyers, pass out flyers, staff tables at the back-to-school-night event, or allow students to pass materials to other students about a religious club forming in schools. A lawsuit was filed to protect the right of CEF to utilize the same forums that were afforded to other groups and to prevent viewpoint discrimination.

Maryland School District Limits Religious Student Club's Access to Forum

Child Evangelism Fellowship of Maryland, Inc. v. Montgomery County Public Schools, 373 F.3d 589 (4th Cir. 2004)

The Montgomery County Public Schools refused to allow Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) to participate in the district's take-home flyer forum to distribute flyers about the Good News Club, citing fears about the separation of church and state. A lawsuit had to be filed to end the religious discrimination.

School District Bans Teacher from Participating in After-School Religious Club

Wigg v. Sioux Falls School District 49-5, 382 F.3d 807 (8th Cir. 2004)

A school district refused to allow a teacher to participate in a Good News Club meeting at the school after school hours, so the teacher filed a lawsuit to protect her right of assembly with the religious group. The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals held that the school district violated the teacher's free speech rights by prohibiting her from attending the Good News Club meetings at her school.

Acting Student Forced to Withdraw from Program to Avoid Violating Religious Beliefs

Axson-Flynn v. Johnson, 356 F.3d 1277 (10th Cir. 2004)

University of Utah acting student Christina Axson-Flynn had to withdraw from the acting program and leave the university after her instructors heavily pressured her to perform scenes that required her to say profane words. Axson-Flynn, a Mormon, had informed the instructors of her religious objections to profane phrases during her audition for acceptance to the acting program, but her objections were ignored.

Church Seeks Equal Treatment with New York Public Schools

Bronx Household of Faith v. Bd. of Educ. of the City of New York, 331 F.3d 342 (2d Cir. 2003)

The Bronx Household of Faith filed suit to prevent New York's public schools from discriminating against churches. The public schools refused to allow churches to use school facilities, but permitted other community groups to have access. Several years and court decisions later, the church's constitutional rights to use school facilities were upheld. However, in *Bronx Household of Faith v. Bd. of Educ. of City of New York*, No. 12-2730, 2014 WL 1316301 (2d Cir. Apr. 3, 2014), the Second Circuit Court of Appeals decided that the school's policy of barring the use of school facilities by churches for religious worship services did not violate the Constitution. The church has filed a petition for a rehearing *en banc*.

Father Sues to Direct Education of His Son According to His Religious Beliefs

Leebaert v. Harrington, 332 F.3d 134 (2nd Cir. 2003)

Turk Leebaert, the father of his son, Corky Leebaert, sued to protect his right to direct the upbringing and education of his child. Leebaert, a resident of Fairfield, Connecticut, requested to excuse his son from a health education program describing health, sex, and character development. The principal responded that the health curriculum was mandatory but that Leebaert could opt out of the six classes related to family-life instruction. Leebaert filed suit to protect his rights, but the district court found that the curriculum did not infringe upon Leebaert's constitutional rights. The Second Circuit affirmed.

Young Students Prohibited from Sharing Their Faith Through Gifts

Walz v. Egg Harbor Township, 342 F.3d 271 (3d Cir. 2003)

A pre-kindergarten student, Daniel Walz, was prevented from giving out pencils with the message "Jesus Loves the Little Children" engraved on them and later, as a first-grader, was prevented from distributing candy canes with "The Candy Maker's Witness" attached to the candy. A lawsuit was filed to protect Daniel's rights to give gifts at school just like other children could, but the Third Circuit Court of Appeals held that the school could prohibit proselytizing speech.

Parent of Students at Christian School Denied Position at Public School

Barrow v. Greenville I.S.D., 332 F.3d 844 (5th Cir. 2003)

Karen Jo Barrow was denied an assistant principal position because she refused to remove her children from a private Christian school. The U.S. District



Court in Dallas ruled against Ms. Barrow, arguing that the right of parents to choose private education was not a fundamental right. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, however, found that the superintendent had violated Ms. Barrow's constitutional parental rights and awarded Ms. Barrow lost wages and punitive damages.

Student Sues School District After Board Member Says a Prayer

Doe v. School District of the City of Norfolk, 340 F.3d 605 (8th Cir. 2003)

A student filed a lawsuit after a school board member said a prayer during a graduation. The Eighth Circuit held that, because the prayer was part of the board member's address and not sponsored by the school district, the prayer was private speech and dismissed the lawsuit.

Columbine High School Censors Religious Expression Following Shooting

Fleming v. Jefferson County School District R-1, 298 F.3d 918 (10th Cir. 2002)

Columbine High School hosted a tile-painting project so students could express themselves following the school's tragedy. Some students expressed themselves with religious symbols, including a victim's sister who incorporated a small yellow cross in her tile design. After the tiles were posted, the school officials eradicated the religious symbols from the tile display. A lawsuit was filed to prevent the school officials from censoring the religious expression of the students. Unfortunately, the court chose not to uphold the students' expression rights, and instead validated the school's censorship.

Lawsuit Attempts to Stop Election of Graduation Speakers to Prevent Religious Expression

Adler v. Duval County School Board, 250 F.3d 1330 (11th Cir. 2001)

A lawsuit was filed to challenge a school policy permitting high school seniors to use a popular vote to select a graduation speaker who could deliver a message of their choosing, without approval by school officials. The lawsuit sought to ban the students because some students might use their speech to express religious thoughts.

Student Banned from Reading a Story from His Bible to the Class

C.H. v. Oliva, 226 F. 3d 198 (3rd. Cir. 2000)

Zachary Hood brought his Beginner's Bible to school to share a story about Jacob and Esau called "A Big Family" as part of class activities, but Zachary's teacher refused to allow the story to be read because it was religious. Zachary's mother had to file a lawsuit to allow Zachary to share his story, just as the other students were permitted to share theirs.

Public School Officials Censor Student's Graduation Prayer

Furley v. Aledo I.S.D., 218 F.3d 743 (5th Cir. 2000)

Katherine Furley was elected to give the invocation at her graduation ceremony and was ordered to submit any prayer to officials. School officials then proceeded to edit, word by word, which words she could and could not pray. A lawsuit was filed to protect Katherine's right to pray without being edited by the government. The Court ruled against her right to pray without government editing.

Muslim Police Officers Told They Must Shave Their Beards

Fraternal Order of Police Newark Lodge No. 12 v. City of Newark, 170 F.3d 359 (3d Cir. 1999)

Two Muslim police officers in Newark were required to shave their beards after the city issued an order requiring all police officers to be clean-shaven. The order permitted a medical exemption, but not a religious exemption. The officers had to file a lawsuit to protect their constitutional right to freely exercise their religion.

Lawsuit Challenges Distribution of Religious Materials to Students

Peck v. Upshur County Board of Education, 155 F.3d 274 (4th Cir. 1998)

A school board policy permitted religious groups to provide religious materials and Bibles to students on one designated day each school year. A lawsuit was filed to strike down the policy.

School District in San Diego Discriminates Against Religious Club

Ceniceros v. Board of Trustees of the San Diego Unified School District, 106 F.3d 878 (9th Cir. 1997)

San Diego Unified School District refused a religious club the opportunity to meet during lunchtime, though other groups were permitted to meet. A lawsuit was filed on behalf of the students to prevent the district's unlawful discrimination and to uphold the students' rights under the Equal Access Act.

Lawsuit Attempts to Ban Choir from Singing Christian Music

Bauchman v. West High School, 132 F.3d 542 (10th Cir. 1997)

A school choir's repertoire included Christian music; and, on occasion, the group sang at a church. A Jewish choir student's family filed a lawsuit, essentially asking the court to censor the choir from singing any religious music. The case had to be fought all the way to the Tenth Circuit to prevent unlawful religious censorship.



Students File Lawsuit to Get Recognition for Their Bible Study Club

Hsu v. Roslyn Union Free School District, 85 F.3d 839 (2nd Cir. 1996)

Students Emily and Timothy Hsu wanted to form a student Bible club at school, but were denied club recognition because the students insisted on a policy permitting only Christians to serve as officers. A lawsuit was filed to protect the club's right to pick leaders in accordance with their faith.

ACLU Stops Vote to Determine Whether to Have Student-Led Prayer at Graduation

ACLU of New Jersey v. Black Horse Pike Regional Board of Education, 84 F.3d 1471 (3rd Cir. 1996)

A lawsuit was filed challenging a school policy that permitted the graduating class a vote to determine if there would be student-led prayer during graduation ceremonies. The court struck down the policy, determining it violated the Constitution and ordered the school to forbid the prayer.

Student Sues to Limit Religious Participation from School Employees and School Choir

Doe v. Duncanville I.S.D., 70 F.3d 402 (5th Cir. 1995)

A student and her father filed a lawsuit because the school permitted employees to be involved with student prayer after basketball games, permitted the choir to use a Christian song as its "theme song," and permitted the distribution of Gideon Bibles to fifth-grade classes. The court upheld the right of the choir to sing the religious song but struck down the employees' involvement with prayer, determining that such an exercise violated the Establishment Clause.

Teacher Gives Student a Zero for Paper About Jesus

Settle v. Dickson County School Board, 53 F.3d 152 (6th Cir. 1995)

Ninth-grader Brittney Settle selected Jesus Christ as the topic for her open research project, but her teacher refused to approve the subject, gave Brittney a zero for her grade, and did not permit her to submit another project. A lawsuit was filed to protect Brittney's free expression rights, but the court refused to uphold Brittney's rights and ruled in favor of the school.

Lawsuit Attacks School District for Students' Recitation of the Lord's Prayer Before Graduation

Goluba v. The School District of Ripon, 45 F.3d 1035 (7th Cir. 1995)

After students recited the Lord's Prayer on their own accord before the opening of graduation ceremonies, student Nikki Goulba filed a civil contempt motion against the school district of Ripon and the Ripon High School prin-

cipal. The motion claimed the officials violated a permanent injunction that prevented them from allowing prayer during school graduations by allowing the students to recite the prayer.

Portrait of Jesus That Hung with Other Portraits Ordered Removed

Washegesic v. Bloomington Public Schools, 33 F.3d 679 (6th Cir. 1994)

A portrait of Jesus Christ hung in a hallway of a school along with other portraits of famous individuals, and a former student filed suit against the school, asserting that the portrait was an Establishment Clause violation. The court agreed and ordered the picture removed.

Teacher Banned from Discussing Religion with Students, Even Outside of Class

Pelozo v. Capistrano Unified School District, 37 F.3d 517 (9th Cir. 1994)

A biology teacher was forbidden from discussing religious matters with students while on the school campus, even if the discussion occurred outside of class time and was student-initiated. A lawsuit was filed to protect his constitutionally protected free speech and equal protection rights, but the court dismissed the complaint finding that the school district's interest in avoiding an unlikely constitutional violation trumped the teacher's rights.

School Censors Student's Video of Herself Singing a Solo at Church

Denoyer v. Merinelli, No. 92-2080, 1993 U.S. App. LEXIS 20606 (6th Cir. 1993)

When Kelly Denoyer was selected as her class's "VIP of the Week," she brought a video of herself singing a solo at church to share with her class, but the teacher refused to play the tape for a variety of reasons, including concern about the videotape's religious message. A lawsuit was filed to protect Kelly's rights, but the court upheld the censorship of the video.

Parent Sues to Stop Graduation Prayers

Jones v. Clear Creek I.S.D., 977 F.2d 963 (5th Cir. 1992)

A Clear Creek I.S.D. parent filed suit to stop a policy permitting high school seniors to select student volunteers to give nonsectarian, non-proselytizing invocations at graduation ceremonies.

Teacher Banned from Reading Bible or Having Christian Books in His Classroom Library

Roberts v. Madigan, 921 F.2d 1047 (10th Cir. 1990)

Mr. Roberts's class had a silent reading period daily, and Mr. Roberts had a library of 239 books, two of which dealt with Christianity, from which the students could select reading material. Mr. Roberts participated in the read-



ing period, often choosing to read his Bible, and he kept the Bible on his desk during the school day. The school principal censored Mr. Roberts, forbade him from placing his Bible on his desk during the school day and from reading it during the school day, and forbade him from keeping the two Christian books in the library. A lawsuit was filed to end the religious bigotry against Mr. Roberts, but the court upheld the school's action and even awarded the school district court costs.

University of Wisconsin Refuses to Accept Religious Community Service Hours

Liebl v. Schmidt, No. 3:16-cv-00739 (W.D. Wis., filed Nov. 10, 2016)

The University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire requires its students to complete thirty hours of community service in order to graduate. The university, however, refuses to recognize any community service hours that involve promoting religious doctrine, proselytizing, or worship. Hours spent recruiting or persuading for a non-religious cause are accepted. Two students sued the university to have their time spent teaching religious education classes recognized as community service in fulfillment of the graduation requirement.

Iowa State University Anti-Harassment Policy Stops Religious Discussions

Dunn v. Leath, No. 4:16-cv-553 (S.D. Iowa, filed Oct. 17, 2016)

Robert Dunn—a student at Iowa State University (ISU), a Christian, and a member of a conservative student group—wanted to share his faith at ISU and engage in discussions about religion and politics with others on campus. ISU, however, imposed a new anti-harassment policy that banned “unwelcome behavior” directed at a person on the basis of race, ethnicity, pregnancy, color, religion, national origin, disability, age, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, or veteran status. According to the policy, behavior (including speech and writing) could be deemed “unwelcome” even if it was “not severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to meet the legal definition of harassment.” As a result of the policy, professors and administrators at ISU told Dunn that he should be careful about espousing conservative views on campus, because if others were offended, he may be in violation of the policy. Dunn was also told that expressing opposition to same-sex marriage or participation in the 9/11 Memorial Project could constitute harassment under the policy. As a result of these threats to Dunn’s religious free speech rights, Dunn filed a lawsuit against ISU that sought to have the policy struck down.

Cleveland Metropolitan School District Discriminates Against Religious Club

Child Evangelism Fellowship of Ohio, Inc. v. Cleveland Metropolitan Sch. Dist., No. 1:13-cv-01765 (N.D. Ohio, June 28, 2016)

The Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) waived facility use fees for afterschool programs that provided character education so long as the program was not religious. Religious afterschool programs, like Child Evangelism Fellowship, were forced to pay the fees. A federal district court held that this discriminatory policy violated the constitutional rights of the Child Evangelism Fellowship. CMSD was forced to pay almost \$150,000 in damages and attorney's fees to Child Evangelism Fellowship and revise their policies to stop the discriminatory treatment of religious groups.

Colorado School District Provides School Choice Grants but Bans Students from Using the Grants to Attend Religious Schools

Thomas v. Douglas County Bd. of Educ., No. 1:16-cv-876 (D. Colo., filed Apr. 19, 2016)

The Board of Education of Douglas County, Colorado, started the School Choice Grant Program, in which students are given grants that may be used to pay for private school tuition. The Douglas County Board of Education, however, banned the students from choosing to use the money to pay for tuition at a religious school. Several parents filed a lawsuit against the Douglas County Board of Education and the school district challenging the program's discrimination against students and parents who want a religious education.

Kingsborough Community College Discriminates Against Orthodox Jewish Faculty

Lax v. City University of New York, No. 1:16-cv-00799 (E.D.N.Y., filed Feb. 16, 2016)

A lawsuit filed against the City University of New York (CUNY) alleged that Kingsborough Community College—one of CUNY's campuses—is driving out Orthodox Jewish faculty members. According to the lawsuit, the head of the Kingsborough campus dissuaded a faculty member from another CUNY campus from applying at Kingsborough because "there are too many Jews already." The lawsuit also reported that the head of the Kingsborough campus "voic[ed] support for suicide bombers and their attacks against Jews" and "call[ed] Jews 'the Devil' and 'evil.'" The lawsuit against the college is ongoing.

American Humanist Association Sues School District for Providing Christmas Gifts for Needy Children and Permitting Student Club to Travel to Guatemala

American Humanist Association, Inc. v. Douglas County Sch. Dist. RE-1, No. 14-cv-02878-RBJ (D. Colo., Jan. 20, 2016)

The American Humanist Association (AHA) sued the Douglas County School District because the Colorado school district permitted its schools to participate in Operation Christmas Child, a program in which the schools collected items to be placed in shoeboxes “to be sent to needy children around the world.” The AHA also complained that a student at a school within the district organized a Fellowship of Christian Athletes trip to Guatemala that was attended by two teachers in their individual capacities. The trip was not funded by the school. A federal district court dismissed the lawsuit.

Court Holds Ten Commandments Monument Unconstitutional

Freedom From Religion Found., Inc. v. Connellsville Area Sch. Dist., No. 2:12-cv-1406-TFM (W.D. Penn. Aug. 28, 2015)

A granite monument of the Ten Commandments was donated to a junior high school in the Connellsville Area School District in 1956. The Star of David, the Greek letters chi and rho, and an eagle grasping an American flag are also inscribed on the monument. A court found the monument to be unconstitutional, but declined to order the monument removed at this time because the complaining student has graduated.

Church Barred from Using Public School Building on Sunday

Basevitz v. Fremont RE-2 Sch. Dist., No. 15-cv-01095-RBJ (D. Colo. July 28, 2015)

A lawsuit was filed against Florence High School, a public high school in Colorado, complaining about the students’ morning prayer circles around the flagpole and the use of the school’s facilities by a local church. As a result of a settlement, the Cowboy Church at the Crossroads will no longer be meeting on Sundays in the school’s building. The settlement also stipulates that non-school people, such as pastors, may not lead or attend the prayer meetings in the mornings, and teachers may only be present as observers to ensure the rules are not broken.

School District Defies Court by Offering Prayer Before Awards Ceremony

M.B. v. Rankin Cty. Sch. Dist., No. 3:13-cv-00241-CWR-FKB (S.D. Miss. July 10, 2015)

A student has sued the Rankin County School District in Mississippi for hosting an awards ceremony that began with a prayer. The school district had

previously gone before the court for a similar incident. For the second time, the court sided against the school district. The judge wrote that the student should have been able to receive her award without being “subjected to the deeply religious prayers.” The court also found the district in contempt for allowing the Gideons to pass out Bibles to students. The judge ordered fines for past and future violations.

Students Denied Admission Were Told Medical Field Is “No Place for Religion”

Buxton v. Kurtinitis, No. ELH-14-2836, 2015 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 83053 (D. Md. June 25, 2015)

Jenkins v. Kurtinitis, No. ELH-14-01346, 2015 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 34772 (D. Md. Mar. 20, 2015).

Brandon Jenkins and Dustin Buxton were denied admission to the Radiation Therapy Program at the Community College of Baltimore County, Maryland, for talking about their faith during the admissions interview. After Jenkins was denied admission, he wrote to the school to ask why. One of the interviewers, Adrienne Dougherty, responded that “this field is not the place for religion” and “[i]f you interview in the future, you may want to leave your thoughts and beliefs out of the interview process.”

Washington High School Suspends Student for Passing Out Gospel Tracts

Leal v. Everett Public Schools, No. C14-1762 TSZ (W.D. Wash., May 29, 2015) Cascade High School in Everett, Washington, suspended and threatened with expulsion high school senior Michael Leal for distributing Gospel tracts to his peers on school property. Leal filed a lawsuit against the school district, and a federal district court judge declared the school’s policy unconstitutional and removed the suspensions from Leal’s record.

American Humanist Association Sues School Officials for Field Trip to Sports Complex

Doe v. Huff, No. 3:15-CV-5052 (W.D. Mo., filed May 27, 2015)

The American Humanist Association (AHA) sued a Joplin, Missouri, middle school principal and superintendent after the school went on a field trip to a Christian sports complex that contains a café, video games, a gym and fitness center, athletic courts, a rock climbing wall, and a batting cage. The students selected the venue, and the field trip was secular. Although no proselytizing took place at the sports complex, the AHA argued that exposing the students to the facility violated the Constitution.

Student Sues for Freedom to Pass Out Religious Flyers

Harper v. McArthur, No. 14-495 (W.D. Ok. filed May 14, 2014)

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2014/05/christian-student-challenges.html>

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokh-conspiracy/wp/2014/05/22/public-university-forbids-criticizing-religious-group-as-a-cult/>

<http://www.adfmedia.org/files/HarperComplaint.pdf>

Cameron University student Daniel Harper filed a lawsuit after he was told that he could not hand out flyers presenting his religious belief that a group on campus was a cult. Harper, an evangelical honor student, handed out flyers with reasons of why he disagreed with the World Mission Society. The suit claims that the speech codes that prohibited Harper from handing out his flyers violate the First Amendment.

Ohio City Prevents Christian School from Expanding Its Facilities

Tree of Life Christian Sch. v. City of Upper Arlington, No. 2:11-CV-009, 2014 WL 1576873 (S.D. Ohio Apr. 18, 2014)

Tree of Life Christian School (ToL) in Columbus, Ohio, ran out of room in its existing facilities due to exponential growth. After locating a site in downtown Upper Arlington, Ohio, ToL requested a zoning amendment to allow the school to use the building, but the city argued that ToL was not a church as required by the zoning ordinance and consequently denied ToL's requests. ToL finally filed a lawsuit against the city, but an Ohio federal district court ruled in favor of the city.

Diversity Officer at Gallaudet University Fired for Supporting Traditional Marriage

McCaskill v. Gallaudet Univ., No. 13-cv-1498, 2014 WL 1443472 (D.D.C. Apr. 14, 2014)

Angela McCaskill, Chief Diversity Officer and the first deaf black woman to earn a Ph.D. at Gallaudet University, was placed on administrative leave and ultimately demoted after she signed a petition supporting traditional marriage in Maryland that circulated at her church. Mrs. McCaskill brought a lawsuit against the university for its discrimination, but a federal district court dismissed her claims.

Former Employee Sues InterVarsity Christian Fellowship for Firing Her Because of Her Divorce

Conlon v. InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, No. 1:13-CV-1111, 2014 WL 1340752 (W.D. Mich. Apr. 3, 2014)

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF), a Christian ministry for college

students, employed Alyce Conlon as a spiritual director. However, Conlon decided to consider a divorce from her husband, which was against IVCF's religiously motivated conduct policies for staff. IVCF gave Conlon time off to work on her marriage and seek counseling but was ultimately forced to terminate Conlon when she did not reconcile her marriage. Conlon sued IVCF, but a Michigan federal district court protected IVCF's right as an employer to use biblical principals when making employment decisions.

Lubbock School District Discriminates Against Religious Organization in Use of Jumbotron

Little Pencil, LLC v. Lubbock Indep. Sch. Dist., No. 5:14-cv-00014 (N.D. Tex. filed Jan. 28, 2014)

Little Pencil, LLC filed a viewpoint discrimination complaint against the Lubbock Independent School District because the district refused Little Pencil the use of the district's jumbotron during high school football games to advertise "Jesus Tattoo." While the school permits other non-school-related advertisements, including other religious organizations, to use the jumbotron, the district denied access to Little Pencil because of this ad's particular religious message.

Student Sues Schools After Being Punished for Speaking Out Against Homosexuality

Glowacki ex rel. D.K.G. v. Howell Pub. Sch. Dist., No. 2:11-CV-15481, 2013 WL 3148272 (E.D. Mich. June 19, 2013)

A teacher in a Howell, Michigan, public school kicked a Catholic student out of class for speaking out against homosexuality. The student commented about the homosexual-pride flags being offensive and then told her that his religion taught that homosexuality is wrong. The Thomas More Law Center filed suit on behalf of the student against the school. A federal district court held that the school violated the student's constitutional rights.

School Stops Sixth-Grade Student from Distributing Pro-Life Flyers

A.Z. v. Nova Classical Academy, No. 0:13-cv-975 (D. Minn. filed Apr. 25, 2013)

A Minnesota public charter school banned a sixth-grade student from peacefully distributing pro-life flyers to her classmates during lunch, even though she was motivated by religious convictions to save unborn children. The school asserted that it can censor student religious and political speech prior to high school. After a lawsuit was filed, the school agreed to enforce a new policy that forbid viewpoint discrimination and restored younger students' freedom of speech.

Community College Officials Banned Student from Speaking About His Religious Views in Outdoor Common Areas

Parks v. Members of the State Bd. of the Va. Community Col. Sys., No. 4:14-cv-30 (E.D. Va. filed Mar. 13, 2014)

<http://www.alliancealert.org/2014/06/09/va-christian-student-wins-free-speech-lawsuit-23-college-campuses-agree-to-change-policy/>

School officials at Thomas Nelson Community College told student Christian Parks that he could not preach or discuss his religious views in an outside common area. Parks was ordered to stop preaching while giving a presentation because the school thought other students may find his viewpoints offensive. He was also told that he could not preach because he did not notify a school official four days prior to his presentation. Parks filed a lawsuit against the school for violating his freedom of speech and freedom of religion. A federal district court held that the school's policies on student speech were unconstitutional.

New York School District Bans All Religious Content from Classrooms

Silver v. Cheektowaga Cent. Sch. Dist., No. 1:13-31 (W.D.N.Y., filed Jan. 10, 2013)

Cheektowaga Central School District in New York permits teachers to display personal messages, including inspirational messages, in their classrooms—so long as those messages have no religious content. Joelle Silver, a high school science teacher, was given a “counseling letter” and forced to remove any posters with religious messages from her classroom as well as sticky notes on her desk with religious verses and the Bible Study Club's prayer request box that was in her room. As a result of the school's actions against Ms. Silver, she filed a lawsuit against the school district to protect her freedoms of speech and religion.

Jewish High School Student in New York Sues to Stop Harassment and Bullying

G.D.S. v. Northport-East Northport Union Free Sch. Dist., 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 182976 (E.D.N.Y. Dec. 22, 2012)

A Jewish high school student filed a federal equal protection complaint and a state discrimination complaint after his New York high school ignored anti-Semitic bullying by other students. The student gave the school names of the abusive students and details of the bullying, which included mocking references to the Holocaust. Nevertheless, school officials took no action. A federal judge held that the student stated a valid claim under both complaints.

California School District Refuses to Treat Religious After-School Clubs Equally

Child Evangelism Fellowship, Inc. v. Buena Park Sch. Dist., No. 12-2012 (C.D. Cal., filed Nov. 19, 2012)

Buena Park School District in Orange County, California, rejected a Christian after-school club's request to meet in the school's facilities on equal terms with similar but nonreligious organizations. The Christian club filed a lawsuit against the school district to be given equal access to the school district's facilities.

Utah College Bans Religious Club from Participating in Homecoming Decorations

Solid Rock Christian Club v. Wyatt, No. 2:12-978 (D. Ut., filed Oct. 22, 2012)

Snow College in Utah has an annual homecoming tradition called "Paint the Town" in which student groups decorate the windows of participating businesses. The Solid Rock Christian Club had participated in the past; but, in 2012, Snow College changed their policies and refused to permit the Solid Rock Christian Club to fully participate because of the club's religious affiliation. Snow College forced the Solid Rock Christian Club to wash away their displays, and the college itself washed away a display on private property whose owner had personally invited the Solid Rock Christian Club to create. The Solid Rock Christian Club filed a lawsuit against Snow College because of the college's discriminatory conduct.

Assistant Principal Sues Principal for Including Religious Statements in Emails

Capriola v. Clay County Sch. Dist., No. 3:11-cv-1152 (M.D. Fla. Oct. 11, 2012)

The assistant principal of a Clay County, Florida, public school sued his boss, the principal, for including religious statements in emails. The assistant principal sought an injunction against further religious or political emails based on the Establishment Clause and the Free Exercise Clause. The case settled.

FFRF Challenges Election of Graduation Prayer

Nielson and the Freedom From Religion Foundation v. School District Five of Lexington & Richland Counties, No. 3:12-cv-01427 (D.S.C., filed May 29, 2012)

Irmo High School in South Carolina permits students to vote each year on whether to have prayer at its graduation ceremony. The Freedom From Religion Foundation filed a complaint alleging such a vote and the resulting prayer in the graduation ceremony violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.



Science Professor Sues College for Anti-Christian Remarks and Termination for Religious Beliefs

Baiyasi v. Delta College, U.S. Dist. LEXIS 65715 (E.D. Mich. May 10, 2012)

A science professor at Delta College filed suit against the university under Title VII claiming that the chair of her department made anti-Christian remarks. Though the district court threw out Baiyasi's hostile work environment claims, it did allow her to pursue her claims that she was denied promotion and subsequently fired because of her religious beliefs, and also that the denial of her promotion was in retaliation for her filing complaints against her department chair.

Lawsuits Seeks to Stop Private Schools from Using City Athletic Fields

Rogers v. Mulholland, 2012 WL 1565091 (D. R.I. May 4, 2012)

A federal district court in Rhode Island decided that the use of city athletic fields by private schools did not violate the Establishment Clause because the fields were being used in a secular way. An objective observer would not view the use by private schools as a sign that the city favored a certain religious view.

Florida Withheld Grant Money from Students Attending Florida Christian College

Florida Christian College v. Shanahan, No. 4:12-109 (N.D. Fla., filed Mar. 8, 2012)

The State of Florida withheld grant money from students attending Florida Christian College because the college did not satisfy the state's "secularity checklist." Florida Christian College and three of its students whose grant money was withheld filed a lawsuit against the Florida Board of Education to stop the state's religious discrimination. The case settled, and the Board of Education agreed to allow grant money to be distributed to students at Florida Christian College.

School District Prohibits Distribution of Religious Literature in Its Schools

Child Evangelism Fellowship Phoenix v. Dysart Unified Sch. Dist., No. 2:12-123 (D. Ariz. Jan. 19, 2012)

The Dysart Unified School District prohibited the distribution of religious literature in its schools. After a suit was filed, the school district reversed its policy and allowed the Good News Club to distribute flyers at school.

ACLU and Atheist Attack Decades-Old School Mural

Ahlquist v. City of Cranston, No. 11-138L, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 3348 (D. R.I. Jan. 11, 2012)

After an atheist student complained about a decades-old school mural in

Cranston, Rhode Island, containing a prayer and the words “Heavenly Father,” the ACLU stepped in to sue on her behalf. A federal district court held that the mural violated the Establishment Clause and must be removed.

School Rejects Volunteer Service Hours for Religious Purpose

Stites v. Fairfax County School Board, No. ____ (E.D. Va. 2012)

Membership in Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology’s National Honor Society chapter requires twelve volunteer service hours each year. Sarah Stites performed forty-six hours of service for her church, but the school refused to count those hours because they did not have a “secular purpose.” Stites is suing the school board to have her service hours credited.

Principal Fired for Promoting Prayer Breakfast Honoring Teachers

Richter v. Goleta Union School District, No. 10-7609 (C.D. Cal., Oct. 12, 2011)

Craig Richter, a principal in the Goleta Union School District in Santa Barbara, California, participated in a video made to promote a community prayer breakfast that honored teachers. The school district fired the principal on the grounds that his participation in the video implied that the school supported Christian values as well. Richter sued under Title VII, but the district court granted summary judgment in favor of Goleta Union School District.

Minnesota School District Bans Religious Club from After-School Program

Child Evangelism Fellowship of Minnesota v. Minneapolis Special School District No. 1, 822 F. Supp. 2d 878 (D. Minn. Sept. 30, 2011)

The Child Evangelism Fellowship of Minnesota filed suit against the Minneapolis Special School District No. 1, claiming the district violated the Christian organization’s freedom of speech and religion by banning them from partaking in an after-school program. The group’s participation was banned specifically for engaging in religious activity. The Child Evangelism Fellowship of Minnesota filed suit in a United States District Court in Minnesota, citing various constitutional violations. The Court denied the group’s preliminary injunction on the grounds that it is unlikely to obtain permanent injunction.

Arkansas School Bans Flyers Advertising Religious Activities

Wright ex rel. A.W. v. Pulaski County Special Sch. Dist., 803 F. Supp. 2d 980 (E.D. Ark. Mar. 25, 2011)

An Arkansas school banned flyers advertising religious activities, but allowed students to distribute flyers for other activities. After a federal district court granted a preliminary injunction stopping the policy, the school settled the case, agreeing to treat religious flyers and nonreligious flyers equally.

Community College Bans Student from Preaching or Distributing Religious Literature

Dew v. Ashford, No. 03:11-00262 (E.D. Tenn. 2011)

Mark Dew, a student at Pellissippi State Community College, was told by school officials that he could not hand out Christian literature or preach on campus. The officials claimed these actions are solicitation and therefore against college rules. The school offered him the option to speak once a week on campus as a guest of a student group or to pay a fee as a nonstudent speaker. Dew filed a lawsuit against the school to defend his right to free speech.

Police Captain Disciplined for Refusing to “Voluntarily” Attend Muslim Lecture

Fields v. City of Tulsa, No. 4:11-00115 (N.D. Okla. 2011)

Paul Fields, a police captain, was stripped of his command and is in the midst of an internal investigation because he declined to attend or force his officers to attend a lecture by Imam Siraj Wahhaj, a Sharia Muslim who promotes the destruction of Western civilization, put on by a mosque in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The mosque’s event was in no way connected with Field’s work as a police officer and was voluntary in nature.

Court Holds Teacher May Ask Student About God

Sabol v. Walter Payton Coll. Preparatory High School, 804 F. Supp. 2d 747, 751 (N.D. Ill. 2011)

A U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois held that a teacher’s asking a student if he or she believed in God and making other comments about God, when questioning the student about an infraction, does not violate the Establishment Clause.

Former Teacher Sues Catholic School for Religious Discrimination

Braun v. St. Pius X Parish, 827 F. Supp. 2d 1312 (N.D. Okla. 2011)

A former teacher sued a Catholic school for religion and age discrimination. A U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Oklahoma granted summary judgment for the school because Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act permits religious institutions to make employment decisions based on religion and there was no evidence of age discrimination.

School Suspends Student for Wearing Rosary Beads

R.H. v. Schenectady City Sch. Dist., No. 1:10-cv-640 (N.D.N.Y. Nov. 3, 2010)

Raymond Hosier, a seventh-grader from Schenectady, New York, was suspended from school for wearing rosary beads around his neck. The school

had adopted a policy prohibiting rosary beads because they are sometimes used as a gang symbol. Hosier sued the school district for the right to wear the rosary beads. The case settled, and the court ordered the school to clear Hosier's record.

School Board Prevents Christian Organization from Placing Bibles on a Distribution Table

World Changers of Florida, Inc. v. District School Board of Collier County, Florida, No. 2:10-00419 (M.D. Fla. Nov. 2, 2010)

For several years, World Changers had been allowed to place free Bibles on tables in Collier County schools where the Bibles could be voluntarily taken. On Religious Freedom Day 2009, however, the school board stopped the tradition. World Changers filed a lawsuit, which settled favorably, ensuring that World Changers may continue to provide free Bibles to students who want them.

Holly, Michigan, Schools Prohibit Student from Distributing Flyers for Church Summer Camp

J.S. ex rel Smith v. Holly Area Schools, 749 F.Supp.2d 614 (E.D. Mich. Oct. 26, 2010)

A Christian student and his mother sued Holly, Michigan, schools for stopping the child from distributing flyers for summer camp at Cornerstone Church. The teacher told the student to put the flyers in his backpack so that there would not be a violation of separation of church and state. The district court that heard the case granted the Smiths a preliminary injunction, allowing him to distribute the flyers to his classmates.

School District Banned Religious Valentine's Day Card and Christmas Items

Pounds et al. v. Katy I.S.D., 730 F.Supp.2d 636 (S.D. Tex. July 30, 2010)

A Houston-area school district put in writing that it would allow no religious items at Christmas and banned certain Valentine's Day cards at school, simply because they were religious. The school district has a long history of anti-religious actions, telling one student she could not say the word "Jesus" when asked what Easter meant to her. A federal district court held that Katy I.S.D. violated the students' constitutional rights.

Counseling Student Expelled for Referring a Homosexual Client to Another Counselor

Ward v. Wilbanks, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 127038 (E.D. Mich. Jul. 26, 2010)

Julea Ward, a graduate student in counseling at Eastern Michigan State University, was dismissed from the program after she referred a homosexual



client to another counselor during the clinical portion of her degree. Ward's supervisor stated that her refusal to see a client presenting concerns about a gay relationship signified an inability on Ward's part to meet the required expectation of ethical standards supplied by the American Counseling Association. Being faced with the options of completing a "remediation program," voluntarily leaving the program, or a formal hearing, Ward chose to have a formal hearing. After the hearing, Ward was dismissed because she had violated the American Counseling Association's code of ethics. Both the Dean of the EMU College of Education and the federal district court affirmed the decision of the hearing.

Lawsuit Stops Voted-For Prayer at Graduation

Workman v. Greenwood Community School Corp., No. 1:10-0293, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 42813 (S.D. Ind. Apr. 30, 2010)

Greenwood Community School had a tradition of allowing a nondenominational prayer during graduation ceremonies if the senior class voted to approve such a measure. In September of 2009, the senior class voted to allow a prayer. Eric Workman, a student at Greenwood, filed a suit to challenge the constitutionality of the electoral process, allowing the prayer. The court issued a preliminary injunction stopping prayer.

Student Sues for Freedom to Protest Abortion on Pro-Life Day of Silent Solidarity

C.H. v. Bridgeton Board of Education, No. 09-5815, 2010 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 40038 (D.N.J. Apr. 22, 2010)

C.H., a student at Bridgeton High School, wanted to wear a piece of red duct tape around her arm as a part of the Pro-Life Day of Silent Solidarity. The tape was meant to draw attention to pro-life issues. C.H. also desired to distribute pro-life flyers and remain silent during the Day of Silent Solidarity. School officials told C.H. that she could not wear the armband or distribute literature because of the controversial nature of its topic. They informed C.H. that she could remain silent, but her participation grade would suffer as a result. C.H. filed a suit to determine her rights. On April 22, 2010, the court enjoined the school from enforcing their policies, allowing C.H. to fully participate in the Pro-Life Day of Silent Solidarity.

Lawsuit Attempts to Stop Church from Meeting in School District's Building

Henley v. Cleveland Board of Education, No. 1:10-431, 2010 WL 796835 (N.D. Ohio Mar. 3, 2010)

The U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio dismissed for lack

of standing a taxpayer's First Amendment claim against a school district for allowing a local church to use the district's building for weekly worship services.

School Prohibits Teachers from Replying to Parent Emails Saying, "God Bless You" or from Attending Non-School-Related, Off-Campus Religious Events

Minor I Doe ex rel. Parent I Doe v. School Board for Santa Rosa County, Florida, 264 F.R.D. 670 (N.D. Fla. Feb. 19, 2010)

The Santa Rosa County School District entered into a consent decree drafted by the ACLU that prohibited students from saying "God Bless" and teachers from replying to parents' emails if they said "God Bless" in the email. School district employees were even prohibited from participating in non-school-related, privately sponsored, off-campus religious events. Faculty and staff were also told to stop praying at privately sponsored after-school clubs. The school has now modified and clarified the decree to protect the religious liberties of its faculty and students.

Religious Club Sues to End Discriminatory Treatment by School District

Child Evangelism Fellowship of Greater San Diego v. Acl, No. 05-1166, 2008 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 97257 (S.D. Cal. Dec. 1, 2009)

Child Evangelism Fellowship of Greater San Diego (CEF) requested to use school facilities to hold Good News Clubs after school hours. From 1999 until the 2004-05 school year, CEF had been charged fees to use the school facilities when other similar secular groups had not been charged. Each year the district increased the cost of the fees, and the fees became so large that CEF was forced to discontinue the Good News Clubs. District employees and parents pleaded for the Good News Clubs to return, but the increased usage costs prohibited the meetings. CEF filed a lawsuit to be treated the same as other similarly-situated groups, which did not have to pay the large fees.

ACLU Sues to Defund Religious Abstinence Education

Robinson v. Thompson, No. 3:09-537 (S.D. Miss., filed Sept. 9, 2009)

A Mississippi teen summit promoting National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month incorporated religious language in its abstinence education. The ACLU sued the state to remove the religious language or end its funding of the program.

University of Montana School of Law Derecognizes Christian Legal Society

Christian Legal Society v. Eck, 625 F. Supp. 2d 1026 (D. Mont. May 19, 2009)

The University of Montana School of Law derecognized the school's chapter

of the Christian Legal Society (CLS), because CLS requires voting members and officers to adhere to a statement of faith. CLS sued to gain official recognition and access to funds, but the court held that CLS's policy on sex being reserved for marriage violated the law school's diversity statement, allowing the school to freely discriminate against CLS.

City College of San Francisco Bans Jews for Jesus from Evangelizing or Distributing Flyers

Jews for Jesus, Inc. v. City College of San Francisco, 2009 WL 86703 (N.D. Cal. April 15, 2009)

City College of San Francisco refused to allow Jews for Jesus to evangelize or distribute religious literature on its campus. After Jews for Jesus filed a lawsuit against the college, the college agreed to allow Jews for Jesus to distribute its flyers on campus so long as Jews for Jesus notified the school ahead of time.

College of Alameda Suspends Students for Praying

Kyriacou v. Peralta Community College District, 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 32464 (N.D. Cal. Mar. 31, 2009)

Kandy Kyriacou and Ojoma Omega were students at the College of Alameda. Both are Christians and would pray together on the balcony outside of class. On November 1, 2001, Kyriacou went to speak with her instructor. After the conversation turned to personal matters, Bell consented, and Kyriacou prayed for Bell. Kyriacou offered to pray for Bell on a separate instance when Derek Piazza, another instructor, interrupted and ordered Kyriacou to stop praying in the office. Kyriacou and Omega received letters from the Vice President of Student Services at the College stating that they had engaged in disruptive behavior and were suspended from class. Kyriacou and Omega filed suit to challenge the suspension. The case settled after two years of legal battles with an acknowledgement that prayer on campus is permitted.

Parent Sues School to Stop Religious Instruction in School Parking Lot

H.S. v. Huntington County Community School Corporation, 616 F.Supp.2d 863 (N.D. Ind. Mar. 19, 2009)

An elementary school in Huntington County, Indiana, allowed students to be released to religious instruction time for thirty minutes each week if their parents signed a permission slip. A local church that conducted the religious instruction parked a trailer in the school parking lot during the instruction time. A parent of a student complained that the school should not allow the instruction to occur on school property. A federal district court agreed with

the parent and issued an injunction against religious instruction occurring on school property.

Art Teacher Sued to Stop Her Coworkers from Voluntarily Praying

Eder v. City of New York, 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 11501 (S.D.N.Y. Feb. 12, 2009)
Melissa Eder, an art teacher at the East New York Family Academy, filed a suit claiming discrimination and retaliation. Eder, who is Jewish, asserted that her coworkers' practice of voluntarily forming prayer circles before meetings was unconstitutional. She claimed that this practice, as well as prayer offered before a holiday party, was unconstitutional violations of her rights. The court held that the faculty members' voluntary decision to engage in prayer before meetings and at the holiday party were not a violation of Eder's rights.

Student Sues School to Stop Discrimination Against Bible Club

A.Q. v. Board of Education of Lindenhurst Union Free School District, No. ____ (E.D.N.Y., filed Jan. 30, 2009)

A.Q., a student at Lindenhurst High School in Lindenhurst, New York, wanted to have Bible Club at the school. The school repeatedly refused to recognize Bible Club as an official club because the board claimed it would violate the Establishment Clause. A lawsuit was filed against the school district for violating the student's rights to free speech, religion, equal protection, and due process. After the suit was filed, the school agreed to recognize the club and give it the full rights afforded to other clubs.

Student Sued to Stop Singing of Patriotic Song Referencing God

S.D. v. St. Johns County School District, 632 F.Supp.2d 1085 (M.D. Fla. 2009)
Students at St. John's elementary school were planning to sing a country song called "In God We Still Trust" for the third grade end-of-year performance. The song made references to the Pledge of Allegiance and the nation's still trusting in God. A student and her parents filed suit against the school arguing that it was in violation of the Establishment Clause. A federal district court agreed with the plaintiff and granted a temporary injunction against the singing of the song.

Federal Employee Banned from Warning About Charitable Contributions

Lister v. Defense Logistics Agency, No. 2:05-CV-495, 2009 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 7414 (S.D. Ohio 2009)

A federal employee was denied a request to post a flyer warning that donations made to a federal charitable contribution program may be used to support abortion, sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, and New Age mysticism.

Agency policy prohibited “items of religious preference” from being posted on employee bulletin boards.

Religious After-School Club Sues for Equal Treatment

Child Evangelism Fellowship of Virginia v. Williamsburg-James City County School Board, No. 4:08-cv-4, 2008 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 61392 (E.D. Va. Aug. 8, 2008)
A school board in Williamsburg, Virginia, allowed several nonprofit after-school programs for students to use school facilities for free. The board required that Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), a religious organization, pay to use school facilities. CEF sued the school board, challenging the discrimination. A federal district court held that charging CEF to use school facilities while providing facilities for free to other organizations is unconstitutional.

Boise State University Funds Atheist Group but Not Christian Legal Society

Cordova v. Laliberte, No. 1:08-00543 (D. Idaho 2008)

Boise State University (BSU) denied the Christian Legal Society (CLS) funding from student activity fees. BSU already funded other student groups, including an atheist society. After facing a lawsuit from the CLS, BSU rewrote its policies for student activity fee distribution to provide protection for all students. The school also amended its policies to allow student groups to limit their leadership to those who share the group’s beliefs and conduct themselves according to those beliefs.

University of South Carolina Denies Funding to Religious Clubs

Christian Legal Society v. Sorenson, No. 3:08-99999 (D.S.C. 2008)

The Christian Legal Society (CLS) chapter at the University of South Carolina was denied funding on the basis that it was a religious organization. The university barred religious organizations from receiving funding, while all other student groups were permitted to receive funding. The CLS chapter sued, and they reached a settlement with the university allowing for equal funding of all student organizations.

Shippensburg University Speech Codes Attempt to Regulate Student “Attitudes and Behaviors”

Christian Fellowship of Shippensburg University et al. v. Ruud et al., No. 4:08-898 (M.D. Pa. 2008)

Members of the Christian Fellowship of Shippensburg University felt their right to free speech was violated by the university’s policies and speech codes, which require that students reflect the university’s official views in their “attitudes and behaviors.” The group feared engaging in discussions from a religious point of view. Following the filing of a lawsuit, Shippensburg

University changed its speech codes so as not to violate the members' First Amendment rights.

Wayne State University Refuses to Fund Pro-Life Event

Wayne State University Students for Life v. Driker, No. 2:08-13181 (E.D. Mich. 2008)

Wayne State University requires all students to pay a student activities fee, a portion of which supports student organizations on campus. When the Wayne State University Students for Life requested funding for its Pro-Life Week 2008, the university refused because the event included “spiritual and religious references.” After Students for Life eliminated these elements, the university still refused to release funds because they deemed the event “offensive” to women. Not until Students for Life filed suit did Wayne State officials finally reverse their position.

High School in Michigan Discriminates Against Religious Student Club

ALIVE v. Farmington Public Schools, No. 07-12116, 2007 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 65326 (E.D. Mich. Sept. 5, 2007)

A high school in Farmington, Michigan, refused to recognize the ALIVE Bible club as a student club. Without recognition, ALIVE could not advertise over the school's PA system, use the school's bulletin board, or appear in the school's yearbook. A federal district judge granted a permanent injunction allowing the group to have equal opportunities as other student groups.

School Prohibits Fourth-Grade Student from Distributing Flyers About Her Faith

M.B. v. Liverpool Central School District, No. 5:04-CV-1255 (S.D.N.Y. 2007)

Michaela Bloodgood, a fourth-grader at Nate Perry Elementary School in Liverpool, New York, wished to share homemade flyers with other students that explained what Jesus Christ had done in her life. Although Michaela would only hand out the flyers during noninstructional time, school officials stated that there was a “substantial probability” that the school would be seen as endorsing the statements in the flyers, and refused to allow her to hand them out. A lawsuit was filed on Michaela's behalf, and a federal district judge ruled that the school had violated Michaela's rights.

ACLU Sues to Stop Class on the Bible's Influence in History and Literature

Moreno v. Ector County I.S.D., No. 7:07-0039 (W.D. Tex. 2007)

The ACLU and People for the American Way Foundation filed suit in federal court against the Ector County I.S.D. in Odessa, Texas, to stop a course taught



on the Bible's influence in our history and literature as an elective in two of the district's high schools.

Minnesota School District Prohibits Religious Flyers While Allowing Others
Greater St. Paul Area Evangelicals, Inc. v. Independent School District No. 625, No. 0:07-01841 (D. Minn. 2007)

A Minnesota school district refused to allow a group to distribute flyers containing religious content, even though other groups were permitted to do so. The school district's policy specifically prohibited materials of a "sectarian nature" for distribution.

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship Sues for Equal Treatment at Wisconsin University

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship-UW Superior v. Walsh, No. 06-0562 (W.D. Wis. 2007)

The University of Wisconsin-Superior refused to recognize the InterVarsity Christian Fellowship chapter at the school. Only after a lawsuit was filed did the University agree to officially recognize the chapter.

School Bans Elementary Student from Singing Religious Song in Talent Show

Turton v. Frenchtown Elementary Sch. Dist. Bd. of Educ., 465 F.Supp.2d 369 (D.N.J. Dec. 11, 2006)

An elementary student was told by her school that she could not sing "Awesome God" in a school talent show. The district court held that the school had violated the student's constitutional rights.

Judge Issues Emergency Order Banning Prayer at High School Graduation

Doe v. Gossage, No. 1:06-CV-070, 2006 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 34613 (W.D. Ky. May 24, 2006)

Judge Joseph McKinley entered an emergency order restraining the principal of Russell County High School from allowing prayer at the graduation ceremony. Despite the judge's order barring the valedictorian from including prayer at the graduation ceremony, the senior class spontaneously stood during the opening remarks of the principal and recited the Lord's Prayer.

Christian Fraternity Sues UNC for Official Recognition

Alpha Iota Omega Christian Fraternity v. Moeser, No. 1:04-00765, 2006 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 28065 (M.D.N.C. May 4, 2006)

The Alpha Iota Omega (AIO) fraternity sued the University of North Carolina after being denied official recognition and funding because the organization

limited its membership to those of the Christian faith. A federal lawsuit was filed in AIO's behalf and the University changed its policy and reinstated funding and official recognition status to the fraternity.

High School Removes Bricks Inscribed with Religious Messages

Kiesinger v. Mexico Academy & Central School, 427 F. Supp. 2d 182 (N.D.N.Y. Mar. 31, 2006)

The Mexico Academy High School decided to remove bricks that had been purchased and inscribed as part of a school fundraiser if the brick contained a Christian message. The district court held that removing the bricks with Christian messages violated the First Amendment.

Christian Legal Society Sues ASU for Official Recognition

Christian Legal Society Chapter at Arizona State University College of Law v. Crow, No. CV 04-2572, 2006 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 25579 (D. Ariz. 2006)

The Christian Legal Society (CLS) requires its members to agree with CLS's statement of faith. Arizona State University denied its CLS chapter from becoming an official student organization because requiring agreement with a statement of faith did not comply with the university's religious nondiscrimination policy. CLS filed a lawsuit and received a favorable settlement. Arizona State University now allows religious student groups to limit membership to those who share their religious beliefs.

Christian Student Organization Sues to be Listed with Other Student Organizations

SWAT et al. v. Plano I.S.D., No. 4:06-0119 (E.D. Tex. 2006)

SWAT, a Christian student organization, was prevented from being listed on Plano I.S.D.'s website because SWAT is a religious organization. A federal district court judge held that the school district violated SWAT's constitutional rights.

Missouri State University Professor Mandates Support for Same-Sex Adoption

Brooker v. Franks et al., No. 6:06-03432 (W.D. Mo. 2006)

A class assignment at Missouri State University required Emily Brooker to draft and sign a letter in support of same-sex adoptions that would be sent to state legislators. When she refused because of her Christian beliefs, Ms. Brooker was forced to sign a contract stating she would alter her beliefs to align with the social work department's ideological standards. After Ms. Brooker filed suit, the university cleared her record and revoked teaching privileges from the professor who had given the discriminatory assignment.

Seventh-Grade Student Sues for Freedom to Distribute Pro-Life Literature

Heinkel v. School Board of Lee County, Florida, No. 05-13813 (M.D. Fla. 2006)
Michelle Heinkel, a seventh-grade student at Cypress Lake Middle School, wished to distribute religious and pro-life literature about the “Day of Remembrance,” an event to remember unborn children who lost their lives through abortion. The superintendent stated that Heinkel’s handing out the literature was not allowed due to the school board’s policy prohibiting the distribution of literature that is political, religious, or proselytizing. Through a lawsuit filed on Michelle’s behalf, a federal court of appeals ruled that the school district’s policy was unconstitutional.

Student Suspended for Wearing Religious T-Shirt

Arthurs v. Sampson County Board of Education, No. 7:06-0066 (E.D.N.C. 2006)
The annual “Day of Truth” event is a response to the annual “Day of Silence,” which supports pro-LGBT policies. During the Day of Truth in Wilmington, North Carolina, Benjamin Arthurs was suspended for wearing a religious shirt and handing out information. The Sampson County Board of Education Superintendent stated that Arthurs would be “pushing his religion on others” and that “religion is not allowed in school.”

Christian Legal Society Threatened for Including Religious References in Constitution

Christian Legal Society Chapter of the University of Toledo v. Johnson, No. 05-7126 (N.D. Ohio Jun. 16, 2005)

In 2005, the Christian Legal Society (CLS) national office redrafted its constitution. The University of Toledo CLS chapter submitted the new constitution to the Office of Student Activities. The assistant director of Student Activities told the chapter that he would not approve the new constitution unless they removed scriptural references and added antidiscrimination language. He threatened that the group would lose recognition unless they did what he asked. CLS filed a lawsuit. The University of Toledo agreed to a settlement and, as a result, allowed the CLS chapter to keep the new constitution. The university also agreed to allow other student clubs to make references to religious texts in their constitution.

Christian Club Sues Penn State for Freedom to Select Christian Officers

DiscipleMakers, Inc. v. Spanier, No. 4:04-02229 (M.D. Penn. 2005)

DiscipleMakers Christian Fellowship challenged a Pennsylvania State University policy that banned student organizations from taking into account the religious views or sexual orientation of those seeking to become an officer

in the club. After the lawsuit was filed, the case settled and the university agreed to change its policies to allow student organizations to create their own guidelines for selecting officers.

Christian Student Club Sues for Equal Treatment

Child Evangelism Fellowship, Butte-Tehama-Glenn Chapter v. Brown, No. 2:05-0939 (E.D. Cal. 2005)

In November 2004, Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) of Butte-Tehama-Glenn requested to use school facilities to hold a Good News Club. The district informed CEF that they would have to pay higher usage fees than secular groups would. Under protest, CEF paid the fees. Because the local CEF operated on a limited budget, however, it had to discontinue the Good News Club meetings in several schools. Although the local CEF chapter advised the school district of legal cases recognizing the equal access rights of Good News Clubs, district officials refused to listen and CEF was forced to file a lawsuit.

Students Sue for Free Speech Rights at Texas Tech University

Roberts v. Haragan, 346 F.Supp.2d 853 (N.D. Tex. Sept. 30, 2004)

The Texas Tech University speech code denied all students the right to free speech except in a small gazebo area in one spot on the campus. The code also stated that students could not speak in a way that caused shame or humiliation to another student. Any speech outside the designated area required advance permission. A lawsuit was filed to force the school to change its policy.

Family Denied Funding for Religious High School Tuition

Eulitt v. Maine Department of Education, 307 F. Supp. 2d 158 (D. Me. Mar. 9, 2004)

Though Maine state law required free public education for children through the twelfth grade, the town of Minot only had schooling through the eighth grade and either contracted to send its students elsewhere for high school or provided the parents with funding for school. A Minot family was denied access to public funding for their child's tuition to a Catholic high school, despite the fact that the state had the authority to approve payments to alternative schools. The court held that the state does not have to provide tuition for religious sectarian education.



Arizona School Bans Religious Messages from Hallway of Tiles

Seidman v. Paradise Valley Unified Sch. Dist. No. 69, 327 F. Supp. 2d 1098 (D. Ariz. 2004)

Paul and Ann Seidman of Scottsdale, Arizona, wanted to purchase tiles encouraging their children in the hallway of their local elementary school. They wanted the tiles to say “God bless Quinn. We love you Mom & Dad” and “God bless Haley. We love you Mom & Dad.” However, the mention of the word “God” caused the Pinnacle Peak School District to reject the tiles’ messages. Other tiles were accepted, and in the federal judge’s words, “some nearly identical to the Seidmans’ messages only from a secular viewpoint.” The school refused to change their position, despite this being a clear case of viewpoint discrimination. After two years, the Seidmans received a court ruling in their favor.

Christian Student Newspaper Provided Fraction of Funds that Secular Newspapers Provided

Thomas v. Boren (W.D. Okla. 2004)

Rick Thomas, editor of a Christian student newspaper at the University of Oklahoma, applied for funds to cover printing costs. Thomas was awarded only \$150, while similar newspapers were awarded in excess of \$4,000. The student committee responsible for the allocation of funds claimed that they could not award the newspaper with more money because they were prohibited from using student funds for religious services. After Thomas sued, the university settled and provided sufficient funds to print the newspaper.

Library Employee Fired for Wearing Cross

Draper v. Logan County Public Library, 403 F. Supp. 2d 608 (W.D. Ky. Sept. 2, 2003)

The Logan County Public Library in Kentucky banned its employees from wearing “clothing depicting religious ... decoration.” An employee was fired for wearing a cross. A lawsuit was filed to protect the employee’s right to free speech and religious freedom.

School District Removes Crosses from Inscribed Bricks

Demmon v. Loudoun County Public Schools, 279 F. Supp. 2d 689 (E.D. Va. Aug. 28, 2003)

For a school fundraiser, people could purchase bricks and have text and symbols inscribed on them to be used in a sidewalk surrounding the school’s flagpole. Some purchasers elected to have a Latin cross inscribed. A parent

complained, so the school district removed all the crosses. A lawsuit was filed to protect this religious expression from censorship.

Teaching Assistant Suspended for Wearing Cross Necklace

Nichol v. ARIN Intermediate Unit 28, 268 F. Supp. 2d 536 (W.D. Pa. June 25, 2003)

A school district suspended an elementary school instructional assistant for wearing a cross necklace, finding her in violation of a Pennsylvania statute that prohibited teachers and other public school employees from wearing religious emblems or insignia. The assistant filed a lawsuit against the school district challenging the statute, which was overtly and openly hostile to religion, and to prevent the district from forbidding symbolic speech by employees from a religious viewpoint. After the district court granted a preliminary injunction stopping enforcement of the statute, the case settled.

School Suspends Students for Distributing Candy Canes with Religious Messages

Westfield High School L.I.F.E. Club v. City of Westfield, 249 F.Supp.2d 98 (D. Mass. 2003)

Students started a religious club and wanted to hand out candy canes with a religious message at school. The school denied the students permission and suspended the students for distributing their candy canes. The students were forced to file suit in federal court to protect their rights without facing suspension.

High School Censors Christian Student Group

Friesner v. Ogg, No. 0:03-00893 (D. Minn 2003)

The Crosby-Ironton High School censored the “Lunch Bunch,” a Christian group, from using flyers to describe their group or to promote the “See You at the Pole” event. A lawsuit had to be filed to protect the students’ rights.

Honolulu Bans Religious Postings on Employee Bulletin Boards

Jenkins v. Honolulu, No. 1:03-00159 (D. Haw. 2003)

Honolulu city employee Kelly Jenkins was prohibited from posting religious literature, like an invitation to his church, in common areas of the employee break room and employee bulletin boards because of “separation of church and state” concerns. After Jenkins filed a lawsuit, Honolulu reversed its policy.



Parent Sues to Ban Religious Groups from Putting Flyers in Students' Mailboxes

Rusk v. Crestview Local Schools, 220 F. Supp. 2d 854 (N.D. Ohio Aug. 7, 2002)
A school permitted nonprofits, including religious nonprofits, to submit flyers to the school for distribution to the students' mailboxes. A parent filed a lawsuit, objecting to the religious groups being able to submit flyers, even though the flyers did not advocate religion and were not proselytizing. The court halfheartedly upheld the religious groups' rights to utilize the mailbox distribution, but only permitted the groups to distribute certain messages and censored information relating to a religious or sectarian event.

Christian Student Club Forced to Sue School for Access to Facilities

Child Evangelism Fellowship, Inc., San Fernando Valley Chapter v. Los Angeles Unified School District, No. 02-1329 (C.D. Cal. 2002)

The Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) applied to the Los Angeles Unified School District to use an elementary school to host a Good News Club. The school policy permitted use by civic and community groups, but prohibited use by "sectarian or denominational religious exercises or activities." In response, CEF applied through the real estate branch and was willing to pay application and rental fees, which are not required of any other groups, but CEF was still denied. A lawsuit had to be filed to gain equal access for the religious group and to prevent the school district's religious discrimination.

Parents Sue Charter School to Stop Neutral Treatment of Religion

Daugherty v. Vanguard Charter School Academy, 116 F. Supp. 2d 897 (W.D. Mich. Sept. 25, 2000)

Parents of children attending the academy claimed that the school violated the Establishment Clause because a moms' prayer group met in the parent room, teachers and staff prayed on their own accord on school property, religious materials were distributed in students' folders, a content-neutral forum, and the school taught morality. These parents filed a lawsuit to prevent the school from permitting the religious activity at the school.

Student Bible Club Prohibited from Meeting When Other Student Clubs Meet

Pearce v. Northville Public Schools, No. 00-CV-75174 (E.D. Mich. 2000)

A Bible club was told it would have to meet before or after school and not during seminar periods as other groups were permitted to do because the group was religious. Bible club members filed suit to protect their right to meet without being discriminated against on the grounds of religion.

New York High School Discriminates Against Religious Community Groups

Liberty Christian Center v. Board of Education of the City School District of Watertown, 8 F. Supp. 2d 176 (N.D.N.Y. Jun. 10, 1998)

The Board of Education of Watertown, New York, denied the Liberty Christian Center access to the Watertown High School Cafeteria during non-school hours. The school permitted other groups to use the cafeteria during nonschool hours, but rejected the Liberty Christian Center because of the center's religious affiliation. A lawsuit was filed to prevent the school board from discriminating against a religious group and denying the group's rights to equal access.

Court Bans School from Accommodating Religion

Chandler v. James, 985 F. Supp. 1068 (M.D. Ala. Nov. 12, 1997)

Civil liberties activists filed a lawsuit because school officials permitted prayer at school functions, excused students from school for baccalaureate services, and permitted religious study with non-school persons during school hours. The court determined that this behavior violated the Establishment Clause and permanently enjoined the school board and public officials from accommodating religious activity in schools.

Court Orders School to Ban Prayer from Graduation Ceremonies

Gearon v. Loudoun County School Board, 844 F. Supp. 1097 (E.D. Va. Dec. 22, 1993)

Parents and students filed a lawsuit challenging prayer at a high school graduation, and the court permanently enjoined the school from permitting prayer at graduation ceremonies.

Fifth-Grade Student Stopped from Completing Independent Study Project on the Power of God

Duran v. Nitsche, 780 F. Supp. 1048 (E.D. Pa. 1991)

Diana Duran, a fifth-grader and member of the Academically Talented Program, was assigned an independent study project, which she completed on "the power of God," a topic originally approved by her teacher. Her research included a survey of her classmates' religious beliefs, and the assignment included presenting her project to the class. However, school officials intervened and prevented Diana from successfully completing the project. A lawsuit was filed to protect her First Amendment freedoms, but the court held that she had no such rights in the classroom.

Court Bans School from Allowing Religious Groups Access Before or After School

Ford v. Manuel, 629 F. Supp. 771 (N.D. Ohio Aug. 8, 1985)

The Findlay Board of Education permitted the Findlay Weekday Religious Education Council to operate before and after school hours in the public schools in accordance with “Community Use of School Facilities.” Parent-taxpayers complained about the program because of concerns regarding the Establishment Clause and filed a lawsuit to strike down the program. A federal district court held that the school district’s allowing the before-school and after-school religious group to meet violated the Establishment Clause.

Student Prohibited from Graduating Paramedic Course Because of Religious Objection to Vaccines

George v. Kankakee Community College, 2016 Ill. App. Unpub. LEXIS 2760 (Ill. App., Dec. 20, 2016)

Nicholas George was a student at Kankakee Community College (KCC) and was seeking a degree in applied sciences as a paramedic. As part of the degree program, KCC required its students to participate in a paramedic class at St. Mary’s Hospital Kankakee, which was operated by Presence Hospitals PRV. St. Mary’s required all participants in the clinical portion of the paramedic class to receive the flu and the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) vaccines. George, however, maintained a religious objection to vaccines. When George requested a religious exemption from KCC, the college responded that while it could offer him a religious exemption, St. Mary’s would not offer any such exemption and KCC could not require St. Mary’s to do so. KCC also placed George on “academic warning.” George sued KCC and Presence Hospitals under the U.S. and Illinois constitutions. Both an Illinois circuit court and an Illinois court of appeals ruled against George.

Performance of A Christmas Carol Banned Because of Tiny Tim

<http://www.theblaze.com/news/2016/12/19/god-bless-us-everyone-protests-prompt-second-look-at-a-christmas-carol-then-school-dumps-it/>

For forty years, Centerville Elementary School’s fifth-grade class had put on a performance of Charles Dickens’s *A Christmas Carol*. In 2016, however, a couple of parents complained that, in the play, Tiny Tim says, “God bless us, everyone.” In response, the Hempfield School District decided to stop the annual tradition.

Killeen, Texas, Principal Requires Removal of Bible Verse from Charlie Brown Christmas Display

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/12/08/school-censors-charlie-brown-christmas-poster.html>

Debra Shannon, a staffer at Patterson Middle School in Killeen, Texas, put up a Christmas decoration on a school door. The decoration included an image of Linus from “A Charlie Brown Christmas” with his recitation of a Bible verse relating to the true meaning of Christmas. Two days later, the principal of the school told Shannon that she had to remove the Bible passage from the display.

FFRF Demands that Personal Profiles of School District Employees Be Scrubbed of All Religious Comments

<https://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/27967-bible-verse-display-removed-from-public-school-after-ffrf-objects>

An academic assistant at Jumoke Academy Charter School in Hartford, Connecticut, included a Bible verse on her personal profile. The verse read, “I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me.” After the FFRF learned of the verse on the profile, it sent a letter to the school demanding the removal of the verse. The school complied with the FFRF’s demand, despite the U.S. Supreme Court’s holding that teachers do not lose their constitutional free speech rights just because they work at a school.

Texas High School Censors Business Logo Because It Includes the Word “Jesus”

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/flower-mound-high-school-censors-jesus-club-sponsors-171700887.html>

Flower Mound High School in Flower Mound, Texas, asked local businesses to sponsor the school’s bass fishing club. Wess Jones, a parent at the high school and the owner of the boat repair company 1st Choice Marine, agreed to do so. In exchange for 1st Choice Marine’s support, the 1st Choice Marine logo was to be placed on the club’s website and jerseys. 1st Choice Marine’s logo bears the company’s slogan, which reads: “It’s not about us, it’s all about Jesus.” A school official told Jones that the school could not include his logo because it mentioned Jesus. To Jones’s surprise, however, when he saw the club’s website, it included 1st Choice Marine—but with a new logo that had been made up by the school. The new logo did not include the slogan or look anything like 1st Choice Marine’s actual logo. First Liberty Institute sent a demand letter to Flower Mound High School demanding that the school stop using the incorrect logo and replace it with 1st Choice Marine’s proper

logo. After receiving the letter, the school district responded, “The District will not further interfere in which logos or sponsorships the FMHS Bass Club chooses to accept.”

Electron Microscope Technician Fired for Religious Beliefs About Creation *Armitage v. Bd. of Trustees of the California State Univ.*, No. BC552314 (Cal. Super. Ct., Sept. 21, 2016)

Mark Armitage was an electron microscope technician at California State University, Northridge and a Christian who believed in young-earth creationism. While looking at a triceratops horn through the electron microscope, Armitage discovered soft tissue, indicating a younger age for the bones. After Armitage’s discovery was published in *American Laboratory* and *Acta Histochemica*, Armitage was fired, with one professor shouting, “We are not going to tolerate your religion in this department!” Armitage sued the university. He asserted that his academic freedom and his religious liberty rights were violated by his termination. The university settled with Armitage for a six-figure sum.

Georgia School District Demands Teachers Eliminate All Religious Items in Schools

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/10/04/school-orders-teachers-to-remove-religious-items-from-classrooms.html>

The Henry County School District of Henry County, Georgia, demanded that teachers eliminate all religious items from school district buildings. The district ordered, “You are hereby directed to remove all items which contain religious symbols, such as crosses, printed bibles, angels, bible verses, printed prayers, and biblical quotations from the common areas, hallways, classrooms, and office Further . . . religious and biblical references should not be included in notes to parents, email signature lines, or any other correspondence sent on behalf of [the school]. Finally, please remember that all references to holiday parties should comply with the Henry County School District’s Policy, Procedure and Practices for Holidays.” The district spokesman, when asked whether Bibles must be removed from the school district’s libraries, stated that it was a good question but said, “I don’t know that we have any Bibles within our libraries.” The U.S. Supreme Court has held that teachers, like students, preserve their religious free speech rights even while on school property.

FFRF and ACLU Sue Indiana High School over Christmas Program

<http://www.wndu.com/content/news/Court-rules-in-favor-of-controversial-Concord-Nativity-scene-393469251.html>

Concord High School in Elkhart County, Indiana, put on a “Christmas Spectacular” in 2015 that included Hanukkah, Kwanza, and Christmas songs as well as a Nativity scene using mannequins. The FFRF and the ACLU filed a lawsuit against Concord High School’s Christmas program. A federal district court held that the 2015 Christmas program was permissible. The case is ongoing.

Clemson University Limits Prayer to Designated Free-Speech Areas

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2016/08/29/prayer-on-college-campus-nixed-by-administrator-because-it-wasnt-in-designated-free-speech-area/>

A man sat down outside at Clemson University with a sign that simply said, “Prayer.” A graduate student sat down next to the man, and the two prayed for a few minutes together. When they were done, however, a school administrator told them that they could only pray in designated free-speech areas. According to the school’s officials, the sign made the prayer a “solicitation” that must be approved by the university.

Catholic University Conducts Hate Crime Investigation over Employee’s Catholic Beliefs

<https://www.lifesitenews.com/news/catholic-university-employee-vindicated-after-being-accused-of-lgbt-hate-cr>

Gigi Kurz, a Catholic employee of Loyola Marymount University (LMU), a Catholic university, faced a “hate crime investigation” after removing a “LGBTQ+ Awareness Week” sign and explaining Catholic teachings on human sexuality to some students. After the dialogue, which Kurz’s attorney said had “not a hint of hostility,” the LMU Gender Sexuality Alliance issued a press release stating that Kurz had “[denied] the existence of transgender people” and referred to a “gender non-conforming” student as a man. The LMU “Bias Incident Response Team” then began working with the Los Angeles Police Department to investigate Kurz. LMU cleared Kurz and restored her to her position without loss of pay but did not apologize.

Humanist Group Plans to Start “After School Satan Clubs” to Protest Equal Treatment of Religious Afterschool Clubs

<https://www.au.org/blogs/wall-of-separation/satan-goes-to-school-group-plans-devilishly-clever-response-to-evangelical>

In *Good News Club v. Milford Central School District*, the U.S. Supreme Court held that public schools must treat religious after-school clubs in the same

way that they treat secular after-school clubs. The U.S. Constitution prohibits hostility towards groups because of their religious beliefs. In protest of this decision, the Satanic Temple—a humanist organization that “supports separation of church and state and rebellion against traditional religious dogma” and is not an actual Satanist temple—is planning to start “After School Satan Clubs” in schools that have Good News Clubs.

FFRF Demands Ohio Town Discriminate Against Religious School

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2016/07/27/grove-city-scholarship-program-challenged-over-christian-universitys-inclusion.html>

Grove City, Ohio, started a college scholarship program to keep its students from leaving the city. The program provides \$1,000 per semester to Grove City residents who maintain a C average, do ten hours of community service per semester, and attend one of the three colleges in Grove City. The FFRF, however, objects to the scholarship program because one of the colleges in Grove City is a Christian school. None of the scholarship money goes directly to the schools but rather to the students themselves. Councilman Ted Berry, who helped create the Grove City scholarship program, responded to the FFRF’s complaint by saying, “I can’t discriminate, and I will not, on where a student chooses to go to school.”

FFRF Warns Against Dangers of Noah’s Ark Museum

<https://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/27037-ffrf-warning-more-than-1-000-school-districts-about-new-noah-s-ark>

The FFRF sent letters to over 1,000 school districts warning them not to expose any students to the Ark Encounter, a full-sized reproduction of Noah’s Ark. The FFRF also announced that its co-president will be personally protesting the opening of the attraction.

AUSCS Demands South Carolina School Board Stop Saying Lord’s Prayer

http://www.postandcourier.com/archives/berkeley-board-no-longer-reciting-lord-s-prayer/article_d39c4a1e-d581-574b-baf8-ed4ea7a5fe99.html

The school board in Berkeley County, South Carolina, traditionally opened its meetings with the Lord’s Prayer. When Americans United for Separation of Church and State (AUSCS) learned of the practice, however, the organization sent a letter to the school board demanding that the invocations cease. Even though the U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly recognized the legality of legislative bodies opening with a solemnizing prayer, the Berkeley County School Board decided to stop the practice.

California Deputy Sheriff Visits Home of First-Grade Student to Warn Him Against Sharing His Faith with His Classmates

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/06/03/school-sends-sheriff-to-order-child-to-stop-sharing-bible-verses.html>

Mrs. Zavala often included a Bible verse and an encouraging note in her seven-year-old son's lunch box. At lunch, the first-grader would tell his friends about the note and the verse and read them aloud. The boy's teacher called Mrs. Zavala and told her that her son could not read or share the Bible verses at lunch, citing the "separation of church and state." Though the Zavalas complied with the school's ban, the school reported the first-grader's sharing of his faith to the sheriff's department. A deputy sheriff showed up at the Zavalas' home to warn them against their son's talking about the Bible to his classmates. Lawyers for the Zavalas have demanded that the school district stop its unconstitutional ban on religious free speech.

Idaho State University Tennis Team Harasses Mormon Tennis Star

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/may/24/orin-duffin-mormon-tennis-player-sues-idaho-state/>

Orin Duffin, a Mormon, was a tennis star on Idaho State University's (ISU) tennis team. Once the tennis team learned of Duffin's religious beliefs, however, several of the coaches and players began a campaign of harassment against Duffin. Head coach Bobby Goeltz and assistant coach Nate Gross began to ask Duffin "inappropriate questions about sexual activities." When Duffin told the team that he would be going to Taiwan as a missionary after the 2014-15 school year, Coach Goeltz prohibited Duffin from participating in doubles games. When the team stayed in Las Vegas, Coach Gross arranged for two prostitutes/strippers to go to Duffin's room to proposition him for sex. After Duffin complained to the university about the team's harassment, the ISU Office of Equal Opportunity, Affirmative Action, and Diversity concluded that the allegations concerning the prostitutes could be corroborated. Coach Goeltz retired and Coach Gross resigned following the university's investigation. Duffin is now suing ISU, its president, the school's athletic director, both former coaches, and ten former teammates for claims arising from this harassment and religious discrimination.

FFRF Demands Religious Afterschool Clubs Ban Any Adult Involvement

<https://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/26649-ffrf-wants-la-schools-religious-clubs-investigated>

The FFRF, after learning that a youth pastor brings free food, reads the Bible, and prays with students at a Christian afterschool club, demanded that the

Los Angeles Unified School District ban all outside adults from participating in the religious clubs. At least one court has held that banning adult participation in religious afterschool clubs violates the adult's religious free speech rights.

FFRF Questions Christian Afterschool Club in Skowhegan, Maine

<http://www.centralmaine.com/2016/05/16/group-seeking-transparency-with-christian-afterschool-club-to-host-skowhegan-discussion/>

Good News Clubs are Christian afterschool clubs that meet in schools around the country, including at Bloomfield Elementary School in Skowhegan, Maine. In *Good News Club v. Milford Cent. Sch. Dist.*, the U.S. Supreme Court made it clear that public schools cannot discriminate against religious afterschool clubs like the Good News Clubs. Instead, public schools must treat religious afterschool clubs as fairly as they treat other, secular afterschool clubs. As part of this fair treatment, the Good News Club in Skowhegan, Maine, is permitted—like other afterschool clubs—to send flyers home with students that let parents know about the existence of the club and that ensure that students who attend the Good News Club do so with parental permission. Some parents, however, were offended that they received a flyer announcing the Good News Club and complained to the FFRF. In response, the FFRF stated that it was concerned about whether the Good News Club was being “transparent.” The FFRF also held a “discussion” for parents.

Christian Students at North Carolina State University Told They Must Get a Permit Before Speaking to Other Students

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/04/27/want-to-talk-about-jesus-youll-need-permit-for-that-at-nc-state.html>

Members of Grace Christian Life, a registered student group at North Carolina State University, wanted to talk with other students on campus about Jesus. The university, however, told the students that they could not speak about anything on campus, including religion, without getting a speech permit first. Grace Christian Life filed a lawsuit against the university. They noted that other students and groups were not stopped from speaking just because they did not get a speech permit first. A federal district court judge granted a preliminary injunction against the school. The judge found that the school had likely violated Grace Christian Life's religious free speech rights.

USC Football Chaplain Fired After Letter from FFRF

<http://www.wltx.com/sports/ncaa/usc-gamecocks/confirmed-source-tells-news-19-usc-chaplain-fired/134858245>

Adrian Despres, chaplain for the University of South Carolina (USC) football

program for over a decade, was fired after USC received a letter from the FFRF objecting to the program's inclusion of a chaplain. USC claimed that the firing was unrelated to the FFRF's letter and was instead to permit "multiple voices ... to assist with the spiritual development of the student-athletes."

Wisconsin School District Declares Independent School to Be Catholic Despite School's Rejection of Catholic Affiliation

<http://www.will-law.org/will-press-release-will-sues-superintendent-evers-religious-freedom-violations/>

St. Augustine School is an independent religious school that aligns its teaching with Catholic doctrine but is not affiliated with the Catholic church. The Friesland School District in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, however, has declared that St. Augustine School is a Catholic school, despite the school's rejection of that affiliation. The school's religious affiliation affects whether or not the school district is required to provide transportation. St. Augustine School filed a lawsuit against the school district to protect its ability to determine its own religious affiliation.

Idaho Governor Vetoes Use of Bible as Reference Book in Public Schools

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/idaho.governor.vetoes.bill.allowing.use.of.the.bible.as.reference.material.in.public.schools/83935.htm>

Despite courts' recognition that knowledge of religious culture and history is necessary for students to be fully educated, Idaho Governor Butch Otter vetoed a bill that would permit the Bible to be used for reference purposes in classes "where an understanding of the Bible may be useful or relevant." The governor claimed that permitting the Bible to be used as a reference book would violate the Idaho Constitution.

Wisconsin High School Wants to Stop Off-Campus Lunch Bible Meeting

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/04/14/high-school-wants-to-shut-down-off-campus-jesus-lunch.html>

Middleton High School in Middleton, Wisconsin, permits students to eat lunch off-campus. Some of the students who choose to go off-campus for lunch attend a weekly religious meeting in a nearby public park. The superintendent and principal of Middleton High School want to stop the gathering, calling the meetings "divisive." School officials also claim that the parents who host the weekly meetings may not be following proper food handling procedures.

Colorado School of Mines Bans All Football Locker Room Nameplates Rather than Permit Bible Reference

<http://www.cnsnews.com/commentary/tyson-langhofer/colo-school-commits-act-cowardice-and-religious-hostility-bans-football>

In order to raise funds, the Colorado School of Mines (CSM) permitted donors to buy short nameplates with a message up to three lines long for the school's football locker room. The school accepted messages such as "Give 'Em Hell" and "Take your whiskey clear." CSM alumnus Michael Lucas donated \$2,500 for one of the nameplates. He wanted the nameplate to say, "Colossians 3:23 and Micah 5:9." The Colorado School of Mines refused to print the nameplate, however, because it included references to the Bible. Because such religious viewpoint discrimination is illegal, Lucas sued the school. In response, rather than permit Lucas's Bible references, the school removed all of the nameplates.

Florida Athletic Association Bans Christian Schools from Praying over Loudspeaker

<https://firstliberty.org/cases/cambridge/>

Cambridge Christian School and University Christian School reached the Florida state high school football championship at the Citrus Bowl in Orlando, Florida. Because both schools were private, Christian schools, they wanted to offer a pre-game prayer over the Citrus Bowl's public-address system. The Florida High School Athletic Association (FHSAA), however, banned the pre-game prayer over the loudspeaker, indicating that the religious viewpoint of the prayer would render it unconstitutional. First Liberty Institute, representing Cambridge Christian School, filed a lawsuit against the FHSAA to stop it from engaging in religious viewpoint discrimination against the schools. The litigation is ongoing.

ACLU Demands School Ban the Phrase "God Bless America"

<http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2016/jan/10/robert-knight-kicking-god-out-of-school/>

Following the September 11 attacks, Glenview Elementary School in Hadon Heights, New Jersey, added the phrase "God bless America" after the Pledge of Allegiance. In December 2015, however, the director of the New Jersey chapter of the ACLU wrote a letter to the school demanding that the practice stop and calling it unconstitutional. To avoid costly litigation, the school stopped saying "God bless America" and announced that they would "explore alternative methods of honoring the victims and first responders of the 9/11 tragedy."

Montana Bans Private Scholarship Funds from Being Used at Religious Schools

Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue, No. DV-15-1152D (Mont. Dist., filed Dec. 16, 2015)

In 2015, Montana established a scholarship tax credit program, which allows individuals and businesses to donate to student scholarship organizations and receive a tax credit. The student scholarship organizations may then give scholarships to students for use at private schools. The Montana Department of Revenue, however, banned student scholarship organizations from giving any scholarships to students who want to attend religious schools. A Montana state district court judge issued a preliminary injunction to stop the Montana Department of Revenue from discriminating against students who want to attend religious schools.

American Humanist Association Sues School District Over “Under God” in Pledge

American Humanist Association v. Matawan-Aberdeen Regional Sch. Dist. and The American Legion, No. MON-L-1317-14 (Super. Ct. N.J., Feb. 4, 2015)

Courts have long recognized that the phrase, “Under God,” in the Pledge of Allegiance is constitutional. Nevertheless, in March of 2014, the American Humanist Association filed a lawsuit against a New Jersey school district to stop the district from including “Under God” in the pledge. Liberty Institute represented The American Legion in defending the constitutionality of the Pledge of Allegiance. A New Jersey superior court judge agreed with The American Legion and Liberty Institute that the Pledge of Allegiance is constitutional and dismissed the American Humanist Association’s lawsuit.

School District Bans Students from Bringing Signs with Religious Messages to Sporting Events

Kountze Indep. Sch. Dist. v. Matthews, No. 09-13-00251 (Tex. App.—Beaumont 2014)

The Kountze High School (KHS) cheerleaders wanted to display encouraging messages to the football players of both KHS’s team and the opposing teams. The cheerleaders decided that the best way to encourage the players was to write Bible verses on the “run-through” banners that the football players run through at the beginning of each game. The Freedom From Religion Foundation discovered that the cheerleaders were writing Bible verses and sent a letter to Kountze I.S.D. demanding that the school district stop the cheerleaders. The superintendent of Kountze I.S.D. then banned any student group, including the cheerleaders, from bringing signs with religious mes-

sages to sporting events. The cheerleaders sued the school district to protect their free speech and religious liberty rights. A state district court judge held that the cheerleaders' speech is protected and may not be censored by the school district. A state appellate court held that the parents' claims were mooted but that the parents of the cheerleaders may still recover attorney's fees because the parents' lawsuit caused the school district to change its unconstitutional policies.

Phrase "Under God" in Pledge of Allegiance Attacked

Doe v. Acton-Boxborough Regional Sch. Dist., No. SJC-11317 (Mass. 2014)

Atheist parents filed a lawsuit challenging the use of the phrase "Under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance. The Massachusetts Supreme Court held that "under God" can be said when students recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The court held that the phrase neither violates the Massachusetts Constitution nor infringes upon atheists' rights because reciting the pledge is fundamentally a patriotic exercise.

New Jersey Sued for Treating Jewish and Christian Schools the Same as Secular Schools

ACLU of N.J. v. Hendricks, No. A-004399-13 (Super. Ct. N.J. 2013)

As part of a construction project to improve the facilities of universities throughout the state, New Jersey has awarded 176 grants worth \$1.3 billion. Only two of the schools receiving grants are religious, Lakewood Yeshiva Beth Medrash Gohova and the Princeton Theological Seminary. They will use the funds for the secular purpose of improving their classrooms and libraries. Although the grants will not go toward furthering the religious teachings at either school, the American Civil Liberties Union has brought a lawsuit against New Jersey, arguing that the state should have discriminated against religious schools.

ACLU and AUSCS Sue to Stop Tax Credits for Scholarship Programs

Duncan v. State of New Hampshire, No. ____ (Sup. Ct., Strafford County, N.H., Jun. 17, 2013)

New Hampshire implemented a program to encourage private donations to scholarship organizations by granting an up-to-eighty-five percent tax credit for such donations. The ACLU and Americans United for Separation of Church and State, however, opposed the program because the state did not require the scholarship organizations to discriminate against students who attend religious schools. A court struck down the program under the New Hampshire Constitution.

Science Teacher Fired for Presenting Both Sides of Evolution Debate

Freshwater v. Mount Vernon City Sch. Dist. Bd. of Educ., 137 Ohio St. 3d 469 (Ohio 2013)

John Freshwater, a science teacher of twenty-one years and praised by his own school as one of the better teachers and effective at teaching evolution as evidenced by Ohio Achievement Test results, was fired because his comprehensive coverage of evolution included evidence of unaccounted for gaps in the evolutionary fossil record. The school derisively equated this to creationism and denounced it as pushing religious doctrine; however, there was never a finding that he was teaching any form of creationism and the evidence presented to students never mentioned God or religion. A referee determined that Mr. Freshwater violated the Establishment Clause, and thus the school board terminated his employment after twenty-one years of faithful and effective service. A state appeals court and the Ohio Supreme Court upheld his termination.

Lawsuit Attempts to Block Low-Income Families from Access to Religious Schools

Meredith v. Pence, 984 N.E. 2d 1213 (Ind. 2013)

Indiana increased the opportunity for low-income families to choose the best schools for their children's education through its innovative Choice Scholarship Program. Qualifying children receive scholarships to apply towards their primary education at schools of their choice. Opponents attacked the program in state court because it failed to ban qualifying children from attending religiously affiliated schools. The Indiana Supreme Court rejected hostile attempts to eliminate the program at the expense of low-income communities, and it upheld the freedom of families to choose the best schools for their children—regardless of creed or belief.

Lawsuit Attacks Colorado Voucher Program

Larue v. Colorado Board of Education, No. 11-4424 (Colo. Dist. Ct., Aug. 12, 2011)

A Colorado state court permanently enjoined the Douglas County, Colorado, Board of Education's voucher program that allowed students enrolled in the county's public schools to use seventy-five percent of per-student funding to attend private schools, including religiously affiliated schools. The court held that the program violated many of the religious provisions of the Colorado Constitution, which it recognized as more restrictive than the religion clauses in the U.S. Constitution.

Valedictorian Banned from Giving Speech Because of Her Desire to Include a Religious Message

Griffith v. Butte School District No. 1, 244 P.3d 321 (Mont. 2010)

Renee Griffith, the class valedictorian at Butte High School, was selected to give a speech at her graduation ceremony. There were no written guidelines for student speakers, but they were told that the remarks had to be, “appropriate, in good taste and grammar, and should be relevant to the closing of [their] high school years.” After meeting with speech coach, Griffith was told that she needed to change her speech to omit any reference to “God” or “Christ” to be allowed to speak. Griffith refused to change her original remarks and was not allowed to speak. Griffith complained to the Human Rights Bureau, but was given a notice of dismissal. The district court found in favor of the school, but the Supreme Court of Montana found that the school had violated Griffith’s right to free speech but not her right to free exercise of religion.

Education Students Sue for Freedom to Complete Student Teaching at Religious Schools

Harrison v. Gregoire, No. 02-2-01831-3 (Super. Ct. Wash. 2002)

The University of Washington and Eastern Washington University both enforced policies that barred student teaching at religious schools. The universities cited the “Blaine Amendment,” which called for a strict “separation of church and state.” Carolyn Harrison and Rene Penhallurick, teaching students at the universities, hoped to complete their student teaching at religious schools but were denied the opportunity. The students sued. As a result of the lawsuit, the State of Washington’s policy now requires that universities either allow or deny student teaching at private schools regardless of religious status. The University of Washington changed its policies, allowing Harrison to teach at a Jesuit school. Eastern Washington University decided to prohibit student teaching at any private school.

Lawsuit Challenges Boy Scouts’ Presentation of Information to Students

Powell v. Bunn, 59 P.3d 559 (Or. Ct. App. Dec. 11, 2002)

An Oregon school district allowed the Boy Scouts to present information on membership to students. A parent filed suit, claiming the policy violated the Establishment Clause.

School Board Derecognizes Fellowship of Christian Athletes

McKee v. City of Pleasanton, 750 P.2d 1007 (Kan. 1988)

Students in Pleasanton, Kansas, formed a Fellowship of Christian Athletes

(FCA) chapter on their school campus and were recognized as an official student club on campus. A new superintendent and school board, however, stripped FCA of their official status and refused to recognize them as a school club. A lawsuit was filed to restore the group's recognition as an official student club.

ACLU Challenges Principal for Writing “God Bless You”

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2015/09/27/god-bless-greeting-lands-louisiana-school-in-hot-water-with-aclu/>

The American Civil Liberties Union of Louisiana has accused Airline High School of promoting Christianity because the school allowed a student group to hang prayer boxes and the principal ended a letter with “May God Bless You All.” The school board has placed the issue on its agenda for discussion. Louisiana State Representative Mike Johnson has offered free legal services to the school.

Coach Kennedy Suspended for Praying Silently After Games

<http://www.seattletimes.com/sports/high-school/why-bremerton-coach-joe-kennedys-stance-on-postgame-prayer-is-admirable/>

Bremerton High School in Washington State ordered football Coach Joe Kennedy to stop his seven-year practice of praying to himself at the 50-yard line after every game. In October of 2015, the school district suspended Coach Kennedy over his silent, 30-second prayer, stripping Coach Kennedy of his right to free religious expression—a right protected by the First Amendment, federal law, and extensive case law precedent. First Liberty Institute, on behalf of Coach Kennedy, filed an Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaint for religious discrimination and a lawsuit against Bremerton School District seeking reinstatement.

School Board Prayer Criticized

<http://www.norwalkreflector.com/Local/2015/09/09/Should-Norwalk-school-board-have-right-to-pray-at-meetings.html>

The Board of Education for Norwalk City Schools generally began monthly meetings with prayer, prompting the Freedom From Religion Foundation to send a demand letter to the board's president. Lutheran pastor Amy Little, who is also a district parent, commented that it is sad that the organization is attempting to “rob us of our faith.” The board intends to research the legal issues before responding to the letter.

FFRF Calls to Abolish the Auburn Tigers' Volunteer Chaplain

<http://www.foxsports.com/college-football/outkick-the-coverage/auburn-tigers-sec-freedom-from-religion-foundation-team-chaplain-chette-williams-082015>

Chette Williams is a former college football player and current volunteer chaplain with Auburn University. In response to FFRF's letter calling Auburn to "abolish the chaplaincy," Auburn released a statement noting that participation in chaplain-led events is voluntary and chaplains are common in many public institutions, including the United States Congress.

MRFF Sues University Over 9/11 Memorial Service

<http://campusreform.org/?ID=6019>

The Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) threatened legal action against the University of North Georgia for allegedly requiring cadets to attend a 9/11 commencement service at which students prayed to the "Christian God." University officials dispute such allegations and claim the memorial service was not mandatory for cadets, nor were they required to be present in formation. Further, UNG President Bonita Jacobs and administrators are confident in their defense against MRFF's accusations, as the university did not plan the event or schedule the Corps Chaplain to conduct the prayer. Instead, UNG says the Student Government Association was responsible for planning the invocation, benediction, and for selecting the featured speakers. "Genuinely student initiated religious speech at events organized by student organizations on campus implicates both of our constitutional obligations," wrote Jacobs in a formal response to MRFF.

High School Band's Performance Cancelled Due to Religious Song

<http://christiannews.net/2015/08/23/high-school-band-nixed-from-halftime-show-over-how-great-thou-art-performance/>

Brandon High School's band was set to perform the hymn "How Great Thou Art" during a football game's halftime show. After a court sided with the American Humanist Association against the school district, the Rankin County School Board stopped the performance to avoid possible additional litigation. The district expressed its regret to the students who had spent the summer working on the piece.

ACLU Threatens Public School Districts for Prayer Before Sporting Events

<http://www.delaware1059.com/story.php?id=12850>

The American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware sent threatening letters to the superintendents of eighteen Delaware public school districts warning them not to allow coaches to participate in team prayers.

FFRF Stops University of Toledo Coach from Giving the Lord's Prayer

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/sports/ncaaf/2015/06/12/toledo-football-coach-will-no-longer-lead-team-prayers/71141726/>

The University of Toledo's head football coach used to lead his team in the Lord's Prayer before football games, but will no longer do so following a letter from the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF).

FFRF Demands That Coaches Not Participate in Student-Led Prayer

<http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/gradebook/organization-complains-about-prayer-at-pasco-county-high-school-football/2232905>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent a letter to the superintendent of the Pasco County, Florida, school district demanding that the district ban coaches from participating in student-led prayers. The school district responded that the coaches are merely present during student-led prayers and are not leading prayers themselves.

FFRF Sends Complaint Letter to the Levy County School Board in Florida

<http://www.gainesville.com/article/20150608/ARTICLES/150609700?p=1&tc=pg>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent a letter to the Levy County, Florida, school board complaining that the school board meetings begin with a prayer, that teachers participate in religious activities, that the school advertised a baccalaureate service on its website, and that signs in a school mention God. While none of these complaints are necessarily constitutional violations, the school board is investigating the FFRF's letter.

Sixth-Grade Student Prohibited from Mentioning Her Faith in "All About Me" Presentation

<https://www.libertyinstitute.org/Fraiser>

Mackenzie Fraiser, a sixth-grade student at Somerset Academy in Las Vegas, Nevada, was assigned to create a slideshow called "All About Me." The slideshow was to include an inspirational quote that represents the student. Because Mackenzie Fraiser is a Christian, she wanted to include John 3:16—her favorite Bible verse—as her inspirational quote. Mackenzie's teacher, however, stated that Bible verses and quotes from the Book of Mormon were prohibited from the slideshow. First Liberty Institute sent a letter to Somerset Academy explaining Mackenzie's religious liberty rights, and the school apologized to Mackenzie. Mackenzie was allowed to resubmit her original project with the Bible verse.



ACLU of Indiana Sues School to Stop Prayers at School Board Meetings, Graduations, and Sporting Events

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/river-forest-school-prayers-critics-didn-t-follow-procedures/article_e076fa90-b3d7-5c5d-a52e-8354e479f38e.html

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Indiana sued the River Forest Community School Corporation (RFCSC) to stop prayers at school board meetings, graduations, and sporting events. RFCSC said that the prayers did not violate the First Amendment.

California School District Bans Native American from Wearing Eagle Feather to Graduation

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Education/2015/0603/Religious-freedom-Eagle-feather-allowed-in-California-graduation>

Christian Titman, a graduating senior at Clovis High School and a Native American, wanted to wear an eagle feather for its religious significance to his graduation. The school district initially refused to allow Titman to wear the feather, but relented after Titman filed a lawsuit against the district.

FFRF Complains About School's Selected Quotations

<http://www.kltv.com/story/29697983/ffrf-asks-mt-vernon-isd-to-remove-religious-quotes-from-buildings>

Mount Vernon Independent School District in Texas has decorated its walls with over 130 inspirational quotes from a variety of sources. The Freedom From Religion Foundation has complained that seven of the quotes are Bible verses or religious in nature. The anti-religious organization has called on the school to censor religious perspectives.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State Threatens School for Field Trip to Dinosaur Museum

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/children-have-constitutional-right-to-go-on-dinosaur-museum-field-trip-without-fearing-threats-from-anti-creationists-139814/>

Americans United for Separation of Church and State sent a letter to the Glendive School District threatening a lawsuit if the district permitted a field trip to the Glendive Dinosaur & Fossil Museum—the second-largest dinosaur museum in Montana—because the museum has a religious viewpoint. Following receipt of the letter, the school district cancelled its planned field trip. A religious liberties organization then sent a letter to the school district explaining that the field trip would have been constitutional so long as the school did not select the museum for its religious viewpoint.

FFRF Attacks Middle School Memorial for Deceased Teacher

<https://www.opposingviews.com/i/religion/first-amendment-group-calls-removal-memorial-wv-middle-school>

Freedom From Religious Foundation sent a hostile letter to a middle school about religious images used in a memorial commemorating a teacher who passed away. A teacher taught at the school for over twenty-five years before tragically passing in an accident. The school dedicated an area in the school's garden with a display of crosses, Bible verses, and angels in honor of the late teacher. The school board was forced to remove the cross, but kept some of the angels, which the late teacher collected.

College Is Persecuted for Believing in Traditional Marriage

<http://www.nationalreview.com/article/397905/standing-gordon-editors>

Gordon College is a nationally ranked liberal arts institution located in the Boston area, with deep roots in the Christian faith and missionary training. In July 2014, when President Obama signed an order prohibiting the federal government and federal contractors from discriminating in hiring based on "sexual orientation" and "gender identity," it offered no exemption to religious organizations like Gordon College, who have faith-based objections to same-sex marriage. Michael Lindsay, president of Gordon College, signed, as an individual, not as a representative of Gordon College, an open letter to the President requesting the inclusion of a religious exemption. After Lindsay's letter to the President, the discovery that, like almost every other Christian school and church, the school had a policy that required students and employees to limit sexual activity to marriage, the school endured a stream of attacks. Salem Mayor Kimberly Driscoll suspended a long-term contract with Gordon College which then prohibited them from using Salem's historic Old Town Hall; nearby Lynn Public School board ended an eleven-year relationship with Gordon College and refused to accept their students in their student-teacher program; and Gordon's accrediting body gave a subtle threat that the school could lose their accreditation if they do not change their policies in one year.

FFRF Forces Alabama School to Change Policies

http://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2015/02/homewood_city_school_accused_o.html

It was a tradition at Alabama's Homewood Middle School to have a "team chaplain" pray and deliver a sermon for the football team during its weekly team pizza meal. Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) forced the district to change the position of the football team chaplains to "team sponsors"

who are “to deliver encouraging messages to the players regarding morals and character, not sermons,” the school attorney said when responding to FFRF complaints. FFRF also took issue with the school’s First Priority Club, which met in the gym before school started. A local youth pastor led a worship service for all those who wanted to attend. FFRF claimed a teacher organized the club, so First Priority Club subsequently was forced to move their meetings into a private classroom with a faculty monitor present who is prohibited from participating in any form. The middle school previously allowed local churches to set up tables with brochures during lunchtime for any interested students. After FFRF’s complaints, all lunchtime visitors are prohibited from proselytizing.

FFRF Demands University of Florida Remove Inscription from Building

<http://www.christianexaminer.com/article/university.of.florida.under.fire.by.atheists.for.bible.verse.inscription/49005.htm>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) is demanding that the University of Florida remove an inscription from a university building. The university’s College of Business Administration building has Micah 6:8 inscribed over an archway. While Micah 6:8 is respected by numerous religions, FFRF has declared that the existence of the quote on a building is an endorsement of Christianity.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State Threatens School over Religious Opera

http://www.cleveland.com/opinion/index.ssf/2015/05/religious_opera_wont_be_perfor.html

Americans United for Separation of Church and State opposed Willoughby South High School’s performance of an opera, “I am Martol,” based on the music of Norwegian composer Ola Gjeilo, because the opera contains religious themes. The students were forced to perform the opera off school property and without the assistance of their choir director.

Students Protest After ACLU Forces Removal of National Motto from Sign

<https://www.yahoo.com/parenting/middle-schoolers-rally-to-get-religious-message-117531644637.html>

Ridgewood Middle School in Shreveport, Louisiana, displayed the national motto, “In God We Trust,” on its sign. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Louisiana sent a letter to the Caddo Parish school district demanding that all religious references be removed from all schools in the district. In response to the letter, Ridgewood Middle School officials removed the motto

from the sign. The students of Ridgewood Middle School, however, protested the removal of the national motto and held a lunchtime rally. Following the student rally, the school restored the national motto.

FFRF Opposes University Athletics Department Chaplains

<http://www.opposingviews.com/i/religion/freedom-religion-foundation-sends-records-requests-five-collegiate-athletic-departments>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) filed records requests on five universities in an effort to stop them from using chaplains in their athletics department.

Cranston Schools Prohibit Teachers from Taking Off Good Friday

http://www.providencejournal.com/article/20150330/NEWS/150339965/-1/breaking_ajax/?Start=1

After twenty-five years of having no school on Good Friday, Yom Kippur, and Rosh Hashanah, the Cranston School Committee in Cranston, Rhode Island, changed its academic calendar to hold classes on each of those days. While the Cranston School Committee's contract with the teacher's union permitted each teacher to take off up to two religious days, Cranston Public Schools denied teachers' requests to take off Good Friday. The union filed a lawsuit against the Cranston Public Schools, and a judge prohibited the school district from denying leave requests for Good Friday.

West Virginia School Board Bans All Student Prayer

<http://www.inquisitr.com/1927547/school-board-bans-prayer-in-school-for-students-and-staff-in-west-virginia-district/>

The Harrison County School Board in West Virginia imposed a complete ban on all student prayer at school and at any school events. Following receipt of a letter from the Freedom From Religion Foundation, Assistant Superintendent Anthony Fratto authored a memo requiring all teachers, coaches, and staff to stop any form of student prayer that they see. All staff were required to sign off on the memo.

American Humanist Association Threatens School for Student's Saying, "God Bless America"

<http://www.onenewsnow.com/education/2015/03/06/fl-student-allowed-to-utter-three-word-phrase-over-atheists-objections>

A student at Yulee High School in Nassau County, Florida, gave the announcements over the school's public address system but added the words "God bless America." Two atheist students who felt "uncomfortable" with the addition of the phrase "God bless America" contacted the American

Humanist Association, who threatened legal action against the school if the student were allowed to utter the words again. A religious liberty organization contacted the school and explained the students' free speech and religious liberty rights, and the school has agreed that students may say "God bless America."

Student Bible Study Banned from Hudsonville, Michigan, School Grounds

<http://www.wnd.com/2015/02/local-schools-evict-bible-study-from-grounds/>
For years, Bible Club Ministries International—Western Michigan provided Bible instruction for Hudsonville, Michigan, students who wanted to attend the studies during lunch breaks or recess and who had parental permission. Following a complaint from the Michigan Association of Civil Rights Activists (MACRS), however, Hudsonville banned the ministry from meeting on property owned by the school district. According to the Detroit News, Mitch Kahle, the "force behind MACRS," "blame[s] religion for most of the world's problems" and equates it with "racism and child abuse."

Virginia School District Interrogates Homeschooled Students to Determine Their Religious Beliefs

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2015/01/15/school-district-to-stop-interrogating-christian-homeschool-kids.html?intcmp=latestnews>

A school board in Goochland County, Virginia, enacted a new policy of interrogating homeschooled students aged fourteen years or older and quizzing them about their religious beliefs. Following huge opposition to the new policy by parents, the Goochland School Board repealed the policy.

Long Island School District Denies Access to Religious Student Club

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/school.recognises.christian.club.after.15.year.old.students.bold.stand/43577.htm>

Liz Loverde, a fifteen-year-old student at Wantagh High School in Long Island, New York, wanted to start a Christian afterschool club called "Dare to Believe." While Wantagh High School permitted many afterschool clubs, it refused to accept Loverde's group because Dare to Believe is faith-based. First Liberty Institute represented Loverde and explained to Wantagh High School that engaging in religious discrimination against religious afterschool clubs can threaten the school's federal funding. The school reversed its position and permitted the Dare to Believe afterschool club.

American Humanist Association Threatens Lawsuit to Stop Students from Supporting Church's Food Pantry

<http://www.ijreview.com/2014/12/209981-group-trying-stop-elementary-schools-thanksgiving-gift-definitely-feeling-holiday-spirit/>

In an effort to teach its students gratitude and to help feed the poor, Oakbrook Elementary sold “Turkey Grams,” messages of gratitude that could be sent to friends or teachers. The proceeds from the Turkey Grams were to be used to purchase canned goods that would be given to a local food pantry. When the American Humanist Association learned that the local food pantry was operated by a church, however, it threatened to sue the school for “assisting church-led projects.” The school’s student council chose the church’s food pantry because it was the closest pantry to the school.

High School Salutatorian Mentions God in Speech Despite School Censorship

<http://libertyinstitute.org/hamby>

Brawley Union School District graduate Brooks Hamby mentioned God in his speech despite receiving threats from school officials that they would mute his microphone if he mentioned God. Hamby sent three versions of his speech to school officials before giving his speech at the ceremony. School officials rejected all three versions of the speech and censored all references to God and the Bible. Liberty Institute is assisting Brooks Hamby in pursuing an apology for censoring the student’s speech.

American Humanist Association Sues South Carolina School for Hosting Graduation Ceremony in Chapel

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/atheist-suit-against-sc-school-for-hosting-graduation-in-chapel-to-be-reheard-in-district-court-129832/>

A school in South Carolina reached capacity in their auditorium to host the graduation ceremony. Students would be limited to three family members each if the ceremony were held in the school. The school decided the most convenient alternative was a chapel that offered stadium seating and allowed as many family members as wanted to attend. The school even went to such lengths as to remove all Christian iconography, such as crosses and Bibles that were in the chapel. However, the school was still attacked for allegedly “proselytizing Christianity,” when students led the graduation ceremony in prayer. A U.S. District Judge enjoined school-sponsored student prayers, which were held as a formal part of graduations in the school district from 1951 to 2013, but the judge upheld spontaneous student prayer. The district was forced to take steps to prevent official, school-sponsored prayers but

said it would not prohibit prayer at graduations so long as it is student-led and initiated and doesn't create a disturbance.

School Forced to Stop Charitable Fundraiser

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2014-11-public-elementary-school-cant-fundraise-for-church-s>

A South Carolina elementary school's student council organized a fundraiser and food drive to benefit a local church's mission trip. The American Humanist Association sent a threatening letter to the school, demanding that the school stop its fundraising effort.

School Choir Banned from Singing Christian Songs While Honoring Veterans

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2014-11-humanist-group-pleased-that-public-school-ceases-chr>

During a school assembly, which honored veterans for their sacrifice and service in our military, a Kansas school choir chose two fitting songs for the program. These songs included references to "Jesus" and the school was immediately threatened for including religious references in their school programs. The school district was forced to announce that it would only use secular music in its future assemblies honoring veterans.

FFRF Sought to Prevent School's Beneficial, Non-Religious Assembly

<http://wisconsinailyindependent.com/ohio-school-district-stands-up-to-atheist-groups-unfounded-threats/>

Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) threatened a school district in Ohio after the district supported a non-religious assembly based on promoting character development for students. Licking Valley Intermediate School hosted a "character education" assembly entitled "Be All You Can Be" for grades three through five. None of the information in the presentation was religious in nature and the program's content was consistent with the school's curriculum. The school principal said the assembly "was all based on goal setting, being a leader, making good choices, because other people are following your lead; how to persevere when you don't reach your goal the first time; how to try again." FFRF objected to the program simply because the presenters adhered to the Christian faith. Even though the group leading the assembly, Jubilee Gang, is a Christian group, they did not reference their Christian affiliation throughout the assembly. The school had "no intent to bring religion into the school, and there was absolutely no religious basis to the assembly," said the school principal. A religious liberties organization sent Licking Valley School District a letter in support of their decision to allow the

assembly to continue, stating “Public schools should be commended when they decline to give in to unfounded threats by those who misunderstand the First Amendment,” and “This is not neutrality but targeted religious discrimination that the First Amendment forbids.”

FFRF Sues School Boards for Prayer in Meetings Despite Overwhelming Support

<http://www.dailybulletin.com/general-news/20141121/chino-valley-unified-board-mulls-response-to-prayer-lawsuit>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation filed suit against the Chino Valley Unified school board, alleging that the board members violated the Constitution by praying, reading Bible verses, and proselytizing at their meetings. At the recent school board gathering in support of prayer, the meeting began with an invocation, which included petitions for guidance and unity, but there were no references to Jesus or the Holy Spirit. There were no explicit calls to faith.

FFRF Condemns Virginia Professor’s “Introduction to Islam” Course

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/21792-ffrf-objects-to-va-professor-s-promotion-of-islam-in-classroom>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent a threatening letter to a college professor for his “Introduction to Islam” course at Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale, Virginia. The course is described as an objective investigation of Islam “in its historical, religious, and political dimensions,” but FFRF claims the class is “a one-sided monologue by a government-paid employee whose agenda is to show the truth of religion—namely, the existence of a god.” An attorney for the Virginia Community College System responded, informing FFRF that it was in the process of conducting a review.

Private School Prohibited from Hosting Sports Tournament Over Prayer

http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2014/11/11/363309020/asked-to-stop-praying-alaska-school-won-t-host-state-tournament?utm_medium=RSS&utm_campaign=us

After seven years of hosting Alaska’s wrestling tournament, Anchorage Christian School was given an ultimatum: either stop praying before the tournament or forfeit its right to host the tournament. An anonymous complaint about the tournament’s introductory prayer led to a request to stop the practice, and Anchorage Christian School refused. “We do the Pledge of Allegiance, the flag is displayed, we sing the national anthem, say a prayer and then we wrestle,” School Administrator Tom Cobaugh stated. Not praying is “a show stopper for us,” he continued. “It was a basic prayer for protection of

the student athletes, that all would compete well, have good sportsmanship,” said Cobaugh. But sadly, the Americans United for Separation of Church and State put an end to the tradition.

High School Prohibits Students from Praying, Singing, or Discussing Religious Topics

<http://www.onenewsnow.com/legal-courts/2014/11/13/school-says-religion-must-stay-outside-perimeters-of-school-day#.VGUy0Yffk8>

Pine Creek High School in Colorado Springs, Colorado, told a group of students they can no longer informally gather to pray, sing religious songs, or even discuss religious topics at school, even though they have been doing so for the past three years. Chase Windebank, the student who founded the group three years ago, was summoned to the assistant principal’s office and told “he could no longer pray with his fellow students during free time because of the separation of church and state.” Windebank was told they could only meet during the school day if their meetings did not include religious content. Since religious discussion was the purpose of the group, they have been forced to meet in the mornings, and the number of participants has drastically decreased—from 90 to around 12 students.

High School Terminates Graduate Intern Based on Religious Beliefs

http://www.oregonlive.com/faith/2014/11/devout_christian_claims_portla.html

A graduate student from Lewis & Clark College, interning at Madison High School in Portland, Oregon, was terminated shortly after privately asking her supervisor about the age-appropriateness of the high school’s sex education curriculum. The intern was a devout Christian and simply asked whether there was any room for her own beliefs, after feeling the high school placed a disproportionate emphasis on sexual identity and school activities for LGBT students. After the graduate intern asked, her supervisor “immediately became combative” and accused her and Christians of being judgmental and terminated her a few days later. Her graduate school then forced her to change her major and subsequently she graduated without a license to work as a school counselor, and is \$100,000 in debt in student loans for a degree that she is unable to obtain now. The graduate student filed suit for civil rights violations and employment discrimination.

MRFF Criticizes Wheaton College for Christian ROTC Officer Requirement

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/11/11/christian-schools-rotc-under-attack.html>

Wheaton College is one of the nation’s most prominent Christian schools,

and the ROTC program has a long and storied history that is steeped in the school's Christian tradition. The ROTC program listed a position for an assistant professor of military science at Wheaton College, who "must be of Christian faith." The Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF) immediately raised concerns about the ROTC, and demanded those involved be "visibly and meaningfully punished," MRFF founder Mikey Weinstein wrote. The U.S. Army responded and announced they have launched a review of ROTC policies nationwide, but denied the investigation had anything to do with Weinstein's threats. Wheaton Provost Stanton Jones believes the school is on solid constitutional ground, stating, "The constitutional requirement for no establishment does not mean we are all non-religious. It means the U.S. government supports a multiplicity of religions." Jones defended the religious requirement of the ROTC leadership saying, "Wheaton students come here because of the religious distinctive of the school. We feel that the resonance of the lead military officer with that religious identity helps that person bridge the gap with students."

FFRF Tries to Stop an Afterschool Club from Meeting On-Campus

<http://www.centralmaine.com/2014/11/07/good-news-club-seeks-to-evangelize-boys-and-girls/>

When the Good News Club, a religious afterschool program, distributed fliers to elementary school students in Skowhegan, Maine, the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sought to abolish the club's activities. The club's goal was to teach Bible-centered character and moral education to students who wished to attend their program. FFRF campaigned for the Skowhegan school district to only allow school-sponsored groups to use the school's facilities. "Teaching young children to be preoccupied with fear, sin, retribution and salvation will destroy their innocent childhood and turn them into adults who lack critical thinking skills," FFRF posted to encourage parents to complain to the district superintendent.

New York School Sued for Anti-Semitism

<http://www.courthousenews.com/2014/11/05/anti-semitism-may-nail-upstate-n-y-school.htm>

A New York school district faced a federal trial for allegedly tolerating white power chants, swastika carvings and anti-Jewish harassment targeting Jewish students. The children endured bus rides during which other students sang songs about killing black and Jewish students. Students also reported that they were taunted with swastikas, "Hitler salutes," and crematoria imagery.

On a bus ride to school, another student reported seeing a student drawing a picture and saying “it is a Hasidic Jew, so let’s shove pennies in his mouth.”

Humanist Group Attacks Veterans Day Assembly Opening Prayer

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2014-11-public-high-school-veterans-day-assembly-cant-includ>

A Louisiana high school hosted an assembly honoring veterans. The ceremony opened with a prayer remembering their sacrifice and paying tribute to their legacy. The prayer was attacked by the American Humanist Association as forcing religious beliefs on students.

Pickens School Board Debates Prayer

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/story/news/local/pickens-county/2014/06/24/pickens-school-board-prayer-issue-resurrected/11319767/>

The Pickens School Board in South Carolina is currently debating their prayer policy in light of the *Town of Greece v. Galloway* decision from the U.S. Supreme Court. The school was threatened by the FFRF for allowing students to pray according to their consciences at board meetings. After the FFRF’s letter, the school board changed its policy to require nonsectarian prayers offered by school board members in 2013. The school board is currently discussing the constitutionality of having clergy offer prayers at meetings.

Humanist Group Attacks School District for Supporting Students’ Trip to Guatemala

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2014-06-humanist-group-calls-on-colorado-public-school-to-ce>

http://www.denverpost.com/news/ci_26020470/group-claims-dougco-schools-violated-constitution-mission-trip

The Appigani Humanist Legal Center sent a letter accusing the Douglas County School District of Colorado of proselytizing for supporting a trip sponsored by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. The Fellowship of Christian Athletes and Adventures in Missions asked the school for donations for their trip to Guatemala. The humanist group says that their fundraising efforts should not involve the entire school or be associated with the school’s name and that supporting the trip violates the First Amendment.

Christian Club Risks Being Kicked Off Campus Because It Wants Christian Leaders

<http://www.campusreform.org/?ID=5685>

California Sate University officials told InterVarsity Christian Fellowship that requiring officers of the group to sign a statement of faith is considered a

violation of a 2011 Executive Order forbidding discrimination. The group's leader explained that having Christian leaders is important for the function of the organization, as the leaders are not merely treasurers or secretaries. The group hopes to receive an exemption.

New York Mayor Introduces Program that Limits Participating Schools' Religious Freedom

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2014/06/de-blasios-universal-kindergarten.html>

New York Mayor Bill DeBlasio created a free full-day kindergarten program that included the participation of Orthodox Jewish Schools. However, DeBlasio's program bans staff from leading prayers and shortens the school day so that there is no time for religious instruction. The private Orthodox schools are considering a different program that does not require the restrictions that are in DeBlasio's plan.

School Bows to Humanist Group and Bans Faculty from Attending Baccalaureate Services

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2014-06-humanist-group-works-with-birdville-independent-school>

American Humanist Association sent a letter to Birdville I.S.D. in Haltom City, Texas. A student informed AHA that his school had religious Baccalaureate ceremonies, overnight retreats at a local church, and Christian iconography in public classrooms. The school responded to the grievances by removing faculty from the Baccalaureate services, religious items from classrooms, and retreats from the church to a community center.

Missouri School Settles with Humanist Organization

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2014-06-american-humanist-association-successfully-settles-l>

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2014/06/consent-decree-entered-in-suit-over.html>

The Fayette R III School District settled with the American Humanist Association (AHA) on a suit AHA brought against the school district in November. AHA claimed that the school district showed unconstitutional favoritism toward Christianity. The school projected prayer over the intercom and allowed religious groups to meet before school. The settlement requires that the school not promote prayer or religious activities.

School Districts Change Graduation Locations Because of Threats from FFRF

<http://www.cantonrep.com/article/20140601/NEWS/140609984>

Two Ohio school districts were forced to find new venues for their graduation ceremonies after the Freedom From Religion Foundation sent them a letter of complaint. The Northwest Local School District and Canton Local School District planned to host graduation ceremonies in local churches. FFRF told the school officials that holding the ceremonies in churches would endorse religion.

Atheist College Professor Attacks Principal for Praying Silently

<http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2014/06/02/atheists-attack-public-high-school-principal-for-praying-to-god-during-graduation-ceremony/>

<http://www.theblaze.com/stories/2014/06/02/high-school-principals-bold-graduation-speech-invokes-god-prayer-and-national-tradition/>

An atheist college professor is upset with high school principal Kevin Lowrey after the principal offered a moment of silence at a graduation ceremony. The principal asked the audience to join him in a moment of silence, but told students that he would pray silently during that time. After the moment of silence ended, the principal told the audience that he asked God to bless the graduating class during the moment of silence.

Teacher Confiscates Student's Bible and Calls Parents in Front of Class

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2014/05/05/teacher-tells-student-cant-read-bible-in-my-classroom/>

A Florida fifth grader had his Bible confiscated during free reading time. After the teacher took the Bible, she called the student's parents in front of the class to tell them that the student was not allowed to read religious books in her classroom. After the Liberty Institute confronted the school with evidence that they violated their own policies, the school apologized to the boy.

School Condemned for Praying for Veterans

<http://christiannews.net/2014/05/30/nc-school-district-condemns-christian-prayers-at-vet-event-as-violation-of-policy/>

A North Buncombe High School booster club held a flag ceremony to honor veterans. Parents and other attendees opposed the opening and closing prayers offered by a local pastor. The district said that the prayers at the ceremony were unconstitutional because they mentioned Jesus.

Ex-Vice Principal Sues Catholic School After Marrying Same-Sex Partner

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2014/05/court-lets-fired-catholic-school.html>

Vice Principal Mark Zmuda sued Seattle Eastside Catholic High School for firing him because he broke his employee contract by marrying his same-sex partner. The school argued that the case should be dismissed because Zmuda breached the morality clause of his employee contract that requires him to uphold teachings of the Catholic faith. Zmuda and the school agreed to dismiss the lawsuit.

Teacher Bans Fifth Grader from Reading His Bible During “Free-Reading” Time

<http://www.libertyinstitute.org/rubeo?>

Giovanni Rubeo, a fifth-grade student at Park Lakes Elementary School in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, wanted to read the Bible during his class’s “free-reading” time. When Giovanni’s teacher saw him reading the Bible, however, she ordered him to stop reading. Giovanni’s teacher then left a voicemail for Giovanni’s father stating, “I noticed [Giovanni] had a book, a religious book, in the classroom. He’s not permitted to read those books in my classroom.” After attorneys from Liberty Institute sent a letter to the school explaining Giovanni’s religious liberty rights, the school apologized to Giovanni and agreed that he is permitted to read his Bible during free-reading time.

Activists Demand Phone Records and Emails from UVA Law Professor

http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/jurisprudence/2014/05/douglas_laycock_gets_smeared_lgbtq_groups_attack_on_the_university_of_virginia.html

GetEqual activists told University of Virginia law professor Douglas Laycock that his involvement in religious liberty cases has consequences. Laycock, who has argued both liberal and conservative ideals, argued in favor of the Hobby Lobby HHS Mandate case and the case involving a prisoner’s right to express his religion. The LGBT activists filed Freedom of Information Act requests for Laycock’s email and phone records to track any communication the professor had with religious rights groups.

FFRF Complains to College After Commencement Speaker Says “God” and “Godspeed”

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20743-wisconsin-public-college-grads-told-to-rely-on-god>

The chancellor at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point told students to rely on faith in God and wished them Godspeed in his commencement



address. A family member of one of the graduates contacted Freedom From Religion Foundation. FFRF sent a letter to the chancellor telling him that he cannot mention religion at graduation ceremonies.

College Students Banned from Thanking God at East Carolina University

<http://www.campusreform.org/?ID=5598>

A professor at a public university told students that they could not thank God in their personal statements that were to be delivered at the departmental graduation ceremony. The professor complained that too many students thanked religious figures in the past. The provost sent a letter to students telling them to disregard the professor's instructions. Students were allowed to say anything permissible under the First Amendment.

ACLU and FFRF Protest Bible-Based Curriculum

<http://www.rockymounttelegram.com/features/religion/groups-challenge-bible-based-program-2465495>

The American Civil Liberties Union and Freedom From Religion Foundation protested a Mustang, Oklahoma, high school for adding a Bible course to its curriculum. The purpose of the course is to enhance students' understanding of archaeology, history, and the arts. FFRF sent a letter to the high school explaining that the course would be biased because it would not include "negative aspects" of God.

Student Told Bibles Not Allowed at School

<http://aclj.org/school-prayer/justice-restored-after-little-girl-bible-banned-from-school>

When a girl from Tucson, Arizona, started bringing her Bible to school to read and discuss with fellow students during free time, school administrators told her that she could no longer bring her Bible. With the help of a religious liberties group, the girl's mother confronted the school's principal about the violation of her daughter's religious rights, and the principal agreed to allow the girl to continue bringing her Bible to school.

Student Denied Use of School Facilities for Bible Study Club

<http://aclj.org/school-prayer/victory-for-bible-club-in-ny>

A student at a high school in Amsterdam, New York, requested permission to use school facilities for an after-school, student-led Bible study club. The school informed the student that he needed an insurance policy to use school facilities after hours, and denied the student's request, even though the school imposed no such mandate on other after-school clubs. A religious liberties group wrote a letter to the school on behalf of the student

addressing the discriminatory policy, and the school subsequently allowed the student to start her club.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Pressures School into Eliminating Religious References

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20640-ffrf-halts-inappropriate-thanksgiving-program-religious-icons-bibles-removed-from-elementary-school-april-15-2014>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) complained that one of the teachers at Oakwood Elementary School in Peoria, Arizona, extended open invitations to her church, kept a Bible and coffee mugs decorated with Bible verses on her desk, and gave religious bookmarks to students. Additionally, the FFRF protested the school's Thanksgiving skit due to religious content regarding the Pilgrims. In response, the school informed the FFRF that the teacher's religious activities were curtailed and that the Thanksgiving program would be reviewed.

Antireligion Organization Kills Bible Distribution

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20477-ffrf-stops-bible-distribution-in-elementary-school-april-9-2014>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard that Lincoln Elementary School in Pryor, Oklahoma, allowed Gideons International to distribute Bibles to students in the school cafeteria, it demanded that the school ban Bibles and Gideons International from campus. The school confirmed that all religious materials would be forbidden moving forward.

School Tells Elementary Student, "No Bibles Allowed"

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2014/04/liberty-institute-commends-cy-fair-isds.html>

A second-grade student at Hamilton Elementary School in Houston, Texas, pulled out her Bible during the school's "Read to Myself" time. However, a teacher prohibited the student from reading her Bible, and told the student not to bring the Bible back to school again because it constituted inappropriate reading material. Liberty Institute sent a letter to the Cypress Fairbanks I.S.D. explaining the student's constitutionally protected right to read her Bible. The district responded by assuring Liberty Institute and the student that it is committed to religious freedom in its schools.

Renowned High School Baseball Coach Criticized for Pregame Prayers

<http://christiannews.net/2014/04/30/acclaimed-baseball-coach-under-fire-from-atheists-for-pre-game-prayers/>

Owasso High School Baseball Coach Larry Turner has been recognized as the best high school baseball coach in the United States, receiving awards such as the 2013 National Baseball Coach of the Year. Coach Turner is also a Christian and leads his team in community service as well as pregame prayers. The Freedom From Religion Foundation discovered Coach Turner's practice of prayer and sent a letter to the school condemning the practice and demanding an investigation.

Teacher Reprimanded for Showing “The Bible” Episodes in Class

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20648-ffrf-halts-teacher-from-showing-%E2%80%9Cthe-bible%E2%80%9D-in-class-april-28-2014>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to the superintendent over Atlanta High School in Atlanta, Texas, complaining that a teacher showed episodes from the TV show, “The Bible” in class. The superintendent confirmed that the teacher had “been instructed to align his instruction” with current law.

Atheist Organization Seeks to Eliminate High School Wrestling Team's Bible-Based Motto

<http://www.thenewscenter.tv/news/headlines/Parkersburg-South-Wrestling-T-Shirts-Draw-Attention-255706021.html>

The wrestling team at Parkersburg South High School in Parkersburg, West Virginia, chose Philippians 4:13 as its team motto, inscribing it on team T-shirts, the school website, and the wall of the gym. When the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard about the motto, it wrote a letter to the school superintendent complaining about the motto's religious nature. The team members hired an attorney and fought to keep their constitutional freedoms. The school allowed the students to keep the T-shirts, but removed the verse from the school website and the gymnasium wall.

High School Football Coach Told to Stop Praying and Witnessing

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20647-ffrf-ensures-prayer-is-not-a-part-of-middletown-high-school-football-april-25-2014>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a letter to the superintendent over Middletown High School in Ohio demanding that the school prohibit Coach Chris Wells from sharing his faith with his players and blessing post-

practice meals. The district confirmed that Coach Wells had been reprimanded.

School Tightens Restraints on Religious Liberty Under Pressure from Atheist Group

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20683-prep-school-adopts-religion-free-event-policy-april-23-2014>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation criticized Tempe Preparatory Academy in Phoenix, Arizona, for a teacher's attempt to balance the presentation of scientific theories through the distribution of religious science materials after watching an atheistic science documentary, and for the holding of graduation ceremonies at a local church. The school subsequently decided to remove all religious items from the church prior to graduations. Additionally, they disciplined the teacher and fired him from his position as head of his department.

Teacher Criticized for Easter Message

<http://losangeles.cbslocal.com/2014/04/21/teacher-questioned-after-putting-religious-message-on-public-school-marquee/>

A teacher at Darby Elementary School in Northridge, California, posted the message "Rest, Rest, Go To Church He is Risen" on the school marquee over Easter weekend. The school principal received numerous complaints and confirmed that the teacher would be questioned.

FFRF Condemns High School Football Coach's Prayers

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20650-ffrf-stops-georgia-coach-from-leading-students-in-prayer-april-19-2014>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) heard that a football coach at Thomas County Central High School in Thomasville, Georgia, led prayer before practices, it demanded that the school prohibit the prayers. The school superintendent informed the FFRF that it would address coached prayer, but would protect the First Amendment rights of both faculty and students.

School District Undergoes Hostile Examination Due to Bible Class

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/atheist-group-vows-to-scrutinize-hobby-lobby-presidents-public-school-bible-class-118253/>

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20500-ffrf-blasts-hobby-lobby-bible-curriculum>

When the Mustang Public School District in Oklahoma approved the implementation of a Bible class elective championed by Hobby Lobby President

Steve Green, the Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to the district superintendent laying out its intent to scrutinize the class's religious content in search of constitutional violations that could be used to eliminate it.

Atheist Group Calls for Investigation into University's Christian Football Coach

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/atheist-group-accuses-clemson-football-program-of-christian-worship-117988/>

Dabo Swinney, head football coach at Clemson University and an outspoken Christian, brought in a Christian chaplain to lead chapel services, devotionals, and Bible studies. When the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard about Swinney's actions, they complained that the university was endorsing Christian worship and demanded an examination of Swinney's practices.

School Bans Religious T-Shirts

<http://www.rawstory.com/rs/2014/04/15/religious-oregon-teens-wear-gay-is-not-ok-shirts-to-school-to-protest-lack-of-straight-day/>

On the National Day of Silence, an awareness event focused on highlighting harassment of LGBT individuals, several students at Oregon City High School wore T-shirts reading "Gay Is Not Ok" in protest, citing their religious beliefs against homosexuality. School authorities commanded the students to turn the T-shirts inside out or remove them.

School Officials Prohibit Advertisements for Christian Student Club

http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2014-04-11/news/os-christian-club-lawsuit-florida-school-20140411_1_school-leaders-liberty-counsel-2013-2014-school-year
http://www.dailycommercial.com/news/article_354cf7da-67d8-57af-ac8b-d219e920d63a.html

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) club at Mount Dora High School in Mt. Dora, Florida, was prohibited from posting announcements or promotions for the club through forums such as the school's billboards, public address system, and website, even though other student clubs were allowed to advertise on those same forums. With the help of a religious liberties group, the Mount Dora FCA filed a lawsuit against the school for its unconstitutional discrimination, and the school agreed to grant the FCA equal access.

Transgender Student Files Complaint Against Christian College for Refusing Request to Live in Male Dormitory

<http://www.kgw.com/news/Transgender-George-Fox-student-told-he-cant-live-in-male-dorms--253942041.html>

Jayce, a sophomore student at George Fox University in Newberg, Oregon,

decided to undergo a female-to-male sex transition and consequently requested to live with other male students in male housing. When the Christian university denied her request due to its religious beliefs, Jacye filed a formal complaint against the university, alleging sex and gender discrimination in violation of Title IX. The university refused to abandon its religious beliefs.

Parent Complains About Invitations to Easter Egg Hunt

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/muslim-parents-upset-over-eggstravaganza-easter-egg-hunt-invite-children-got-at-school-117429/>

After receiving permission from several local public schools, Cherry Hill Presbyterian Church in Dearborn, Michigan, sent flyers home with children that advertised the church's Easter egg hunt. When Majed Moughni, a Muslim attorney and the father of two public school students, saw the invitations, he complained of a "serious violation of church and state."

Elementary Student Commanded to Stop Praying Over Her Lunch

<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/florida-girl-claims-stopped-praying-lunch-article-1.1742858>

http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2014/04/outrage-school-stops-5-year-olds_4798.html

Five-year-old kindergarten student Gabriella Perez bowed her head and prayed before she ate during every lunch period at Carillon Elementary in Oviedo, Florida. However, a lunch supervisor told Gabriella that she was not allowed to pray and that praying was not good. Liberty Institute sent a letter to the school explaining Gabriella's constitutionally protected right to pray, but the family decided to take Gabriella out of the hostile environment to homeschool her instead.

After-School Program Supervisor Tries to Take Bible Away from Student

<https://www.aclu.org/religion-belief/aclu-tn-protects-students-right-read-bible-school>

A supervisor for Canon County's REACH after-school program told an elementary student that he could read any book but the Bible in their program. When the student refused to stop reading his Bible, the supervisor attempted to take the Bible away from him. The ACLU of Tennessee sent a letter to REACH explaining the student's constitutional right to read his Bible.

School Confiscates Religious Valentine's Day Cards

<http://www.adfmedia.org/News/PRDetail/8987>

At Floyd R. Shafer Elementary School's celebration of "Friendship Day" (aka Valentine's Day), a first-grade student brought cards that recognized St.



Valentine's historical influence on the holiday and included John 3:16. When Principal William Mudlock saw the cards, he told the parents that it could be offensive to others and ordered them to be removed. A religious liberties group stepped in and filed a lawsuit on the student's behalf against the school for its discrimination.

Student Denied College Admission Due to Religious Beliefs

<http://aclj.org/school-prayer/aclj-files-lawsuit-on-behalf-of-student-denied-college-admission-because-of-his-faith>

Brandon Jenkins applied for the Community College of Baltimore County's (CCBC) Radiation Therapy Program with competitive credentials and having scored the maximum number of points allowed during the observation portion of the application process. However, when asked what was most important to him during the interview portion, Jenkins stated that the most important thing was God. As a result, the school denied his admission to the program, with Program Director Adrienne Dougherty stating, "I understand that religion is a major part of your life and that was evident in your recommendation letters, however, this field is not the place for religion. We have many patients who come to us for treatment from many different religions and some who believe in nothing at all. If you interview in the future, you may want to leave your thoughts and beliefs out of the interview process." Jenkins contacted a religious liberties organization, who filed a lawsuit on Jenkins's behalf for the discriminatory treatment.

Professor Faces Job Discrimination After Becoming a Christian

<http://www.wnd.com/2014/03/university-stung-by-jury-verdict-in-retaliation-case/>

<http://www.charismanews.com/us/44262-710-000-the-cost-of-discriminating-against-a-christian-professor>

The University of North Carolina-Wilmington denied a professor a promotion because he became a Christian. Professor Mike Adams was an atheist when he was hired to teach at the university in 1993. The university celebrated Adams for his atheist viewpoints. However, Adams became a Christian in 2000. Since 2000, Adams has written nationally syndicated articles with a Christian viewpoint. Adams earned multiple awards from the university, received excellent reviews from students, and published the greatest number of articles among his colleagues. Nonetheless, the university denied Adams his promotion and told Adams that he was subject to investigation. In June, Adams was awarded \$710,000 in damages for the university's discriminatory treatment.

Elementary Students Chastised for Distributing Coins with Religious Message

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/calif-teachers-reprimand-students-bible-verse-coins-legal-group-demands-apology-116613/>

Two students from Desert Knolls Elementary School in California were chastised for distributing religious coins during recess and other noninstructional times. The coins contained the verse John 3:16 and the question, “Where will you spend eternity?” A teacher told the two students that she hated the coins. One student’s coins were confiscated. A religious law firm demanded that the school apologize for how the teachers treated the boys and for violating their religious rights.

Bowdoin College Disfellowships Bowdoin Christian Fellowship

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/10/us/colleges-and-evangelicals-collide-on-bias-policy.html?emc=edit_th_20140610&nl=todaysheadlines&nid=59743270&r=1

<http://www.patheos.com/blogs/thoughtlife/2014/03/vanderbilt-part-two-religious-liberty-is-imperiled-at-bowdoin-college/>

<http://spectator.org/articles/57996/god-and-sexuality-bowdoin>

<http://bowdoinorient.com/article/9029>

School officials at Bowdoin College accused the Bowdoin Christian Fellowship of discrimination in the selection of leaders for the organization. The Christian group requires that group leaders not engage in homosexual conduct. Dean of Students Tim Foster told on-campus organizations that not allowing LGBTQ students to participate or hold a leadership position in an organization is considered discrimination. Bowdoin College drafted an agreement stating that Bowdoin Christian Fellowship could not discriminate against LGBTQ students when assigning leadership positions. The two ministers who led the group refused to sign the agreement and subsequently resigned from the organization. Bowdoin is in the process of discontinuing Bowdoin Christian Fellowship’s association with the school.

FFRF Complains About Access to Florida Schools

<https://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/20227-ffrf-blasts-governmental-ties-with-church>

Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to two Florida School districts complaining that the high schools are engaging in religious activity. FFRF and the Central Florida Freethought Community claimed that the high schools in both districts discriminated against atheists who wanted to distribute freethinking materials to students. Both atheist groups claim that the schools



allowed prayer sessions for athletes, clothes with bible verses, and weekly religious services at Apopka High School.

Philadelphia School Disciplines Security Officer for Following Religious Dress Requirements

<http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/03/06/philadelphia-schools-beards-bias/6111505/>

<http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2014/March/14-crt-235.html>

The U.S. Department of Justice filed a lawsuit on behalf of school security officer Siddiq Abu-Bakr against a Philadelphia school district. Siddiq and similar individuals suffered religious discrimination when the district instituted a dress code that prohibited police officers and security officers from having beards longer than one-quarter inch. Siddiq notified his supervisor that he could not follow the new dress code because it interfered with his Islamic beliefs. As a result, Siddiq received a written reprimand for violating the policy.

Coach Fired Because of His Religious Obligations

<http://www.northjersey.com/news/former-teaneck-hs-rowing-coach-may-sue-over-dismissal-1.659267>

Pastor Clemens Reinke was also the high school rowing coach of Teaneck High School. Reinke was fired because he could not attend Sunday matches on account of his pastoral obligations. Following his termination, parents of the rowing team filed complaints against the school board for improper termination, and Pastor Reinke threatened to file his own lawsuit against the school district.

Coach Told to Stop Praying and Stop Sharing His Faith

<http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/n-high-school-football-coach-caught-baptizing-players-article-1.1601977>

Mooresville High School Coach Hal Capps was prohibited from sharing his faith with students after Freedom From Religion Foundation discovered a Twitter video in which Capps attended the baptism of several students. School administrators told Capps he could no longer instigate team prayers. Throughout the controversy, precipitated by a demand letter from FFRF, players expressed their support for their coach and their determination to continue team prayer.

Public School Students Told Not to Participate in Charity Work

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2014-02-minnesota-public-school-told-to-end-field-trips-to-c>

Public school students in New Hope, Minnesota, assembled nutritional meals

for impoverished children overseas. The students worked with a religious charitable organization, Feed My Starving Children. Upon learning of this arrangement, the American Humanists Association sent a threatening letter to school officials, demanding that the district stop participating with the charitable program.

Purdue University Rejects Donor's Plaque Because It Referenced God

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2014/02/purdue-university-rejects-reference-to.html>

When Purdue University asked Dr. McCracken to supply the language to dedicate a conference room on a plaque, he chose an inscription to honor his parents, "To those who seek to better the world through the understanding of God's physical laws and innovation of practical solutions." Purdue refused his use of "God's physical laws" out of a concern that it would be seen as an endorsement of religion. After Liberty Institute intervened and legal action was threatened, Purdue University allowed McCracken to use his language on his plaque.

Nativity Scene in Fertile, Minnesota, Challenged by Freedom From Religion Foundation

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20286-ffrf-prevents-nativity-scene-from-returning-to-school-cafeteria-february-28-2014>

Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a letter to the Board of Education in Fertile, Minnesota, complaining about a Nativity scene in a school cafeteria. After receiving the demand letter, the district temporarily removed the display and then put it back after a school board vote. The district's attorney decided that, in the future, the Nativity scene will not be displayed without other holiday décor.

Atheist Group Demands Religious Poster Torn Down in Classroom

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20178-religious-poster-becomes-picture-thing-of-the-past-february-21-2014>

Freedom From Religion Foundation demanded that a poster with a religious message be removed from Bernard Campbell Middle School in Lee's Summit, Missouri. The district ensured that the poster, which quoted Scripture, was taken down.

Iowa State University Remove Bibles From Campus Hotels

<http://www.adfmedia.org/files/IowaStateUniversityLetter.pdf>

After receiving a threatening demand letter from Freedom From Religion Foundation, Iowa State University pulled all Bibles from guest rooms on



campus. FFRF claimed that the presences of these Bibles constituted a violation of the Establishment Clause.

Pro-Life Group Restricted by School District

<http://www.thenewstribune.com/2014/02/19/3057104/wilson-high-student-claims-school.html>

Student leaders in the Wilson Students for Life club contend that its group is not receiving fair treatment by school administrators. It has not been allowed to host a day of silence or a candlelight vigil. Furthermore, while the club has displayed some posters, still others have been prohibited because of their strong pro-life message. Wilson Students for Life argue that its message cannot be censored just because it is controversial.

Teacher Attacked for Showing Parts of Creationism Videos

<http://www.elkharttruth.com/news/schools/2014/02/19/Concord-High-biology-teacher-accused-of-teaching-creationism.html>

High school biology teacher Ryan Culp presented multiple origin theories, including creationism, which he presented through video clips. When the Freedom From Religion Foundation learned of Culp's presentation, FFRF sent a threatening demand letter to Concord Community Schools Superintendent Wayne Stubbs asserting that it is illegal even to present the creationist point of view in public schools.

Group Demands Historic School Tear Down Cross From Top

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2014/02/12/group-wants-kansas-school-to-remove-cross-from-top-building/>

Americans United for Separation of Church and State sent a threatening letter to school administrators in Kansas, demanding a cross be removed from the top of Spearville Elementary School. Built in 1925 as a Catholic school, the building was transferred to the local public school district in 1975.

Humanist Group Objects to Pledge of Allegiance

http://americanhumanist.org/system/storage/2/06/d/5023/Matawan-Aberdeen_Regional_School_District_Letter.pdf

The American Humanist Association (AHA) sent a demand letter to Matawan-Aberdeen Regional School District in Aberdeen, New Jersey, to stop the daily practice of reciting the American Pledge of Allegiance. Objecting to the phrase "Under God" in the pledge, AHA alleged that this daily practice of recitation constitutes a violation of the New Jersey Constitution. If AHA's demands are not met, it threatened litigation.

School Secretary Not Allowed to Assist After-School Christian Club in Any Way

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20182-good-news-club-permission-slips-no-longer-handled-by-teacher-january-28-2014>

After receiving a demand letter from Freedom From Religion Foundation, the Seminole County School Board decided that an elementary school secretary would not be permitted to even collect permission slips for an after-school club because the club included Christian content.

School Bans Religious Group from Advertising in School Flyer

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20184-%E2%80%9CAll-pro-dad%E2%80%9D-meetings-no-longer-advertised-in-public-school-flyer-january-28-2014>

“All Pro Dad” is a fatherhood program that uses a football theme to advocate for the importance of fatherhood. Following a letter from the Freedom From Religion Foundation, White Bluffs Elementary School has banned “All Pro Dad” from advertising in its all-school flyer because “All Pro Dad” programming includes religious content.

Atheist Group Demand Removal of Religious Symbols in Classroom

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20183-ffrf-remove-religious-symbols-in-elementary-classroom-january-14-2014>

Decorations in an elementary school classroom in Giles County, Tennessee, included religious images. After Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent a demand letter to Giles County Superintendent, school administrators forced all teachers to remove religious symbols from their classrooms.

Teacher Forced to Remove Religious Poster in Her Classroom

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20181-illegal-poster-removed-from-texas-classroom-january-9-2014>

Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) sent a letter to Rusk Independent School District in Texas, demanding a high school teacher remove a poster from her classroom that included a Bible verse. The school district acquiesced to FFRF’s demands, and the teacher was forced to remove the poster.

Atheist Group Attacks Christmas Sign Outside of School

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19881-ffrf-takes-down-religious-sign-at-west-virginia-school-january-3-2014>

During Christmas season, the marquee for Buffalo Elementary included the message, “Wise Men Still Seek Him.” Sending a demand letter, Freedom From



Religion Foundation (FFRF) successfully intimidated the school district's superintendent into removing the holiday message.

Ex-Employee Sues Catholic School Because of its Religiously Informed Employment Policies

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2014/01/29/dorchester-man-files-discrimination-against-catholic-school-says-lost-job-because-was-gay-married/OKswVITMsOrruEbhsOsOeN/story.html>

Fontbonne Academy, a Roman Catholic girls' prep school, hired Matthew Barrett as the food services director. When the school learned that Mr. Barrett was married to another man, it rescinded its offer of employment. Sponsored by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston, this school affirms the Catholic church's teaching on sexuality and marriage. Still, Barrett, represented by GLAD counsel, filed a formal complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination in an attempt to coerce the school to violate its employment policies as a religious school.

FFRF Condemns Church's Invitation to Christmas Activities

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19879-ffrf-ends-religious-advertising-in-ohio-elementary-school-december-23-2013>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) received word that South Bloomfield Elementary School in Ashville, Ohio, permitted the distribution of invitations to a local church's Christmas event, it wrote a letter of complaint to the superintendent. The superintendent told the FFRF that he would review the district's distribution policy.

Christian School Pressured Out of Voucher Program Because of Religious Beliefs

<https://www.au.org/blogs/wall-of-separation/equal-education-nc-christian-school-rejects-vouchers-after-discrimination>

Myrtle Grove Christian School in Wilmington, North Carolina, had been approved to receive funds through the state's "Opportunity Scholarship" program. However, when gay activists discovered that the school refused to enroll LGBT students due to its religious beliefs, they vehemently protested the school's approval. The school succumbed to the pressure and voluntarily withdrew from the scholarship program.

Coaches Told to Cease Involvement in Prayers

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19944-coaches-reigned-in-on-prayer-at-nc-high-school-december-20-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to the superintendent

for South Central High School in Winterville, North Carolina, requesting a reminder to all coaches not to associate themselves with any prayers. The district's attorney confirmed its compliance.

School Choir Told “No Christmas Carols”

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/12/anderson-high-school-choir-members.html>

For several years, members of the Anderson High School Choir in Austin, Texas, sang Christmas carols and other seasonal music at private homes. However, an attorney for the district advised against the Christmas carols because of a misconception that including religious songs would be an Establishment Clause violation. Accordingly, Austin I.S.D. administrators discouraged members of the Anderson High School Choir from singing any Christmas carols. Liberty Institute responded by sending a letter that assured administrators of the constitutionality of students' engaging in private speech through singing religious songs.

School Attempts to Block Christian Student Club

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/12/long-island-school-says-christian-clubs.html>

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2014/05/under-new-threat-clients-religious-club.html>

When John Raney, a student at Ward Melville High School in Setauket, New York, applied to form a Christian club, school administrators simply ignored his application for more than two months. Only when Raney's mother asked the principal about her son's application did the student learn why his club had been denied. Religious clubs, according to school administrators, are illegal in New York public schools. John then contacted Liberty Institute, who sent the school officials a letter warning them of the risk of legal action. The school district reversed their decision within seven hours of receiving the demand letter, and the club currently makes a positive impact in the community by fighting a growing problem of teen drug use and suicide.

Christian Group Reprimanded for Mentioning God During School Event

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19872-ffrf-halts-proselytizing-group%E2%80%99s-access-to-families-at-public-school-december-19-2013>

Points of Light (PoL), a Christian service organization, hosted a barbecue at a “Back to School Night” alongside other school activities at Frick Middle School in Oakland, California. However, when the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard that PoL had mentioned God during the event, it sent a

letter to Oakland Unified School District Superintendent Gary Yee complaining about PoL's activity. Consequently, the school district rebuked PoL for its statements and informed them that they could not promote Christianity while on campus.

Atheist Group Scares School Away from Holding Graduation Ceremony at Local Church

<http://www.cantonrep.com/article/20131218/NEWS/131219242>

<http://www.cantonrep.com/article/20140601/News/140609985>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation found out that Hoover High School held graduation ceremonies at a local church auditorium, it sent a demand letter that claimed such a practice violated the Constitution by forcing people into a church, and instructed the school to find a new location. The students started a petition to keep the graduation at the church, but school officials decided to move the ceremony to a local civic center instead.

Atheist Group Bullies School Superintendent into Removing Personal Nativity Scene

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19877-ffrf-takes-down-nativity-scene-at-ohio-school-district-december-18-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to Judith Robinson, superintendent of Green Local Schools in Ohio, demanding that she remove the Nativity scene displayed in her office window. Robinson immediately complied.

Elementary Student Instructed to Remove Religion from Award-Winning Speech

<http://tampa.cbslocal.com/2013/12/16/controversy-over-5th-graders-religion-speech/>

After fifth-grade student Zachary Golob-Drake won an award for a speech about the history of using religion to justify murder, he was scheduled to present the speech to the fourth and fifth grade classes of his own school. However, the assistant principal stripped him of his award and told him that he had to rewrite the speech, remove the religious references, or not compete. Following a long conversation with Golob-Drake's mother, his award was returned, and permission slips detailing the speech were given to the other parents to decide whether to let their children attend.

Band Director Prohibited from Any Affiliation with Student Prayers

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19943-band-director-no-longer-directing-prayer-at-sc-high-school-december-12-2013>

The band director at a high school in Rock Hill School District Three in Rock Hill, South Carolina, gave a signal to his students to begin performances, which started with prayer. The Freedom From Religion Foundation frowned on this action and labeled it a constitutional violation in a letter to the school district. The school's legal counsel informed the FFRF that the band director was instructed to cease signaling the start because of its association with the opening prayer.

School Forbids Flyers with Bible Verses

<http://www.adfmedia.org/News/PRDetail/8691>

When a seventh-grade student at Robert E. Clark Middle School in Kansas City, Kansas, posted flyers promoting a "See You at the Pole" event, a school counselor told the student that the fliers were illegal due to a district-wide policy that banned the distribution of religious materials. The school then removed and destroyed the flyers. A religious liberties group stepped in to defend the student's constitutional religious freedoms. The school removed the ban on distributing religious materials, and the lawsuit was dropped.

School Administrators Hide Christmas Cards and Suppress Teachers' Religious Freedoms

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/12/in-school-in-troubling-case-of-blatant.html>

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/12/liberty-institute-restores-religious.html>

Brooklet Elementary School in Brooklet, Georgia, had a long tradition of displaying Christmas cards on the hallways of the school. Mysteriously, the cards disappeared after Thanksgiving break when administrators reportedly ordered their relocation away from the students' view, which came after a demand from Americans United for Separation of Church and State. School officials insisted they were merely following the law. However, reports surfaced that teachers were ordered to walk away from student-led prayer and remove Bible verses or religious sayings from their email signatures. Following an intervention by Liberty Institute, the Bulloch County Board of Education issued a notice supporting religious liberty, but persisted in its disallowance of religion in email signatures.

ACLU Threatens School for Playing Christmas Carols

<http://www.charismanews.com/us/41862-sc-school-bans-religious-christmas-carols-even-without-mention-of-christ>

York Preparatory Academy, a public charter school in South Carolina, decided to prohibit students from playing “Joy to the World” and “O Come, All Ye Faithful” after receiving a mass letter from the ACLU threatening legal action against any school that allowed Christmas carols in school productions. After protest from students and parents, the school contacted a religious liberties group, who rebutted the ACLU’s misleading demand letter. After being properly informed, the school decided to include the songs in its holiday concert and removed the ban.

Catholic School Derided for Adhering to Religious Beliefs

<http://bigstory.ap.org/article/catholic-school-fires-gay-teacher-drawing-protest>

When a teacher at Holy Ghost Preparatory School told administrators that he was going to obtain a marriage license with his same-sex partner, the school released him from employment in accordance with its religious beliefs about homosexual conduct. Consequently, the public lashed out at the school on social media, and several alumni announced the discontinuation of their financial support.

Antireligion Group Ends Prayers at Department Thanksgiving Celebration

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19728-ffrf-ends-prayers-during-employee-meetings-at-north-carolina-education-lottery-december-6-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation heard that a department within the North Carolina Education Lottery (NCEL) prayed before their annual Thanksgiving celebration and sent a letter condemning the practice. The NCEL responded by eliminating all prayers and religious activities at employee functions.

School Commanded to Eliminate Creationism from Gym Class

<https://www.aclu.org/religion-belief/aclu-ohio-warns-public-school-against-allowing-local-clergy-teach-creationism-gym>

The Lebanon School District in Lebanon, Ohio, allowed gym classes to be led by an organization called “His Pins,” a program headed by local clergy who teach creationism alongside archery. The ACLU of Ohio opposed the class due to its religious content and demanded that the school cancel the program.

School Choirs Participate in Christmas Concert Despite Atheist Groups' Complaint

<http://seattle.cbslocal.com/2013/12/05/aclu-protests-high-school-choirs-singing-in-church-concert/>

School choirs from Kalispell High School and Whitefish High School in Kalispell, Montana, accepted an invitation to contribute in the “Peace on Earth Community Christmas Celebration,” a Christmas concert held at a local Mormon church. The ACLU and the FFRF immediately protested, claiming that such involvement violated the Establishment Clause. The schools chose to participate anyway.

FFRF Tells School to Quit Praying Before Meetings

<http://www.presselegram.com/social-affairs/20131203/national-group-asks-bellflower-unified-school-board-to-stop-prayers-at-meetings>

Bellflower Unified School District in Los Angeles, California, has a tradition of opening school board meetings with prayer. The Freedom From Religion Foundation heard about the practice and sent a demand letter commanding its cessation. The district refused to comment or acknowledge the letter.

School Faculty Told to Quit Praying

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19755-faculty-barred-from-religious-extracurricular-at-new-york-school-december-3-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to Greer Rychcik, the superintendent of Hyde Park School District in New York, requesting her to tell all faculty members to stop all participation in student prayer groups. Rychcik agreed to send along a reminder to remain neutral towards religion.

Antireligion Group Condemns Religious Youth Motivational Speaker

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/19286-ffrf-probes-sexist-texas-school-speaker>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard that a popular religious motivational speaker was scheduled to present at several high schools in Texas, it launched an investigation to uncover anything that would facilitate an argument for keeping him out of the schools.

Elementary Student Ordered to Remove God from Poem

<http://radio.foxnews.com/toddstarnes/top-stories/school-orders-child-to-remove-god-from-poem.html>

A first grade girl at West Marion Elementary School in North Carolina wrote a poem to read at a school assembly for Veteran’s Day that honored her two Vietnam War veteran grandfathers. However, when school officials discov-

ered that the poem contained references to God, they ordered the child to remove the references.

University Removes Bibles from Guest Rooms

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19941-ffrf-ousts-bibles-from-university-of-wisconsin-extension-lodging-december-1-2013>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation discovered that the University of Wisconsin-Extension kept a Gideon Bible in each of the guest rooms in its conference center, it sent a letter demanding the removal of the Bibles. The university caved and confirmed that the Bibles would be promptly removed.

FFRF Condemns Christian Football Coach's Mentoring

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/15113-ffrf-claims-victory-in-ridgeland-school-coach-complaint>

Mark Mariakis, head football coach at Ridgeland High School, drove his football players to pregame meals served at a local church, encouraged attendance at a summer Christian football camp, and permitted the team's adoption of a chaplain. The Freedom From Religion Foundation heard about Coach Mariakis's actions and demanded that the school district superintendent halt his involvement. The superintendent responded by confirming the discontinuation of the team chaplain and any involvement in religious activities, but refused to stop serving pregame meals at the church.

West Virginia University Professor Reprimanded for Pro-Life Involvement

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/11/west-virginia-university-school-of.html>

Dr. Byron C. Calhoun, M.D., a West Virginia University School of Medicine Professor and Vice Chairman of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the West Virginia University Hospital's Charleston Division, volunteered his personal time to act as a national medical advisor for the National Institute of Family and Life Advocates, a pro-life advocacy group, due to his religious convictions on the sanctity of life. After Dr. Calhoun's involvement received media attention, the university threatened him with a written, professional reprimand. However, under the threat of legal action by Liberty Institute, the university backed off and claimed it never officially filed the reprimand against Dr. Calhoun despite having provided him with a copy.

Atheist Organization Axes Graduation Ceremony Held in Local Church

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/20180-ffrf-ends-graduations-in-church-november-21-2014>

The Lewis Center for Educational Research Academy for Academic Excellence, a small charter school in Apple Valley, California, held its graduation

ceremonies in a local church. The Freedom From Religion Foundation learned of the school's practice and ordered the school to cease holding the ceremonies in any sanctuaries, stating that the practice unconstitutionally forced individuals into church. The school informed the FFRF that the graduation ceremonies would be moved into their newly built gymnasium in the future.

Student Forced to Choose Between God and Graduation

<http://www.redstate.com/diary/goppolitx/2013/11/20/cuba-new-mexico-high-school-student-forced-to-choose-between-graduation-and-god/>

Liberty Thompson, a devout Seventh-day Adventist and a senior at Cuba High School in Cuba, New Mexico, was on track to be the valedictorian of her class and have enough college credits to graduate high school with an associate degree. However, Thompson found out that the school changed the day of graduation from Friday to Saturday, which is Thompson's Sabbath day. Thompson and her father attempted to appeal the change to the Cuba Independent Schools' school board, but the board refused to let either speak about the issue at all and threatened to arrest Thompson's father or ban him from campus. When the story went public, the board agreed to at least hear the appeal, but insisted that no changes would be forthcoming.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Purges Meal Blessings at School Meetings

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19551-no-more-blessings-at-mandatory-employee-meetings-in-south-carolina-school-district-november-19-2013>

Berkeley County School District served lunch at its annual in-service meetings for transportation employees, and a worker said a prayer over the food. The FFRF heard about the prayer and wrote a demand letter condemning the action. The school district consequently agreed to discontinue any prayers in the future.

Humanist Group Bullies Small Schools into Cancelling Annual Christmas Toy Drive

<http://townhall.com/columnists/toddstarnes/2013/11/18/school-cancels-christmas-toy-drive-after-humanists-threaten-to-sue-n1748653/page/full>

<http://www.9news.com/news/article/365198/188/School-drops-Operation-Christmas-Child-after-lawsuit-threat>

East Point Academy and SkyView Academy, small charter schools in South Carolina and Colorado, regularly participated in Operation Christmas Child, an annual toy drive for underprivileged children that is sponsored by Samari-

tan's Purse, an international Christian relief and evangelist organization. Even though the schools' involvement was completely voluntary and nonreligious, the American Humanist Association (AHA) threatened the schools with a lawsuit. Rather than risk a legal battle with the superiorly funded AHA, both principals had no choice but to cancel the program instead of fighting an AHA lawsuit.

College Campus Bus Driver Forced to Resign for Praying

http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2013/11/rutgers_students_rally_for_beloved_bus_driver_who_says_he_lost_his_job_for_praying.html

Stan McNeil, a beloved bus driver for a company contracted by Rutgers University, prayed for a woman in a wheelchair before she rode on the bus. The interaction was captured on video; and, upon seeing the recording, the bus company told McNeil to resign. When students took to social media to call for McNeil's reinstatement, the bus company claimed that McNeil's resignation stemmed from a failure to use the required number of straps to secure the disabled student's wheelchair.

School Pressured into Removing Jesus Painting

<http://www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2013/11/15/Muskingum-County-Jesus-painting-removed.html>

A student at John Glenn High School in New Concord, Ohio, complained about a "Good Shepherd" painting of Jesus located in the school's office. The ACLU also threatened the school district with a lawsuit unless they removed the picture. The school district caved beneath the threats and ordered that the painting be moved to a local church.

Arizona School Axes School Board Meeting Opening Prayers

<http://www.azcentral.com/community/mesa/articles/20131112mesa-school-board-ends-opening-prayer-custom.html>

The Mesa Public Schools governing board decided to end all opening prayers before public meetings after the board's legal counsel advised them that they would lose imminent lawsuits if the practice continued.

Florida School Districts Adopt Discriminatory Textbook

<http://www.wftv.com/news/news/local/hundreds-prepare-protest-against-islam-chapter-vol/nbhJt/>

Along with several other Florida school districts, Volusia County School District adopted a world history textbook that dedicates a large portion of its teaching to Islam, while excluding other religions.

School Bus Driver Fired for Praying with Students

<http://www.startribune.com/local/south/230757861.html?page=all&prepage=1&c=y#continue>

George Nathaniel, a pastor in Richfield, Minnesota, also drove school buses for a company contracted by a local school district. During the bus rides, Nathaniel led prayers with and for the students. Complaints began to surface from the school district, and the bus company commanded Nathaniel to quit praying. However, Nathaniel continued his prayers, and the bus company consequently terminated his employment.

Humanist Group Tries to Stop Teacher from Attending Club Meetings

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2013-11-humanists-file-suit-over-weekly-prayers-in-missouri>

<http://www1.komu.com/news/student-in-prayer-suit-against-fayette-district-speaks-out/>

The Fellowship of Christian Students Club (FCSC) was permitted to hold weekly prayer meetings in a teacher's classroom before classes began at Fayette High School in Missouri. The teacher often sat in on the meetings, much to the consternation of the American Humanist Association (AHA). The AHA filed a lawsuit claiming that the teacher's indirect involvement in the FCSC's meetings constituted a reckless disregard of other students' constitutional rights. Additionally, the AHA complained about a Bible that the teacher had on her desk. The school district stated that it "will vigorously defend against any claim that the District has taken actions which violate any person's First Amendment rights."

Atheist Group Condemns Student-Led Prayers at School Pep Rally

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19734-rallies-at-oklahoma-high-school-will-include-pep-but-no-prayer-november-4-2013>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard that faculty members at Alva High School in Alva, Oklahoma, allowed student-led prayer circles at school pep rallies, it wrote a demand letter that denounced the practice. In response, Superintendent Steve Parkhurst pointed out that the prayers were voluntary and student-led, but he affirmed that faculty members were reminded not to participate.

School Sued for Allowing Students to Give Their Testimonies

<http://americanhumanist.org/news/details/2013-11-mississippi-high-school-student-victorious-in-lawsuit>

After administrators of Northwest Rankin High School in Flowood, Missis-

ssippi, allowed several students to give their Christian testimonies in front of the student body, the American Humanist Association filed a complaint in federal court alleging that the school violated the First Amendment's Establishment Clause. The U.S. Southern District Court of Mississippi handed down a judgment that required the school to implement a new policy on religious activities at school.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Criticizes Student-Led Bible Reading

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19550-ffrf-ends-prayers-during-morning-announcements-in-alabama-high-school-october-31-2013>

Hokes Bluff High School in Etowah County, Alabama, opened school days with student-led reading of Scripture and announcements over the school's intercom system. The FFRF wrote a demand letter to Superintendent Alan Cosby that condemned the practice and called for its termination.

School Tells Student "No Bibles at School"

<http://aclj.org/free-speech-2/victory-elementary-school-kids-can-bring-bibles-to-school>

A fifth grader in the Los Angeles Unified School District was told by his teacher that he could not read his Bible or bring it to school. The student's mother contacted a religious liberties group for help, and the group showed the school how its policy violated the student's First Amendment rights. The principal reversed the unconstitutional rule and permitted the student to bring his Bible to school and read it outside of class.

Atheist Group Attempts to Intimidate Schools After Their Choirs Sing Hymns

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/19015-public-school-choruses-are-not-church-choirs>

Four public school choirs in south-central Pennsylvania agreed to perform in a musical event held at a local Presbyterian church called the Choral Festival. The FFRF found out that the concert included several religious songs and consequently sent demand letters to all four schools claiming constitutional violations. However, the attorneys for the school district denied any wrongdoing and rebuked the FFRF for their mischaracterization of First Amendment law.

Atheist Group Succeeds in Banning Bibles and Candy Canes from Elementary School

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18957-ffrf-halts-tenn-teacher-bible-distribution-proselytizing>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a demand letter to the Franklin County School District after it found out that teachers in one of the district's elementary schools had handed out Bibles and candy canes with the story of its Christian origin attached. An attorney for the district confirmed that the practices would be halted immediately.

ACLU Mass-Mails Condemnation of Prayer to Hundreds of Schools

<http://wkms.org/post/aclu-tn-advises-schools-game-day-prayers>

<http://blogs.tennessean.com/politics/2013/tenn-gop-urges-school-districts-to-ignore-aclu-letter/>

The ACLU of Tennessee sent a letter to 135 Tennessee public schools that denounced prayer before football games and told school authorities that such an activity is unconstitutional.

School Attacked for Hosting Christian Speaker

http://www.pressherald.com/news/ACLU_asks_Biddeford_schools_to_apologize_for_religious_presentations.html?pagenum=full

After Pastors John and Debbie Phillips' niece was killed in the infamous Columbine High School shooting, they founded Life Choices Ministries (LCM), an organization that makes presentations focused on tolerance and respect. Believing that an LCM event would benefit students, Biddeford Schools Superintendent Jeremy Ray authorized the Phillips to present in Biddeford schools. However, the ACLU of Maine discovered LCM's Christian origins and consequently demanded that the school district apologize for subjecting students to "overtly religious presentations." Ray apologized if anyone was offended, but stood firm on the permissibility of LCM's presentation.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Halts School Lunch Ministry

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/19140-ffrf-halts-proselytizers-at-school-lunches-october-29-2013>

The FFRF wrote a demand letter to school officials at Pedro Menendez High School in St. Augustine, Florida, in order to eliminate local youth pastors' practice of visiting with students during the lunch hour. The school consequently "terminated [the pastors'] standing invitation to visit the school at lunchtime."



Pregame Prayers Condemned by Antireligion Group

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19622-prayers-are-dropped-from-pregame-routine-in-oregon-high-school-october-29-2013>

When a complaint regarding pregame prayers at Aloha High School football games in Oregon reached the Freedom From Religion Foundation, it wrote a letter accusing the school district of violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The school principal eliminated all prayers and faith-based activity before games.

Teachers Ordered to Remove Religious Shirts

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19873-ffrf-stops-teachers-from-wearing-%E2%80%9Cjesus-is-my-hero-shirts%E2%80%9D-october-23-2013>

Teachers at the Butchel Community Learning Center in Akron, Ohio, joined in celebrating school spirit by wearing donated T-shirts that promoted the school's athletic program. However, the Freedom From Religion Foundation complained to the school superintendent that the shirts were inappropriate because they also contained messages such as "God's Got Our Back." The school district confiscated the shirts and returned them to the donor.

School Cuts Invocation Pursuant to Atheists' Demands

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19611-ffrf-prevents-future-prayers-and-discrimination-at-ohio-high-school-october-22-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a demand letter to the superintendent of Western Brown High School in Mt. Orab, Ohio, after hearing that there had been a prayer during the National Honor Society induction ceremony at the school. Superintendent Peggy McKinney denied any wrongdoing, but ultimately agreed to drop all invocations from future ceremonies.

School Refuses to Allow Prayer by Military Chaplain During Veterans Day Ceremony

<http://www.poonorecord.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20131021/NEWS90/310210319>

American Legion Post 311 regularly participated in Wallenpaupack Area High School's Veterans Day ceremony. Every year, Post 311 led the ceremony, which included an opening prayer from the group's chaplain. However, District Superintendent Michael Silsby informed Post 311 Commander William Kemmett that a prayer would not be allowed this year after the district received a complaint from the Freedom From Religious Foundation about prayer in schools. Post 311 decided to take a stand for their religious beliefs and withdrew from the ceremony.

Atheist Group Bullies School into Banning Christmas Carols

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19741-religious-teachings-will-be-prohibited-during-music-classes-at-michigan-elementary-school-oct-16-2013>

Every year, students at Emmons Lake Elementary School in Caledonia, Michigan, put on a holiday concert at Christmas. When the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard from a third party complainant that some of the songs contained traditional Christian themes, they immediately contacted Superintendent Randy Rodriguez to object. The school district assured the FFRF that they would address the situation, and the original complainant confirmed that the traditional carols had been barred.

Wisconsin High School Attempts to Suspend School Choir's Christmas Concerts

<http://www.wausaudailyherald.com/article/20131031/WDH01/310310273/West-choir-director-says-he-directed-suspend-Master-Singers>

<http://dailycaller.com/2013/10/14/wausau-school-superintendent-backs-down-in-confused-war-on-christmas/>

Wausau West High School has an elite choir group called the Master Singers that performs at the school's winter concert and in other venues. School authorities informed Choral Programs Director Phil Buch that the choir must either sing five secular songs for each religious song in their performances or sing no religious music at all. Consequently, Buch decided to disband the group. The community rose up in protest against the school's restrictions on the choir, causing the school to retract its position and allow the Master Singers to resume their scheduled performances as originally planned.

School Tells Student That Writing About God Is Not Allowed

<http://radio.foxnews.com/toddstarnes/top-stories/school-tells-child-she-cant-write-about-god.html>

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/10/10-year-old-shelby-county-school.html#more>

When Erin Shead, a ten-year-old student at Lucy Elementary School in Millington, Tennessee, was given an assignment to write about someone she idolized, she decided to write about God. However, after turning in her paper, Shead's teacher told her that she could not write about God, but instead approved Shead's second choice: Michael Jackson. Additionally, the teacher told Shead that she had to take her paper about God home because it could not remain on school property. Liberty Institute stepped in to inform the school district of Shead's constitutional freedom to talk about God in school. The

school authorities consequently allowed Shead to turn in her original paper, which was awarded an A.

Football Coach Instructed to Not Participate in Prayer

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19876-ffrf-helps-end-coach-led-prayer-october-15-2013>

Football players at West Linn High School in Tualatin, Oregon, consistently circled together for prayer at their football games. Assistant Coach Art Williams regularly joined the players in their practice until the Freedom From Religion Foundation took action. The FFRF wrote a demand letter to Superintendent William Rhodes calling for the immediate termination of Coach Williams's prayers. The school district adhered to the FFRF's directive and ordered Coach Williams to abstain from joining the players in their prayers.

Teacher Ordered to Remove Pledge of Allegiance Poster Because of Its Reference to God

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19135-teacher-freedom-%E2%80%98comes-from-god%E2%80%99>

A social studies teacher at Big Rapids High School in Michigan displayed a poster that included the message that "our freedom ultimately comes from God" alongside the Pledge of Allegiance. The Freedom From Religion Foundation complained to Superintendent Tim Haist about the reference to God, and the teacher was ordered to remove the poster.

Antireligion Organization Shuts Down "See You at the Pole" Event

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/19293-ffrf-ceases-see-you-at-the-pole-event-october-14-2013>

The principal and a teacher at Columbian High School in Tiffin, Ohio, helped organize the "See You at the Pole" event at their school. The Freedom From Religion Foundation immediately complained to Don Coletta, the district superintendent, about the school authorities' involvement. Coletta buckled under the FFRF's pressure and promised to prohibit such conduct in the future.

High School Football Coach Commanded to Cease Prayers

<http://www.tampabay.com/blogs/gradebook/atheist-group-calls-on-pasco-school-district-to-end-football-coach-led/2147304>

Zephyrhills High School football coach Reggie Roberts regularly led his players in prayer with the support of his team. When Superintendent Kurt Browning found out, he sent a memo to the entire school district ordering all coaches to abstain from engaging in prayer in their official capacities. The Freedom

From Religion Foundation also followed up after hearing about Roberts's prayers, insisting that Browning put a permanent end to such actions.

University Blocks Peaceful Pro-Life Demonstration

<http://www.americanfreedomlawcenter.org/case/center-for-bio-ethical-reform-inc-et-al-v-dennis-r-black-et-al/>

The Center for Bio-Ethical Reform, Inc. (CBR), a California-based pro-life organization, partnered with the State University of New York at Buffalo (SUNY-Buffalo) chapter of Students for Life to bring CBR's Genocide Awareness Project (GAP) to the university campus. CBR's GAP is a traveling exhibit that parallels abortion to other historically recognized genocide events using graphic photomurals that unveil the atrocities of abortion. When CBR requested approval to use a location outside of the university Student Union building, university officials refused to grant permission, even though other groups regularly used the location as a forum for similar activities. After being shown that such discrimination violated the First Amendment, the university reluctantly gave its consent to CBR. However, when CBR put up its display, a mob of SUNY-Buffalo students blocked the exhibit with umbrellas and bed sheets. The university refused to intervene, despite repeated requests from CBR and the mob's explicit violation of university regulations. Consequently, CBR filed a lawsuit against SUNY-Buffalo for its violation of CBR's First Amendment rights. The university settled the lawsuit and changed its policies to protect free speech.

ACLU Demands School Ban Gideons International

<http://www.crossville-chronicle.com/local/x1836125005/BOE-OKs-settlement-with-ACLU>

A teacher from Brown Elementary in Crossville, Tennessee, allowed members of Gideons International to come into the classroom and give Bibles to the students. When word of the distribution reached the ACLU of Tennessee, it wrote a demand letter to the Cumberland County Board of Education. In response, the board agreed to a settlement that banned "Gideons International, or any other organization not solely composed of and led by students" from distributing any religious material during school hours.

Atheist Group Stops After-School Prayer Group

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18835-ffrf-stops-school-sponsored-prayer-group-at-tennessee-elementary-september-24>

Love Fellowship Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee, hosted a group that walked the halls in Hardy Elementary School after hours to pray for the

school. Several school administrators, teachers, and students voluntarily joined the group. The Freedom From Religion Foundation heard about the group and complained about the practice in a demand letter sent to the school district's lawyer. The school responded by disallowing the group to continue its after-school prayers.

Florida School Tells Student that Wearing Cross Necklace Is Against School Policy

<http://aclj.org/school-prayer/victory-school-allows-student-wear-cross-necklace>

When a middle school student in Florida wore a cross necklace to school, the student's teacher informed him that the necklace was not allowed. In response, the student's father contacted a religious liberties group for help. The group provided the father with legal council that enabled him to show the legality of the cross necklace to the school principal, and the school consequently retracted its discriminatory stance.

School Attempts to Prohibit Teacher Participation in "See You at the Pole"

<http://www.pacificjustice.org/1/post/2013/09/pji-attorneys-warn-school-district-not-to-silence-teacher-prayers-before-school.html>

Bakersfield City School District (BCSD) sent a bulletin to all of the principals in its district that claimed that teachers could not participate in "See You at the Pole" events (nationally recognized, annual, student-led gatherings for prayer before school at the schools' flagpoles). Religious liberty attorneys urged the BCSD to retract their statement and noted that "teachers do not lose their rights to act as citizens and exercise their First Amendment freedoms when they are off the clock."

California School Restricts Local Church's Legal Distribution of Materials

<http://aclj.org/school-prayer/victory-school-district-grants-equal-access-religious-speech>

A church in California runs a state-approved after-school program called Release Time Religious and Moral Instruction. However, when the church attempted to distribute informational flyers about the program, a local school district limited the church's distribution while giving other, nonreligious organizations free rein to hand out their materials. The church then reached out to religious liberty attorneys and was able to convince the school district to amend its discriminatory policy and give equal access to religious organizations.

School Considers Eliminating Prayer from Parent Teacher Organization Meetings

<http://www.sewaneemessenger.com/front/index.php?id=1162925891841636726>

The Franklin County School Board and the North Lake Parent Teacher Organization in Tennessee regularly opened their meetings with prayer. Upon discovering this practice, the Freedom From Religion Foundation ordered the Board and the PTO to end such practices. The board then scheduled a special meeting that allowed members of the community to listen in to the discussion about the FFRF's demands. Although the majority of the board supported continuance of the prayers—to the demonstrated approval of the community attendees through a standing ovation—a lone member of the board and the board's legal council advised a mere moment of silence in order to avoid the threat of litigation.

Atheist Group Demands Prohibition of Student-Led Prayer Before Football Games

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2013/sep/06/south-pittsburg-football-prayer-time-challenged/>

South Pittsburg High School in Tennessee allows a student-led pregame prayer and worship service on the football field before all home football games called "Meet Me at the 50." When the Freedom From Religion Foundation received an anonymous complaint about the events, it wrote a demand letter to Marion County Superintendent of Schools Mark Griffith calling the practice unconstitutional. Griffith stated that the school had done nothing wrong and responded by filing suit to discover the complainant's identity.

Atheist Group Condemns Graduation Ceremony Due to Location in Local Church

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18751-ffrf-halts-graduation-ceremony-at-church-september-3-2013>

Hoover High School in North Canton, Ohio, regularly held graduation ceremonies at the nearby Faith Family Church. The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a demand letter to the school superintendent alleging that this obligated students and their families to enter a church and was therefore unconstitutional. Pushed away from the church location through the FFRF's letter, the school began to seek another venue for future graduation ceremonies.



Freedom From Religion Foundation Intimidates School into Excluding Prayer

<http://www.kxii.com/news/headlines/Complaint-stops-prayer-at-Pottsboro-football-games-221725621.html>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation found out that Pottsboro High School opened its football games with a prayer led by a local pastor, they sent a letter to the school superintendent demanding the cessation of the practice. The school bowed to the FFRF's request and exchanged the prayer for a moment of silence.

Atheist Organization Condemns Football Coach's Invitation to Worship Service

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18633-ffrf-protests-church-service-sponsored-by-ark-school-and-coach>

A high school football coach in Bryant, Arkansas, extended an open invitation on Facebook to a preseason worship service at a local church. When the Freedom From Religion Foundation learned of the invitation, they sent a demand letter to the school superintendent calling for the cancelation of the service, condemning it as "trampling" on the Constitution.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Opposes Vouchers for Lower Income Religious Families

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18309-dangerous-wisconsin-voucher-scheme-proceeds>

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18609-where-is-the-%E2%80%98choice%E2%80%99?-catholic-schools-win-big-in-wis-voucher-scheme>

When the Wisconsin legislature proposed a bill to expand private school vouchers for lower income families, the Freedom From Religion Foundation labeled the program as "dangerous" and "appalling" and called for Wisconsin citizens to reject the proposal. The Wisconsin legislature ignored the FFRF and passed the bill, giving disadvantaged religious families the opportunity to choose private education.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Attacks Prayer at High School Graduation

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18685-ffrf-drops-minister-led-high-school-graduation-prayers-august-20-2013>

When a student reported that Wallenpaupack Area High School in Hawley, Pennsylvania, allowed a local minister to lead an invocation and benediction at the school's graduation ceremony, the Freedom From Religion Foundation

protested to the school superintendent that such actions were unconstitutional and called for their elimination. The school confirmed that they would “no longer have religious rituals as part of the commencement ceremony.”

University Dismisses Newly Hired Bishop for Biblical Beliefs

<http://www.theamericanconservative.com/dreher/no-african-christians-apply-dartmouth/>

Dartmouth University hired James Tengatenga, a prominent bishop from the Anglican Church in Malawi, Africa, to run a foundation for spirituality, ethics, and social justice. After Bishop Tengatenga’s appointment, university officials realized that the Anglican Church opposed same-sex “marriage” and that Tengatenga had criticized the Episcopal Church’s election of an openly homosexual bishop. Consequently, the university dismissed the bishop before he began his job.

Atheist Group Pressures School to Remove Ten Commandments Poster

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18836-ffrf-complaint-removes-ten-commandments-poster-from-school-library-august-13-2013>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation heard that the Blytheville High School library in Arkansas had a poster of the Ten Commandments hanging near the library checkout station, they complained that the poster violated the Establishment Clause and demanded its removal. Although the school initially resisted, it eventually took the poster down.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Attacks University’s Faith-Based Dormitory

http://blog.al.com/montgomery/2013/10/bibles_before_beer_in_faith-ba.html
<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18312-ffrf-calls-troy-university-dorms-illegal>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation found out that Troy University allowed a private, nonprofit organization to sponsor a dormitory for students of any religion who want to incorporate faith into their collegiate experience, the FFRF demanded that the plans for the housing facility be discontinued. Liberty Institute stepped in to defend the university from the FFRF’s accusations.

School Authorities Ignore Anti-Semitic Bullying

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/regionals/south/2013/08/10/parents-say-son-was-target-anti-semitic-attacks-carver-middle-high-school/vFIOVCjNHBMIPrLXjiuVJN/story.html>

Parents of a Jewish junior high school student sued Carver school district



in Massachusetts after district officials ignored continued harassment and physical abuse against their son from schoolmates. The harassment included beatings, name-calling, derogatory references to the Holocaust, and a swastika drawn outside of the student's house. This case is ongoing.

University Bans Prayer from Commencement Ceremony

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18563-graduation-prayer-now-a-thing-of-the-past-at-lsu-august-7-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation complained to the president of Louisiana State University A&M that the university's practice of allowing a Catholic priest to open and close graduation ceremonies with prayer violated the Constitution. The university responded by discontinuing the prayers.

University Forbids Intelligent Design Theory in Science Classes

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/08/01/ball-state-intelligent-design_n_3688857.html?utm_hp_ref=college

Jo Ann Gora, president of Ball State University, announced that the university would no longer allow professors to include intelligent design as part of their curriculum due to a complaint from the Freedom From Religion Foundation that such teaching violated the "separation of church and state."

School District Discriminates Against Christianity and Judaism in Curriculum

<http://radio.foxnews.com/toddstarnes/top-stories/school-defends-textbook-calling-muhammad-gods-messenger.html>

Brevard Public School District approved the use of a world history textbook for an advanced placement class that disparages Christianity and Judaism while promoting Islam. Additionally, students are given lessons on the Koran and the five pillars of Islam while all other religions are ignored. After local board members and politicians raised concerns, the issue was placed under review by the school board.

School Attempts to Discriminate Against Christian After-School Club

<http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=1357>

Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) operated a Christian after-school ministry for children called Good News Club at Cranberry Elementary School in Cleveland, Ohio, during the 2011-2012 school year. The following year, the school began charging CEF over sixty-five dollars per hour to use the school facilities, while still allowing other groups, such as the Boy Scouts of America, to use the facilities free of charge. CEF refused to submit to the discriminatory treatment and filed a lawsuit against the school district.

ACLU Attempts to Stop Student-Led Prayer at Football Games

<http://blog.alliancedefendingfreedom.org/2013/07/24/michigan-schools-try-to-silence-prayer/>

The ACLU attempted to shut down prayers after football games in Bloomfield Hills School District in Michigan by alleging that a football coach was leading the prayers. Upon investigation, the school district discovered that the prayers were entirely student led and verbally agreed to allow the practice to continue.

ACLU Attacks the Distribution of Gideon Bibles in Kentucky Schools

<http://blog.alliancedefendingfreedom.org/2013/07/22/blocking-the-bible-in-kentucky/>

The ACLU of Kentucky sent a letter to 174 public school superintendents throughout the state of Kentucky, threatening possible lawsuits in the coming school year if they allow The Gideons International to distribute Bibles to students on campus.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Criticizes School's Graduation Policy

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/07/protecting-students-religious-freedom.html>

The Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation attacked the Lexington-Richland School District 5 in South Carolina because it allows students to make opening and closing remarks at graduation with the freedom to choose their own messages, and the school district prohibits discrimination against students' religious messages. Liberty Institute stepped in to insure that student speakers retain the freedom to choose their own messages at graduation, free from religious discrimination. Furthermore, Liberty Institute attorneys endorsed revamping the school district's policy regarding invocations before board meetings to ensure that the policies are in compliance with South Carolina law and U.S. Supreme Court precedent. The school board gave its initial approval of the policy changes.

Atheist Group Attempts to Intimidate Community Members Into Cancelling Scheduled Prayers for Local School District

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18238-ffrf-takes-on-alabama-school-district-%E2%80%9Cprayer-caravan%E2%80%9D-daily-prayers>

<http://ffrf.org/news/news-releases/item/18268-ffrf-reports-additional-violations-in-cullman-county-ala>

After discovering that school district leaders and community members voluntarily planned on visiting different schools in the local district to pray for



the upcoming school year before classes began, the Freedom From Religion Foundation demanded that the school district superintendent cancel the prayers. The school superintendent refused, and the prayers continued as planned. FFRF then attempted to bully the school district by another route, sending a second demand letter to another school district leader that called for the cancellation of the prayers and the banning of pastors from school grounds and discontinuation of using churches as meeting places for various school functions.

Anti-Religion Group Attacks Minister's Thanksgiving Lunch Prayer

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18386-ffrf-students-can-give-thanks-without-a-god-july-29-2013>

In Mount Vernon, Ohio, Pleasant Street Elementary School celebrated the 2012 Thanksgiving holiday with a special lunch at the school. After hearing that a minister gave a prayer of thanks before the meal, the Freedom From Religion Foundation struck the school with a letter demanding that such prayer never happen again. The Norwalk City School District superintendent complied and confirmed that such prayer would no longer be permitted.

College Student Ordered to Hide Cross Necklace

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/07/university-official-orders-student-to.html>

Audrey Jarvis, a 19-year-old liberal arts major at Sonoma State University, was working at a student orientation fair when her supervisor told her to hide her cross necklace because it “might offend others, it might make incoming students feel unwelcome....” Jarvis, a devout Catholic, was so upset by the incident that she left the student fair. Liberty Institute assisted Ms. Jarvis in seeking a religious accommodation from Sonoma State University, and the university has apologized for the supervisor’s actions, saying that they were “completely wrong.”

School District Pressured into Removing Bible Verse From Principal's Office

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18348-principal%E2%80%99s-office-no-place-for-bible-quotes-says-ffrf-july-19-2013>

In San Bernardino, California, the Riley Elementary School principal had a Bible verse framed in his office. The Freedom From Religion Foundation received word of the Bible verse and immediately complained to the San Bernardino City Unified School District superintendent. The school district responded by removing the Bible verse from the principal’s office.

Elementary School Pressured into Removing Cross From School Office

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18171-ffrf-downs-cross-at-texas-school-july-15-2013>

Upon hearing that Brock Elementary School in Brock, Texas, had a framed cross in one of the school offices, the Freedom From Religion Foundation complained to the school superintendent that this display excluded non-Christians and asked that the school remove cross. The school complied and responded: "The cross was located in the elementary office and removed. Have a BLESSED day!"

Antireligion Groups Blast Mother for Praying for School Safety

<https://www.au.org/blogs/wall-of-separation/safety-check-woman-praying-on-nh-school-steps-without-permission-could-have>

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18170-no-preaching-visitors-allowed-on-new-hampshire-school-property-july-12-2013>

When New Hampshire mother Lizarda Urena heard that bullets had been found at Concord High School where her children attended, she made a habit of visiting the campus at the beginning of the school day to pray for the safety of the faculty, staff, and students. After word of Urena's actions got out, Americans United for Separation of Church and State condemned the mother herself as the "obvious security issue," and the Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to the school district superintendent demanding that Urena be banished from the school grounds. The school complied and refused to allow Urena to continue her prayers on school property.

Antireligion Group Bullies School into Barring Student-Led Prayer

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18165-ffrf-action-drops-prayers-from-michigan-high-school-graduation-july-11-2013>

After students led prayer at a Ross Beatty Junior/Senior High School graduation ceremony in Cassopolis, Michigan, the Freedom From Religion Foundation complained to the school, claiming that the students' actions violated the Constitution. The school said that it would share these concerns with the student advisor that oversaw graduation events, stating, "We do not anticipate a recurrence [of the prayers]."

Freedom From Religion Foundation Denounces Teacher's Christian Posters

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18335-religious-posters-aren%E2%80%99t-in-kansas-public-school-anymore-july-11-2013>

When the Freedom From Religion Foundation found out that a math teacher in McPherson, Kansas, hung several Christian posters in his math classroom,

they contacted the school superintendent and requested that the teacher be punished for forcing his religion on students. The school acquiesced to the demand, confirming that the teacher was disciplined and had a note placed in his personal file regarding the situation.

Atheist Organization Condemns Historical Patriotic Song

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18183-religious-song-sung-no-more-at-california-school-july-10-2013>

An elementary school in Rancho Cordova, California, highlighted the classic song “America (My Country, Tis of Thee)” as the song of the month. The Freedom From Religion Foundation demanded that the school cease promoting the song because it referred to God in some of the lyrics. The school submitted and ended the use of the song.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Intimidates School into Banning Bible Circulation

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18334-ffrf-ends-bible-handouts-in-washington-high-school-july-10-2013>

After members of Gideons International handed out Bibles to students at Cascade School District in Everett, Washington, the Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to Cascade School District Superintendent Steve McKenna threatening a lawsuit unless McKenna barred the distribution of Bibles at the school. McKenna responded by yielding to the threat and stating, “The situation was unfortunate and should not have occurred.”

Historical Constitution Class Condemned by Atheist Group Because of Religious Content

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18144-ffrf-helps-to-call-off-unconstitutional-constitution-classes-in-ohio-july-4-2013>

The President of the Springboro Community City School Board of Education scheduled summer classes on the U.S. Constitution taught by The Institute on the Constitution, a Christian organization that teaches the Biblical influence on the United States’ formation, and The National Center for Constitutional Studies, a group dedicated to teaching about the origins of the United States Constitution. The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter demanding the cancellation of these classes because they asserted that the United States was founded on Christian principles. The school responded by abandoning the classes.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Quashes Graduation Prayer in Arkansas School

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18180-haas-hall-academy-has-graduation-prayers-no-more-july-2-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation intimidated the superintendent of Haas Hall Academy in Fayetteville, Arkansas, into banning prayer at the school's graduation ceremonies pursuant to a local resident's complaint. In their response, the school confirmed, "There will be no prayer at the upcoming Haas Hall Academy graduation."

Atheist Group Demands Removal of Church Banner

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18336-church-banner-banned-from-public-school-grounds-july-1-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to the Moreno Valley Unified School District superintendent demanding that the school remove a banner advertising a church that met on the school grounds on Sundays, claiming that the banner violated the school's legal obligation to remain neutral towards religion. The school complied with the request.

Basketball Coach Required to Cease Any Involvement with Pregame Prayer

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/18164-supreme-court-precedent-takes-down-b-ball-court-prayer-july-1-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation called for the superintendent of Monticello High School in Kentucky to instruct a basketball coach to abstain from all participation in pregame prayer at basketball games, regardless of whether students initiated or led the prayer. The school acted according to the request.

EEOC Investigates Firing of Teacher for Giving a Bible to a Student

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/06/thanks-to-liberty-institutes-pressure.html>

Walt Tutka, a substitute teacher in New Jersey, was fired by the Phillipsburg School District for handing a Bible to a student who asked for it. When the student was the last to enter through a door, Mr. Tutka said, "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first." The student repeatedly inquired about the origin of the phrase. Eventually, Mr. Tutka found the quote in a pocket New Testament and showed it to the student. The student then commented that he did not own a Bible, so Mr. Tutka offered the pocket Bible to the student. The school district then fired Mr. Tutka. With help from Liberty Institute, Mr. Tutka filed a charge of discrimination against the school district with the U.S.

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Without conducting the required review, the EEOC dismissed Mr. Tutka's complaint. After Liberty Institute pressured the EEOC to perform the required investigation and discovered evidence that the school district fired Mr. Tutka because of his membership in Gideons International, the EEOC reopened its investigation and has requested that Mr. Tutka and the school district enter mediation.

Valedictorian Silenced During Speech for Sharing His Faith

<http://blog.libertyinstitute.org/2013/06/joshua-ids-officials-violate-state-and.html>

Remington Reimer, valedictorian of Joshua High School in Joshua, Texas, planned to give his valedictorian address and then get ready to attend the U.S. Naval Academy. When Reimer began to speak about his faith during his valedictorian address, however, that was all put at risk. Texas law prohibits schools from editing valedictorian addresses, but as soon as Reimer began to speak about liberty and his faith, school officials cut his microphone. Furthermore, the principal of Joshua High School threatened to send a letter to the U.S. Naval Academy to ruin Reimer's reputation in retaliation for Reimer's speaking about his faith. Following a demand letter from Liberty Institute, school officials apologized to Reimer and provided assurances that no further discrimination against student religious speech will occur in the future.

Atheist Group Nearly Ruins Fifth-Grade Musical

<http://www.tylerpaper.com/article/20130523/NEWS08/130529905>

<http://www.kiitv.com/story/22453344/thousands-show-support-of-school-play-in-god-we-trust>

E.J. Moss Intermediate School's fifth grade class in Lindale, Texas, prepared for over five months to put on a musical, "In God We Trust." The musical connects the faith of important historical figures from the United States founding to the national motto, "In God We Trust." Just days before they were set to perform, a Wisconsin-based atheist group threatened legal action against the school unless certain parts of the play were removed. As a result, some students lost their parts entirely because there was no time to replace the script. A local Baptist church spent \$1,600 to rent out the school auditorium for a second showing of the musical so the students could perform the entire show they had worked so hard on all year. Thousands in the community showed up to support the students, with about 900 having to sit in overflow rooms to watch on live feed or outside where they could only hear the show.

Arkansas School to Cancel Sixth-Grade Graduation Because of Prayer

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/arkansas-school-district-cancels-graduation-rather-than-allow-prayer-95674/>

After receiving complaints from the Wisconsin-based Freedom From Religion Foundation, the Riverside School District in Lakeside, Arkansas, decided to cancel its sixth-grade graduation rather than allow prayer at the graduation.

Student Prays at Graduation Despite Objections

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/28/lincoln-high-school-prayer-graduation-kentucky_n_3347203.html

Despite formal objections by six students, Student Body Class President Jonathan Hardwick prayed in “Jesus’ name” during Lincoln Country High School’s graduation ceremony. Principal Tim Godbey publically noted that, while faculty cannot publically pray on school grounds, students are permitted to voice prayers. Hardwick received a standing ovation from parents and students upon the completion of his prayer.

School Forced to Remove Ten Commandments

<https://www.au.org/church-state/julyaugust-2013-church-state/people-events/oklahoma-student-foils-school-posting-of-ten>

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/05/15/ten-commandments-oklahoma-muldrow_n_3279658.html

The Freedom From Religion Foundation found out that a high school in the small town of Muldrow, Oklahoma, had copies of the Ten Commandments posted on classroom walls. Immediately, the FFRF threatened the school with a lawsuit if the Ten Commandments were not removed. Despite strong support from the community in favor of keeping the Ten Commandments in the school, the district decided to yield to the threat in order to forgo costly legal proceedings.

Ohio College Agrees to Change Policy Banning Signs at Student-Led Religious Freedom Rally

<https://www.thomasmoresociety.org/2013/03/12/free-speech-case-settled-over-sinclair-community-college-violations/>

Sinclair Community College in Dayton, Ohio, used a restrictive speech policy to ban its students from bringing signs to “Stand Up for Religious Freedom” rally. After a federal lawsuit was filed to protect student speech, the school agreed to change its policies.



ACLU and Freedom From Religion Foundation Sue to Remove Student-Owned Jesus Portrait from Ohio School

<http://stateimpact.npr.org/ohio/2013/04/03/jackson-city-schools-remove-painting-of-jesus/>

http://thetandd.com/lifestyles/faith-and-values/ohio-school-board-votes-to-keep-jesus-portrait-up/article_710897ba-76f7-11e2-9356-001a4bcf887a.html

A community school in Jackson, Ohio, permits each student organization to hang a portrait of a person that holds special significance to that group. A Christian student organization hung a portrait of Jesus in that school in 1947. The portrait hung there for sixty-six years without any objections, acquiring historic significance to the Jackson students and alumni. The portrait is inscribed with the name of the student organization claiming ownership. Nevertheless, the Freedom from Religion Foundation labeled this student speech an “egregious violation,” and, joining forces with the ACLU, filed a federal lawsuit against the small Ohio school district. With limited resources and the prospects of an expensive legal attack from FFRF and the ACLU, the school district was forced to remove the historic portrait. The school lamented that it could not afford to fight a protracted legal battle over the portrait.

Community College Bans Employees from Sending Religion-Related Emails to Each Other

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/15156-ffrf-stops-community-college-violation-aug-22-2012>

Peralta Community College in Oakland, California, issued a sweeping policy prohibiting its employees from talking about religion with one another on school email accounts and forcing employees to remove any religious quotes from email signatures.

Alabama Schools Will Not Teach Students about the History of Easter and Christmas

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/17331-ffrf-helps-end-ala-church%E2%80%99s-religious-school-assemblies-march-11-2013>

Houston County Schools in Alabama held assemblies right before Easter and Christmas break to teach the students about the history and cultural significance of these two nationally-celebrated holidays. An atheist organization was outraged that students would learn why these holidays exist. In an effort to suppress any mention of religion in public schools, the organization attacked simple history lessons about culturally important public holidays. The schools submitted to the atheists' demands and canceled the assemblies.

Florida College Bans Gideons from Graduation Ceremonies

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/17529-ffrf-ensures-secular-graduation-ceremonies-at-a-fla-college-march-6-2013>

St. John River State College banned the Gideons from attending graduations and peacefully passing out pocket New Testaments after the Freedom From Religion Foundation complained of the “exclusionary distribution of bibles.”

Florida College Student Suspended for Refusing to Stomp on “Jesus”

<http://www.libertyinstitute.org/pages/florida-atlantic-university-student-suspended>

A professor at Florida Atlantic University required the students in his class to write “Jesus” on a piece of paper and then stomp on the paper. Ryan Rotela, a Mormon student in the class, refused to stomp on the paper because of his religious beliefs. Rotela then reported the incident to university officials. Instead of protecting Mr. Rotela’s religious liberty rights, however, the university officials brought academic charges against Rotela and suspended him. Following a legal demand from Liberty Institute, the university reversed its decision, apologized to Rotela, expunged the academic charges, and agreed to allow Mr. Rotela to take the class from a different professor.

Atheist Group Outraged Teacher Agreed to Students’ Requests for Her to Sing a Religious Song

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2013/feb/08/religious-song-sparks-complaint/>

Heather Moorman is a science teacher at Lakeview Middle School in Ringgold, Georgia, but outside the classroom she is a Christian recording artist. One day while in class her students requested that she sing one of her songs, and Ms. Moorman generously agreed. The Freedom From Religion Foundation caught wind of this and sent a demand letter to “halt this egregious abuse of power” alleging that Ms. Moorman’s compliance with the students’ requests was “interfering with the rights of students” by imposing her religion on students and “making non-Christian ... students into outsiders.” The school’s investigation revealed it was an isolated event and took no disciplinary action against Ms. Moorman. Nevertheless, FFRF celebrated this nonevent as “end[ing] Georgia middle school teacher’s religious songs.”

Pennsylvania School District Denies Equal Access to Religious Club

http://www.pennlive.com/midstate/index.ssf/2013/02/bible_class_fight_christian_gr.html

When the Good News Club, a Christian student club, wanted to start an

after-school program at Foose Elementary School in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, the school responded that the club would have to pay a \$1,200 annual fee to use the school's facilities because the club is religious. Other nonprofit organizations are granted free use of the school facilities after school. The Good News Club filed a lawsuit against the school district to be treated fairly.

Arizona Education Association Fights Voucher Program for Special-Needs Students

http://azstarnet.com/news/local/education/precollegiate/judge-upholds-arizona-schoolvoucher-plan/article_75f6a2b2-4845-11e1-8e51-001871e3ce6c.html

A state trial court upheld Arizona's new voucher program for special-needs students, which provides these students with the opportunity to receive private educations. The Arizona Education Association had challenged the voucher program because money could go to religious schools under the program.

School Bans Teachers from Mentioning Religion in Personal Biographies

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/17343-ffrf-cleans-up-jackson-tennessee%E2%80%99s-school-district-website-jan-22-2013>

The Jackson-Madison County School District in Jackson, Tennessee, asked its teachers for biographical information for the district's website. As would be expected in a diverse selection of teachers, some of the teachers found religion important to their lives and incorporated this into their biographies. The Freedom From Religion Foundation accused these teachers of "push[ing] religion on a captive audience" and demanded that the "religious messages be scrubbed" from the biographies. The school district responded by requiring all teachers to remove any religious elements from their personal biographies.

Oklahoma School Bullied into Replacing Christmas Songs with "Secular Winter-Themed Songs"

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/17345-ffrf-calls-out-religious-songs-and-bullying-at-oklahoma-grade-school-jan-11-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation threatened Sulphur Elementary School in Sulphur, Oklahoma, for including Christmas songs referencing the historical reason for Christmas in the school's December play. FFRF claimed that references to "a baby boy" as the "reason for the season" are "divisive" and the Christmas songs should be replaced with generic "secular winter-themed songs." The school submitted to the FFRF's demand.

High School Denies Equal Treatment to Teacher; Issues Sweeping, Unqualified Order to Cleanse Classroom of Any and All Religious Content

<http://www.buffalonews.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20130110/CITYANDREGION/130119944/1002>

Cheektowaga Central School District in New York permits teachers to display messages reflecting personal beliefs and interests that are not part of school curriculum, unless those beliefs and interests relate to religion. The district threatened to fire Joelle Silver if she did not remove all vestiges of religion from her classroom. The materials motivating this threat include personal sticky notes on her desk reminding her of religious verses, one encouraging poster (among many) not referencing God but quoting a religious figure encouraging students to hold firm to beliefs and act in love, a quote from President Reagan discussing the historical theme of God and country, and a prayer box in her room used for the school's Bible Study Club. Ms. Silver complied with all requests and then filed a lawsuit in federal district court to end the school's discriminatory practice.

Antireligion Group Intimidates School into Silencing Student-Led Prayers

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/17339-ffrf-reminds-utah-school-there-is-no-need-to-honor-prayer-at-national-honors-society-jan-7-2013>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation celebrated a victory over squashing student-led prayers at a Utah High School. FFRF sent a demand letter to the school's superintendent after two student-led prayers occurred at a National Honor Society Induction Ceremony. In response, the superintendent reiterated to school principals that student-led prayers would not be tolerated at school events.

Atheist Opposition to "Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown" Cancels School Field Trip

<http://charlotte.cbslocal.com/2012/12/05/church-calls-off-charlie-brown-christmas-show-amid-controversy/>

Students in Little Rock, Arkansas, were planning to take a field trip to see "Merry Christmas, Charlie Brown," a stage adaptation of the classic "A Charlie Brown Christmas." The school explained to parents that the play "would enhance [their] child's creative imagination in the area of dramatic arts." The school also provided notice that the play contained religious themes. As a result of the opposition to the students' being allowed to see the play, the play was canceled due to safety concerns.



Atheist Group Threatens School for Teaching Two Songs that Mention God in Music Class

<http://www.christianpost.com/news/atheist-group-demands-ny-school-district-remove-songs-mentioning-god-from-curriculum-79929/>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation threatened the Shenendehowa Central Schools of Clifton Park, New York, because the school district's music class includes two songs that mention God in their lyrics. The school district refused to change its curriculum, noting that the songs "were used appropriately to teach specific musical concepts, and as the basis for secular classroom activities." FFRF did not follow through on its threats against the school district.

Mississippi Cheerleaders Banned from Writing Bible Verse on Run-Thru Banners

<http://ffrf.org/legal/other-legal-successes/item/16175-a-mississippi-high-school-will-no-longer-promote-religious-banners-at-sporting-events-oct-22-2012>

Cheerleaders at Stone High School in Mississippi wrote a Bible verse on their run-through banner instead of encouraging violence against the other team. The school received a complaint that someone had to look at a quotation from the Bible. Within less than a week, the school assured the complainant that it would not happen again.

Group Demands School Band Stop Playing "God Bless America"

<http://www.metrowestdailynews.com/news/x521650947/Group-lodges-complaint-about-God-Bless-America-in-Wayland>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation demanded that the Wayland High School band in Wayland, Massachusetts, stop playing "God Bless America" on Pearl Harbor Day and Memorial Day. The FFRF's letter to the school stated that playing "God Bless America" "sends a message to students that the school is endorsing and compelling belief in a god." The school did not acquiesce to the group's demands.

Texas School Prohibits Student from Handing Out Invitations to Church Event

<http://www.beaumontenterprise.com/news/article/Lawsuit-dropped-against-Nederland-ISD-3663947.php>

A Nederland, Texas, public elementary school prohibited a third-grade student from distributing invitations to a church event. The student's father filed suit on his son's behalf but dropped the suit when the school district agreed

not to discriminate against any religious or nonreligious private student-to-student speech, as long as the speech does not disrupt educational activities.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Stops Prayer at Minford, Ohio, Schools
Bonnie Gutsch, "FFRF halts Ohio high school prayers," Freedom from Religion Foundation, available at <http://ffrf.org/legal/challenges/ffrf-halts-ohio-high-schoolprayers/> (accessed May 19, 2012)

High school assemblies and graduations in Minford, Ohio, have included prayer as a tradition for years. On February 25, 2011, the Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter to school officials demanding they stop the practice. The school officials complied.

Catholic School Threatened with Lawsuit for Firing Teacher for Religious Reasons

The News-Sentinel, "*Fort Wayne-South Bend diocese denies teacher's discrimination allegations,*" available at <http://www.news-sentinel.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20120425/NEWS/120429677/1005/FOOD> (Apr. 25, 2012)

A Catholic school in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, fired Emily Herx for undergoing in vitro fertilization (IVF) despite Catholic beliefs opposed to the procedure. Herx had signed an agreement when she began teaching at the school that said she would recognize and follow Catholic teachings. Herx filed suit against the school for firing her for undergoing the IVF treatment.

Owasso, Oklahoma, Schools Prohibited Christian Organization from Distributing Information

<http://www.fox23.com/news/local/story/Settlement-reached-in-lawsuit-against-Owasso/1HRD9EtuVEaUb430FoYU8Q.csp>

Owasso Public Schools banned members of a Christian organization from handing out information to students and teachers. Once Owasso Kids for Christ filed suit, the parties reached a settlement in which religious organizations were allowed to put flyers on a bulletin board and an information table, and the school paid \$20,000 in attorney's fees.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Stops Alabama Community's Tradition of Bible Stories at Schools

http://www.al.com/living/index.ssf/2012/02/bible_man_okd_by_jackson_count.html

For thirty-five years, Jackson County, Alabama, invited "Bible Man" to visit its schools and share Bible stories with elementary school students. In December of 2012, the Freedom From Religion Foundation filed a complaint forcing the community to stop this tradition at one of its schools and to silence



organized prayer for football players at a local church. The Jackson County community is determined to find a way to keep their community traditions.

ACLU Investigates School Because It Scheduled Motivational Speakers Through the Fellowship of Christian Athletes

<http://www.columbiamissourian.com/stories/2012/01/01/aclu-objects-missouri-school-districts-religious-speakers/>

The ACLU investigated a school because it scheduled motivational speakers sponsored by the Christian Fellowship of Athletes. The ACLU obtained school emails in search of any information sufficient to raise First Amendment complaints. It ended up singling out the district guidance counselor's email about the speakers because it made religious references, and also the FCA student members for handing out cards at the school's baseball stadium advertising "Field of Faith." The ACLU had to settle with merely warning the school that it risked violating the First Amendment's Establishment Clause.

Iowa State University Bans Students from Exploring Biblical Insights into Business Management

http://www.iowastatedaily.com/news/article_70ce5c96-4096-11e1-ac1d-0019bb2963f4.html

Despite implementation by successful businesses such as Hobby Lobby and Chick-fil-A, and the growing interest in spirituality's role in successful businesses, Iowa State University, joined by the ACLU, derailed a plan for its students to examine biblical insights into business management. After the course was first approved, twenty faculty members objected to it, purporting to be concerned about academic rigor, and that it would violate the Establishment Clause.

School Forced to End Discrimination Against Religious Groups

<http://onenewsnow.com/legal-courts/2011/12/21/christian-club-recognized>

A Long Island, New York, school in the Hicksville Union Free School District refused to recognize religious student groups in violation of the Equal Access Act, which prohibits discrimination against religious student organizations in public schools. The principal of the school told one student group, "I don't care if other schools have Christian clubs. I don't want one at this school." After a lawsuit was filed, the school reversed its decision and agreed to recognize student religious organizations in compliance with the Equal Access Act.

Residents and Teachers Prohibited from Praying at School Flagpole Following Letter from the Freedom From Religion Foundation

<http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2011-12-16/story/clay-school-board-rescinds-injunction-against-pastor>

Freedom From Religion Foundation complained to a Jacksonville, Florida, school about privately-organized, weekly prayers around its flagpole before school begins, which had occurred for the previous twelve years. In response, the county school board requested the prayers to stop. When the prayers continued, the school board placed an injunction against the minister leading them, making it illegal for him to visit any of the district's schools—even to visit his grandchildren. The injunction was only lifted after the pastor promised to stay off of campuses.

University Forces Nursing Students to Participate in Abortions

http://www.nj.com/news/index.ssf/2011/12/umdnj_settles_with_nurses_over.html

The University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey adopted a policy that requires all nursing students to participate in abortion procedures, even if it is against their religious convictions. A group of nurses filed suit against the university in November 2011, alleging Fourteenth Amendment and medical personnel rights violations. The case settled, and the nurses may now refuse to participate in abortions for religious reasons.

Student Suspended for Identifying as a Christian and Stating Views on Homosexuality

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2011/09/22/texas-school-punishes-boy-for-opposing-homosexuality/>

Dakota Ary, an honors student in Fort Worth, Texas, mentioned to a friend during German class that he is a Christian and that he believes homosexuality is wrong. The comment was a result of the German teacher's discussion of homosexuality with the class and the teacher's displaying of a picture showing two men kissing. The teacher overheard Ary's comment and became irate. The teacher then sent Ary to the principal, who suspended Ary for three days. After the school was confronted with its discrimination against Ary's Christian beliefs, it rescinded his punishment.



Freedom From Religion Foundation Stops Official School Prayer, Sparking Protest

Lynn Lampkin, "Prayer Protest' Held at Hernando Football Game," FOX Memphis, available at <http://www.myfoxmemphis.com/dpp/news/Mississippi/prayer-protest-held-at-hernando-football-game-rpt-20110826> (Aug. 26, 2011)

School officials in Desoto County, Mississippi, stopped the practice of leading prayer sessions over the high school football stadium PA system after receiving a threatening letter from Freedom From Religion Foundation. Students and their families protested the end of prayer by shaving their heads and carrying signs pledging allegiance to Christianity. Crowds began to gather around the flagpole during Friday night football games to pray.

California School Fundraiser Prohibits Religious Inscriptions on Bricks

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2011/06/14/california-school-district-cancels-fundraiser-after-submission-scripture/>

The Desert Sands Unified School District in California held a fundraiser in which donors could purchase bricks or benches. Purchasers were allowed to have the brick engraved with a message. The school district did not allow two donors to install bricks with Bible verses inscribed on the bricks. The two donors filed suit claiming unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination in a public forum. The claims were based on the Free Speech Clause, the Equal Protection and the Due Process Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment, the Free Exercise Clause, and the Establishment Clause. The school district rescinded the fundraiser and returned the raised funds.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Opposes Minister Praying at Graduation

http://www.ffrf.org/uploads/legal/gilescounty_letter.pdf

Freedom From Religion Foundation sent a letter of complaint to Giles County, Tennessee, school for inviting a minister to pray at the kindergarten graduation ceremony.

ACLU Sued School for Holding Graduation Ceremonies in a Methodist-Owned Auditorium

Lauren Green, "New Jersey School and ACLU Compromise of Graduation at Christian-Owned Site," FoxNews.com, available at <http://www.foxnews.com/us/2011/05/26/new-jersey-high-school-aclu-compromise-grnew-jersey-school-aclu-compromise/> (May 26, 2011)

The ACLU sued Neptune High School in Neptune, New Jersey, after the school decided to continue with its seventy-year tradition of holding its graduation ceremonies at the Great Auditorium of the Ocean Grove Camp

Meeting Association, a Methodist organization. The ACLU settled with the school, agreeing to cover any religious symbols in the Great Auditorium.

High School Class President Threatened with Arrest for Praying at Graduation

Liberty Counsel, "Hampton High School Graduates Choose Prayer at Ceremony," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=1071> (May 24, 2011)

The class president of Hampton High School wanted to pray at her graduation. The principal of the school, however, said that any students who attempt to pray would be stopped, escorted from the building by police, and arrested. After receiving a demand letter, the school reversed its policy.

ACLU Threatens School into Removing Graduation Prayer, Student Prays Anyway

Liberty Counsel, "Graduation Continued With Prayer in Louisiana," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=1070> (May 23, 2011)

Following a complaint and a threat from the ACLU, Bastrop High School in Bastrop, Louisiana, replaced the traditional graduation prayer with a "Moment of Silence." Senior Laci Rae Mattice, however, led the audience in the Lord's Prayer despite her instructions to lead the "Moment of Silence."

FFRF Stops Algebra Teacher from Praying with Students

Freedom From Religion Foundation, "FFRF halts prayer in high school algebra class," available at <http://ffrf.org/legal/challenges/ffrf-halts-prayer-in-high-school-algebra-class/>

A Lenoir City, Tennessee, student complained to the Freedom From Religion Foundation (FFRF) that his former Algebra II teacher prayed with students before their final exams. FFRF wrote a letter to the superintendent. The school's superintendent stopped the prayers, and the teacher apologized in writing.

ACLU Threatens School for Holding Graduation Ceremonies in a Church Building

Liberty Counsel, "Texas Graduation Gets Free Offer of Help from Liberty Counsel Against ACLU Threat," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=1068> (May 19, 2011)

Irving Independent School District holds their graduation ceremonies at The Potter's House, a nondenominational church, which is used because it can seat more persons than any school-owned facility. The ACLU threatened to sue the school if it did not change locations.



Complaints Against School for Churchmembers' Offering to Pray with Students Before AP Test

<http://www.wsbtv.com/news/news/prayer-at-test-site-continues-despite-schoolcompl/nFB8b/>

Students at a Georgia high school took an AP test at a local church due to overcrowding concerns at the school. When they arrived, church members were there offering to pray with students before the test. Some parents and students were offended and complained to the school that students were subjected to voluntary opportunities for prayer.

ACLU Attacks the Distribution of Gideon Bibles in Tennessee School

<http://www.aclu.org/religion-belief/aclu-tennessee-stops-unconstitutional-bible-distribution-white-county-school>

A parent complained after a Gideon Bible was distributed to her daughter during school. The ACLU stepped in and settled the case with the school. Bibles can now only be distributed when paired with nonreligious materials, contact with religious distributors is limited, the religious texts are not emphasized over the nonreligious texts, and clear disclaimers of school endorsement are posted at the distribution site.

Los Angeles Unified School District Banned a Fifth Grader from Performing a Christian Song at a Talent Show

<http://www.adfmedia.org/News/PRDetail/4612>

The Los Angeles Unified School District in California prohibited a fifth-grade student from performing a Christian song at an elementary school talent show. After the student got a temporary restraining order against the school district, the district changed its position and permitted the student to sing the song.

Freedom From Religion Foundation Threatened Polk County, Florida, With a Lawsuit if the Polk County School Board Continued to Pray at Meetings

<http://www.newschief.com/article/20110205/NEWS/102055127/1021/news01?p=1&tc=pg>

The Freedom From Religion Foundation threatened a lawsuit against the Polk County School Board if the board continued to pray at its meetings. In response, the board added a disclaimer to its board meeting agendas, which reads, "Voluntary invocation may be offered before the opening of the School Board meeting by a private citizen. The views or beliefs expressed in the invocation have not been reviewed nor approved by the School Board, and



the Board is not allowed, by law, to endorse the religious beliefs or views of this, or any other speaker.”

Freedom From Religion Foundation Stops Graduation Prayers in McNairy County

Letter from Charlie Miskelly to Rebecca Markert, available at <http://www.ffrf.org/uploads/legal/McNairy%20County%20Schools%20TN.pdf> (Jan. 27, 2011)

The McNairy County School district had a practice of hosting student-led prayers over loudspeakers at graduation ceremonies. The Freedom From Religion Foundation wrote a letter stating that “the Supreme Court has struck down prayer at public high school graduations.” After receiving two complaints, the school stopped the tradition.

School Under Attack for Saving Money by Holding Graduation in a Church

<http://www.ajc.com/news/news/local/charokee-fight-over-graduations-at-churches-could-/nQncH/>

A Cherokee County, Georgia, public school holds its graduation ceremony in a church. Americans United for Separation of Church and State spoke out against the practice, claiming that holding graduation ceremonies in a church violated the students’ constitutional rights. The school claims, however, that it holds graduation in the church because it saves tens of thousands of dollars. A similar secular venue would be much more expensive, and the school gym would not accommodate all of the attendees.

Univ. of Wisconsin-Madison Denied Funding to Student Group that Is “Too Religious”

<http://www.speakupmovement.org/Map/CaseDetails?Case=240>

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Roman Catholic Foundation (UWM-RCF) was denied funds from the student activity fee funding on the grounds that the organization was “too religious.” The UWMRCF appealed to the Student Judiciary. The Freedom From Religion Foundation pressured the Student Judiciary to withhold funding, but the Student Judiciary reversed the university’s decision and granted the funding.

West Virginia University-Parkersburg Removes Prayer from Graduation Ceremony Despite Overwhelming Support

<http://www.speakupmovement.org/Map/CaseDetails?Case=266>

West Virginia University-Parkersburg decided to remove prayer from the nursing school graduation ceremony even after students voted overwhelmingly in support of including the prayer.



Professor Fired for Teaching Catholic View of Homosexuality in “Introduction to Catholicism” Class

<http://www.foxnews.com/us/2010/07/09/university-illinois-reinstates-instructor-fired-catholic-beliefs/>

Dr. Kenneth J. Howell, an adjunct professor at the University of Illinois, was fired from his position after a lecture on the Catholic view of homosexuality set off a firestorm of “insensitivity” complaints on campus. Although Dr. Howell had given the same lecture for nearly ten years to his Introduction to Catholicism class this was the first time it had sparked such debate. After Dr. Howell’s attorneys sent a letter to the university threatening legal action if Dr. Howell’s First Amendment rights were not respected, the university agreed to reinstate him as a member of the faculty.

Students Prohibited from Wearing Religious Jewelry

Jay Sekulow, “Free Speech Victory in CO: School OK’s Student Cross,” ACLJ, available at <http://aclj.org/school-prayer/free-speech-victory-in-co-school-ok-s-student-cross> (Oct. 18, 2010)

Students at Mann Middle School in Colorado Springs were told that they could no longer wear religious jewelry because some people at the school were “offended” by the display. Cainan Gostnell regularly wore a cross necklace to school. Concerned by the new rule, Gostnell sought legal assistance to preserve his right to wear the cross. After receiving a demand letter, the school assured Gostnell that he would not be punished.

Religious Education Program Stops In-School Classes Following Threat of Lawsuit

<http://www.journalgazette.net/article/20100826/LOCAL04/308269981>

The Weekday Religious Education program has been in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, for over sixty years and has been providing in-school classes for twenty. When a lawsuit was filed against the program, however, the program closed down the in-school instruction. Weekday Religious Education now only exists as an after-school program.

Students Told to Stop Their “Christian” Actions

Liberty Counsel, “Students Told to Cease ‘Christian’ Acts,” available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14102&AlertID=1149> (June 24, 2010)

A group of Christian high school students in Roswell, New Mexico, distributed rocks with Bible verses painted on them and food, hot chocolate, and candy canes. The school did not object until the students distributed rubber models of preborn babies with Bible verses written on them. School officials confis-

cated all of the models and told the students that they needed to stop their “Christian” actions. Twenty-five of these students were later given detention for putting donuts with religious messages in the school’s teachers’ lounge.

Principal and Athletic Director Criminally Charged for Praying Over a Meal
Christina Leavenworth, “Pace High School’s Frank Lay retires,” FOX10tv.com, available at <http://www.fox10tv.com/dpp/news/pace-high-schools-frank-lay-retires> (May 21, 2010)

Pace High School Principal Frank Lay and Athletic Director Robert Freeman were charged with criminal contempt because they prayed over a meal. The ACLU had received an injunction prohibiting school employees from promoting religion at school events. Lay and Freeman were found not guilty of violating the injunction.

Miami University of Ohio Discriminates Against Religious Clubs in Distributing Funds

Alliance Defense Fund, “Speak Up: Miami University of Ohio,” available at <http://www.speakupmovement.org/Map/CaseDetails?Case=217>

Miami University of Ohio used a two-tiered system to unevenly distribute funds to student clubs depending upon the club’s mission. All religious groups were funded out of a limited fund of approximately \$10,000. Nonreligious groups were funded out of a general fund of \$350,000. Furthermore, restrictions were placed on money from the limited fund that did not exist on money from the general fund. After being sued over this two-tiered system, the university eliminated the funding system and granted a more equitable distribution of funds to all student groups.

School Agrees to End Discrimination Against Student Speech

<http://oldsite.alliancedefensefund.org/userdocs/EBVoluntaryDismissal.pdf>

A Pennsylvania school barred a student from wearing a pro-life T-shirt that read, “Abortion is not Healthcare.” After the student sued the school for state and federal violations, the school ended its policy prohibiting student expression promoting a particular religious denomination, sect, or viewpoint.

College Student Penalized for Choosing to Write About Religious Poem

Alliance Defense Fund, “Speak Up: Tarrant County College,” available at <http://www.speakupmovement.org/Map/CaseDetails?Case=231>

Bethany Roden, a student at Tarrant County College in Texas, was assigned to write a response paper on two poems of her choice for an English composition class. Roden chose poems with religious themes and incorporated her religious beliefs into her essay. Her professors penalized her for including



religious themes in her essay. Upon receiving a demand letter, the college changed Roden's grade from a B to an A.

School Officials Confiscate Drawing of Jesus on the Cross and Recommend Psychological Testing

Brad Puffer, "Taunton, Mass. boy sent home from school for Jesus drawing," NECN, available at <http://www.necn.com/Boston/New-England/2009/12/15/Taunton-Mass-boy-sent-home/1260897625.html> (Dec. 15, 2009)

The parents of a second-grader at Maxham Elementary School in Taunton, Massachusetts, criticized public school officials after their son was sent home from school for drawing a picture of Jesus dying on the cross. School faculty confiscated the student's drawing and recommended psychological testing. School officials denied the claims and said an examination was never issued. The boy's parents said the second grader had scenes of Jesus' crucifixion on his mind after visiting a Catholic shrine with his parents.

Minnesota Schools Leave American Legion Out of Veteran's Day Because of Prayer

Mary Jane Smetanka, "Bloomington schools, Legion part ways over prayers at flag," Star Tribune, available at <http://www.startribune.com/local/west/69720847.html?page=1&c=y> (Nov. 10, 2009)

Bloomington School District in Minnesota cut the American Legion out of its traditional Veteran's Day ceremony because the American Legion had said a prayer during the ceremony in the past. In response, The American Legion withheld \$30,000 in scholarships normally given to the schools, and other organizations refused to participate in the ceremony because of the school district's treatment of The American Legion.

EEOC Tells Catholic College It Must Cover Contraceptives in Its Health Insurance

Charlotte Allen, "The Persecution of Belmont Abbey," The Weekly Standard, available at <http://www.weeklystandard.com/Content/Public/Articles/000/000/017/093aasuz.asp?page=1> (Oct. 26, 2009)

When an employee of Belmont Abbey College, a private college established by Benedictine monks, discovered the college's health care policy provided for contraceptives and abortion services, the college president immediately moved to harmonize the policy with Catholic teaching. Eight faculty members objected and filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. After initially ruling in support of the college, the EEOC then reversed

its opinion and declared the college *had* engaged in gender discrimination by denying oral contraceptives to its female employees.

High School Cheerleaders Prohibited from Using Religious Banner

<http://www.chattanooga.com/2009/9/29/159917/Attorney-Says-Students-Can-Make-Bible.aspx>

Cheerleaders at Lakeview-Fort Oglethorpe High School in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia, made a banner saying “Commit to the Lord” that the football team burst through as they ran out onto the field. After several years, a parent complained about the banner and, to avoid litigation, the school ended its practice.

Ohio University Refuses to Recognize Christian Student Organization

Alliance Defense Fund, “Speak Up: Wright State University,” available at <http://www.speakupmovement.org/Map/CaseDetails?Case=252>

Wright State University (WSU) in Ohio refused to recognize Christian Bible Fellowship (CBF) as a student club. WSU said that recognition was denied because CBF required voting members to abide by Articles of Faith and because CBF refused to include nondiscrimination terms in its constitution. After receiving demand letters, the university allowed CBF to keep faith-based membership and exempted the group from the nondiscrimination policy.

Texas A&M Rejects Christian Organization for Requiring Members to be Christian

Alliance Defense Fund, “Speak Up: Texas A&M University,” available at <http://www.speakupmovement.org/Map/CaseDetails?Case=230>

Texas A&M University refused to approve Freshman Leaders in Christ’s (FLIC) constitution unless it removed a provision that required members to be Christian. After receiving a demand letter, Texas A&M allowed FLIC to remain a student organization and keep their constitution.

Pennsylvania School Refused Recognition of Good News Club

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2009/01/pennsylvania-good-news-club-flyer-case.html>

The Good News Club was blocked from becoming an official club by Haverford, Pennsylvania, public schools. After a suit was filed against the school district, however, a settlement was reached in which the Good News Club would become an official school club and the school district would pay attorney’s fees.

Community College Implemented Prohibitive Rules for Distributing Religious Literature

<http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2009/01/suit-challenging-yuba-community.html>

Yuba Community College in California prohibited the distribution of religious material unless the school first approved the material and the material was only distributed during certain hours. Following a lawsuit, the school agreed to change the rules to allow students to share religious material on campus.

Student Penalized for Mentioning Jesus in a Christmas Poem

Liberty Counsel, "Sixth-Grader Penalized For Mentioning Jesus in His Christmas Paper at School," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14102&AlertID=934> (Dec. 18, 2008)

An eleven-year-old student in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, was penalized for mentioning Jesus in a Christmas poetry assignment. His teacher asked him to submit a rewrite of the poem. Upon being overruled by the principal, the teacher then refused to display the students' poems as promised.

California School District Bans Good News Clubs from Distributing Flyers to Students

Liberty Counsel, "School District Complies With Demand To Allow Christian Club Announcements," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=676> (Apr. 2, 2008)

The Carmel United School District in Carmel, California, prohibited the Good News Club, a Christian student organization, from distributing flyers advertising the club because the school district said that allowing these flyers would be an endorsement of Christianity. After receiving a demand letter, the school district reversed its policy.

California School Board Denies Credit for Community Service Hours Performed at Church

Liberty Counsel, "School Board Settles Lawsuit By Amending Policy and Accepting Student's Community Service Hours at Church," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=658> (Jan. 29, 2008)

The Long Beach District School Board denied credit to a student for community service hours performed at his church. Threatened with a lawsuit, the school board granted the credit and rewrote the policy to allow service at both secular and religious organizations in accordance with the First Amendment.

Student's Religious Artwork Removed from School Mural

Doug Huntington, "Girl's Cross Put Back into School Mural," Christian Post, available at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/girl-s-cross-put-back-into-school-mural-27748/> (Jun. 2, 2007)

Thompson Junior High School in Oswego, Illinois, had the school's art department create a mural for the school. Each student in the art club was given a piece of the mural to work on. The principal ordered Melissa Yates' piece to be covered with blue paint, however, because she had drawn a cross on her piece. Following receipt of a demand letter, the school reversed its policy and allowed Yates' cross to be restored to the mural.

Third-Grade Student Stopped from Reading Bible During "Reading Time"

Thomas More Law Center, "Thomas More Law Center Ensures Right Of Third-Grade Student To Read Bible In Public School," available at http://www.thomasmore.org/qry/page.taf?id=19&_function=detail&sbtblct_uid1=3&_nc=45ac96639e2d94aafe24cc62ceddb5a1 (July 23, 2007)

Third-grade student Rhajheem Haymon was told that he could not read his Bible during quiet reading time. After receiving a demand letter laying out the reasons why Rhajheem should be allowed to read his Bible, the school reversed its policy.

Arkansas High School Bans Graduation Prayer and Religious Commencement Speaker

Liberty Counsel, "Annual 'Friend or Foe' Graduation Prayer Campaign Finishes Fifth Successful Season," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=588> (Jul. 17, 2007)

Administrators of Omaha High School in Omaha, Arkansas, told graduating seniors that they could not pray at their graduation or choose a youth ministry leader as the commencement speaker. After one of the seniors sought legal assistance, the school reversed its decision and allowed both prayer and the students' choice of commencement speaker.

High School Valedictorian Prohibited from Praying During Graduation Speech

Al Sullivan, "God not allowed Valedictorian pulls speech rather than remove prayer," Hudson Reporter, available at http://www.hudsonreporter.com/pages/full_story/push?article-God+not+allowed+Valedictorian+pulls+speech+rather+than+remove+prayer%20&id=2412697 (Jul. 12, 2007)

Jeremy Jerschina, the valedictorian of his class, submitted his valedictorian speech, which included a prayer, to school officials prior to his graduation



ceremony from the Bayonne High School. School officials reviewed the speech and told Jerschina that he could not pray or reference his religious beliefs. Rather than give the speech without the prayer, Jeremy refused to give any valedictorian speech.

Michigan School Bans Choir from Singing “The Lord’s Prayer” at Graduation

Dr. Kendall Harmon, “Choir Told Not to Sing ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ at Graduation,” available at <http://www.kendallharmon.net/t19/index.php/t19/article/3172/> (May 26, 2007)

In memory of a fellow student who had died, the Comstock Park High School’s choir wished to sing “The Lord’s Prayer” at the school’s graduation, which was being held in a church building. Although the choir had already performed this song at a benefit, school officials, acting on legal advice, would not let them perform the song. Because of the song’s religious content, the school’s legal counsel advised, “Don’t go there.”

Students Suspended for Praying in Cafeteria

Gundrun Schultz, “12 Washington State High School Students Suspended for Public Prayer Group,” LifeSiteNews.com (Mar. 6, 2007)

A group of high school students started a before-school prayer meeting in the cafeteria. The school wanted the students to meet in a classroom where they would not be seen by other students. After the group insisted on praying in the cafeteria, they were suspended.

School Stops Second Grader from Giving Valentine’s Day Bibles

Liberty Counsel, “School Admits Error and Allows Student To Give Bibles To His Friends,” available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=552> (Feb. 21, 2007)

The day before Valentine’s Day, Adam Prevette, a second grader at Roaring Elementary School in Wilkesboro, North Carolina, brought Bibles to school for two of his friends. His teacher told him that he could only give the Bibles if he brought enough for everyone, so the following day Adam brought Bibles as Valentine’s Day gifts for his classmates. However, when he brought them the teacher then stated that Adam was not allowed to hand out the Bibles. Following multiple meetings, the school principal agreed to allow Adam to distribute the Bibles and apologized that he had been prevented.

Pennsylvania Schools Demand Fees from Religious Club

Liberty Counsel, "Religious Club Gains Equal Access to Pennsylvania Public Elementary Schools," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=545> (Jan. 26, 2007)

Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF) had been holding Good News Clubs in two elementary schools in Clinton County, Pennsylvania, for a number of years. At one point, CEF was advised that, unlike other groups, they would have to pay a fee for the use of school facilities. They were first told that they would be charged a fee because CEF was not local. After CEF showed that it had a local office, they were told that CEF must pay because the Good News Clubs were "sectarian." After receiving an attorney's letter, the school superintendent informed CEF they would not impose a fee.

New Jersey School Bans Good News Club After Discovering Club Is Christian

Liberty Counsel, "School District Reverses Decision and Grants Christian Club Equal Access to Facilities," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=16> (Jan. 17, 2007)

After learning that the Good News Club teaches morals and character development from a Biblical perspective, the principal of Minue Elementary School in Carteret, New Jersey, tried to block club meetings on the school premises. The principal first refused to allow flyers to be sent home to inform parents about the club, and then told the club they could not use school premises, even though they paid the usage fee. After receiving an attorney's letter, the school attorney informed the club that they could meet and distribute flyers.

Milwaukee School Limits Number of Students Who May Attend Bible Club

Liberty Counsel, "Milwaukee Public Schools Remove Cap on Good News Clubs," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=14> (Jan. 11, 2007)

Hi-Mount Elementary School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, limited the number of school children who could attend the Good News Club and refused to allow permission slips to be sent home to parents, informing them about the club and requesting permission for their children to attend. Good News Club coordinators tried unsuccessfully on numerous occasions to resolve the issue and were forced to file a lawsuit to convince the district to end the discrimination.

School Makes Bible Club Start an Hour After School

Liberty Counsel, "Milwaukee Public Schools Remove Cap on Good News Clubs," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=14> (Jan. 11, 2007)

Congress Street School in Milwaukee refused to allow its Good News Club



to meet until an hour after the end of the school day. Secular clubs were permitted to begin immediately after school. After correspondence with attorneys, the school ended its discriminatory practice.

Ohio Schools Refuse to Allow Bible Club to Distribute Information and Permission Slips

Liberty Counsel, "Ohio School District Halts Discrimination Against Good News Clubs," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=13> (Jan. 10, 2007)

Good News Clubs in Stow, Ohio, were denied the right to distribute information and parent permission slips to students. Since the parents were not informed of the opportunities to send their children to the after-school Bible clubs, attendance would be limited. After attorneys threatened to take legal action, the schools reversed their decision.

Connecticut School District Requires Extra Fees from Bible Club

Liberty Counsel, "Good News Clubs Return to Connecticut Schools," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=10> (Jan. 4, 2007)

Wolcott School District in Wolcott, Connecticut, had always charged Good News Clubs only the minimal charges that are applicable to local nonprofit organizations, such as the Boy Scouts. When the Good News Clubs applied to use school facilities for the 2006-07 school year, however, district officials insisted that the Good News Clubs must be charged higher fees as a "non-Wolcott" organization. Following an attorney's letter, the Wolcott School District reversed its decision.

Brown University Suspends Religious Student Organization

FIRE, "Brown University: Wrongful Suspension of Religious Student Group," available at <http://thefire.org/case/728.html>

Brown University officials suspended a Christian student group, the Reformed University Fellowship. Brown's Office of the Chaplains and Religious Life gave unclear reasons for the suspension. After weeks of public pressure, the Brown administration sent a letter to Reformed Uniformed Fellowship allowing the group to re-affiliate.

School Prohibits Elementary Students from Handing Out Flyers for Vacation Bible School

Montana News Association, "School District Reverses Policy Banning Religious Literature," available at <http://www.montanansnews.tv/articles.php?mode=view&id=5249> (Aug. 29, 2006)

Gabriel and Joshua Rakoski, students at Hollymead Elementary School,

asked to hand out flyers about a Vacation Bible School. The school district's policy prohibited the "distribution of literature that is for partisan, sectarian, religious or political purposes," and the students' teacher did not allow them to distribute the flyers. Following a demand letter stating that the policy was unconstitutional, the school district changed its policy.

University of Mary Washington Bans All Religious and Political Student Groups

Alliance Defense Fund, "Speak Up: University of Mary Washington," available at <http://www.speakupmovement.org/Map/CaseDetails?Case=233>

Robert Simpson wanted to start a Christian group on campus at the University of Mary Washington, but the university required that he agree to their nondiscrimination policy and refused to recognize any religious or political group. After receiving a demand letter, the university changed its policies so as to not violate the right to free association or free speech.

High School Cancels "Diversity Day" Instead of Including Christians

<http://www.lc.org/pressrelease/2006/nr032206.htm>

The Viroqua High School planned a "diversity day" in order to showcase the viewpoints of various religious groups, sexual orientations, and nationalities, but stated that Christian groups and former homosexuals would be excluded. After a legal organization intervened on behalf of the excluded groups, the school district cancelled the event entirely rather than include them.

Fourth Grader Prohibited from Bringing Candy Canes with Story of Jesus to School

Religion Clause, "Student Can Give Classmates Candy Canes with Jesus Story Attached," available at <http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2005/12/student-can-giveclassmates-candy.html> (Dec. 16, 2005)

Jaren Burch, a fourth-grader in Mansfield, Texas, tried to take candy canes that were attached to a story about Jesus to a class party, but his teacher told him that he would not be allowed to do so. After receiving a demand letter regarding Jaren's First Amendment rights, school officials reversed their position, allowing him to bring the candy canes with the stories.

Community College in New York Prohibits Christian Student Group

Alliance Defense Fund, "Speak Up: North Country Community College," available at <http://www.speakupmovement.org/Map/CaseDetails?Case=213>

Tammy Snyder, a student at North Country Community College in Saranac Lake, New York, attempted to start a Christian student group on campus. To advertise, Ms. Snyder hung flyers around campus, careful to respect school

policy regarding the creation of a student organization. On three separate occasions campus officials removed Ms. Snyder's flyers, informing her that her organization would violate the separation of church and state. After being sent a demand letter, the college reversed its position and allowed Ms. Snyder to establish the club.

Sophomore Suspended for Distributing Religious Pamphlets at School

Kelly McCarthy, "Student suspended for passing out religious material," Student Press Law Center, available at <http://www.splc.org/news/newsflash.asp?id=1083> (Sept. 30, 2005)

Samantha Weatherholtz, a sophomore at Fort Defiance High School in Virginia, was suspended for three days for passing out religious pamphlets. Following the suspension, complaints caused the school to revise its speech policy.

Middle School Students Stopped from Praying at the Flagpole

Jim Brown, "School Reverses Decision on Student Prayer Rally," Christianity.com, available at <http://www.christianity.com/news/religiontoday/1360179/> (2005)

Three students at a middle school in Barnegat, New Jersey, met at the flagpole and started to pray. A school administrator stopped the students, telling them that they could not participate in "See You at the Pole," that their prayers were creating a "disturbance," and they must stop mixing school and religion. Upon being threatened with a lawsuit, the school reversed its decision and allowed a "do over" prayer meeting.

Texas School District Demands Fees from Bible Club

Grapevine-Colleyville I.S.D. surprised Students Standing Strong (SSS), a student-led Bible study club, on a Friday with an ultimatum that it must sign away its right to be a student club and pay fees in order to hold its previously approved club meeting the following Monday. Other, non-Christian clubs were not given the same ultimatum. After a demand letter was sent, the school district agreed to allow SSS to meet without signing an additional form or paying additional fees.

Principal Stops Performance of Song that Might Mention God

Liberty Counsel, "Kindergarten Class Permitted To Sing Song That Principal Deemed To Be Religious," available at <http://www.lc.org/index.cfm?PID=14100&PRID=463> (June 3, 2005)

At an end-of-the-year ceremony, a kindergarten class at Terrytown Elementary School in Terrytown, Louisiana, wished to sing "I Can't Give Up Now," written by Mary Mary. The school principal did not wish to allow the class

to perform the song because, even though the song does not mention God, she interpreted the word “he” in the song as referring to God. The principal changed her position and allowed the song only following the threat of a lawsuit and pressure from parents.

Middle School Student Punished for Distributing Church Flyers

Student Press Law Center, “Florida School District Settles Suit with Student Who Challenged Distribution Policy,” available at <http://www.splc.org/news/newsflash.asp?id=950> (Feb. 11, 2005)

Christine Curran, an eighth-grader at Driftwood Middle School in Hollywood, Florida, took flyers for a church youth conference to pass out at school. Although she was passing them out between classes, school policy required that the flyers be approved by a school official, and Christine was told she would be “written up.” After a lawsuit was filed, the school district agreed to rewrite the policy.

College Bans Christian Organization from Showing *The Passion of the Christ*

FIRE, “Indian River Community College: Ban on ‘The Passion of the Christ’ and Repression of Free Speech,” available at <http://thefire.org/case/661.html>

Indian River Community College (IRCC) in Fort Pierce, Florida, prohibited the Christian Student Fellowship from showing *The Passion of the Christ*. IRCC claimed the prohibition was consistent with its policy prohibiting the showing of R-rated movies. However, IRCC had previously allowed the viewing of an R-rated film, *Welcome to Sarajevo*, as well as the performance of a skit called “F**king for Jesus.” After facing intense media scrutiny, IRCC administrators overturned the prohibition.

Muslim Student Suspended for Wearing Head Covering

https://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/on_the_front_lines/pr492

Nashala Hearn, an eleven-year-old Muslim girl in the Muskogee Public School District, was suspended twice for wearing a head covering, since the school district’s dress code did not allow “hats, caps, bandannas, plastic caps, and hoods on jackets.” After a lawsuit was filed criticizing the dress code as unconstitutional, the school district changed the code to allow for religious exceptions.

Principal Removes “Christian” from Student Organization’s Name

David Limbaugh, Persecution, How Liberals Are Waging War Against Christianity 50–51 (HarperCollins Sept. 7, 2004)

A Panama City, Florida, principal changed the name of one Bible club from “Fellowship of Christian Students” to “Fellowship of Concerned Students”

without conferring with student members. The principal also prohibited the organization from advertising.

Teacher Prevents Kindergarten Student from Giving Out Jellybeans with Religious Poem to Classmates

Rutherford Institute, "Institute Called On to Defend Kindergartner's Right to Religious Expression!" available at https://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/on_the_front_lines/pr473 (Feb. 9, 2004)

A teacher prevented a kindergarten student from giving out bags of jellybeans along with a religious poem entitled "The Jelly Bean Prayer" to classmates. The school's policy permitted students to distribute secular gifts but not religious gifts.

Schools Refuse to Count Religious Volunteer Work for Graduation Requirement

Rutherford Institute, "School Officials Discriminate Against Religious Puppeteers, Deny Community Credit for Volunteering at Vacation Bible School," available at https://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/on_the_front_lines/pr454 (Oct. 6, 2003)

Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland require sixty hours of community service as a prerequisite to graduation. Students who worked at a Vacation Bible School on an Indian Reservation were not permitted to count that time toward their hourly requirement. Attorneys intervened and the students were permitted to count the hours, but, unfortunately, the policy remains and continues to discriminate against students who participate in religiously based community service.

Iowa School Refuses Access to Fellowship of Christian Athletes

<http://www.alliancedefendingfreedom.org/News/PRDetail/860>

The South Tama Community School District in Iowa refused the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) access to school facilities, so an FCA member complained. Only after a demand letter was sent to the school district did the district back down and change their policy to stop discriminating against religiously affiliated groups.

Rutgers University Re-Recognizes Christian Student Group

InterVarsity and Rutgers, "InterVarsity and Rutgers Joint Statement," available at <http://www.intervarsity.org/news/intervarsity-and-rutgers-joint-statement> (April 1, 2003)

In 2002, Rutgers University denied official status to the InterVarsity Multi-Ethnic Christian Fellowship (InterVarsity) because InterVarsity did not fol-

low the university's nondiscrimination policy. InterVarsity sought to select members who upheld the group's Christian beliefs, a practice deemed discriminatory by the university. After InterVarsity filed suit, Rutgers agreed to recognize the organization and grant it the same privileges available to other university-sanctioned organizations.

University of North Dakota Refuses to Recognize Christian Medical and Dental Association

Alliance Defense Fund, "Speak Up: University of North Dakota," available at <http://www.speakupmovement.org/Map/CaseDetails?Case=208>

The University of North Dakota refused to officially recognize the school's chapter of the Christian Medical and Dental Association (CMDA). Without formal recognition, the CMDA was barred from receiving funding and publicizing its meetings. The university denied CMDA the right to fully function because the group restricts membership to those who adhere to the association's Christian beliefs. After a lawsuit was threatened, the university recognized CMDA and changed its policy to recognize the rights of religious organizations to maintain their religious integrity.

Texas Tech Defends Professor who Discriminates Against Religious Students

Lisa Falkenberg, "Policy Involving Evolution Prompts Federal Inquiry," Associated Press, Jan. 29, 2003, BC cycle

A Texas Tech professor discriminated against students on the basis of their religion. The university stood behind the professor, saying the professor's policies were not in conflict with those of Texas Tech.

UNC Threatens Christian Student Group for Not Allowing Non-Christian Leaders

Jim Brown, "After Legal Threat, UNC Allows InterVarsity Ministry to Remain on Campus," Agape Press, available at http://thefire.org/public/pdfs/4811_2875.pdf (Jan. 7, 2003)

An administrator at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill threatened to strip InterVarsity Christian Fellowship (IVCF) of funding because of IVCF's refusal to allow non-Christians to serve in leadership roles. After being threatened with a lawsuit, UNC allowed IVCF to continue as an officially recognized student organization.



Teacher Throws Away Students' Bibles and Threatens to Call CPS

David Limbaugh, Persecution: How Liberals are Waging War Against Christianity 45 (Regnery Pub. Jan. 1, 2003)

A schoolteacher at Lynn Lucas Middle School near Houston, Texas, threw away two students' Truth for Youth Bibles and took the students to the principal's office where she threatened to call Child Protective Services on their parents for permitting them to bring their Bibles. Later, at the same school, different officials threw away a student's book cover showing the Ten Commandments, claiming the Ten Commandments are hate speech and could offend students.

Elementary Student Told She Cannot Read Religious Book As Her Favorite Book About Christmas Traditions

<http://www.freerepublic.com/focus/f-news/724609/posts>

A second-grade teacher at Northwest Elementary School in Massachusetts, as part of a class project, asked students to bring books to class about their Christmas traditions. Laura Greska, a second-grader, brought a book called "The First Christmas," but her teacher stopped her from reading it because it was religious. A lawsuit was filed against the school district for violating Laura's First Amendment rights.

School Prohibits Students from Distributing Candy Canes with "Jesus Loves You"

Catholic League, "2002 Report on Anti-Catholicism: Education," available at <http://www.catholicleague.org/education-9/> (Dec. 31, 2002)

School officials in Reno, Nevada, prohibited students in a Bible club from distributing candy canes with the message "Jesus Loves You" attached to them. After the club sought legal assistance, the school reversed its policy.

Teacher Prevents Kindergarten Student From Praying Before Snacks

Frank J. Murray, "Federal Court Hears Lawsuit Over Kindergarten Christian; New York Schools May Relent, May Let Tot Say Grace at Meals," Washington Times, April 12, 2002

Kindergartner Kayla Broadus prayed, "God is good. God is great. Thank you, God, for my food," with two classmates at her school in Saratoga Springs, New York, at the snack table before they ate their snack. Her teacher silenced the prayer, scolded Kayla, and informed the school's lawyer. A lawsuit ensued over the child's prayer.

College Students Passing Out Religious Cards Threatened with Arrest

Adrian Sainz, "Miami-Dade Community College, students settle free-speech suit," Jacksonville.com, available at <http://jacksonville.com/tu-online/apnews/stories/061402/D7K56C984.html> (Jun. 14, 2002)

Students at Miami-Dade Community College tried to distribute business-sized cards to other students on campus. Each card had a number for people to call where they could hear a recorded message about Jesus Christ. Campus security officers approached and told the students that they couldn't pass out the cards. Later, the students returned to resume handing out their cards and were approached by security guards and an administration official. When the students tried to leave, more security officers and a police officer were summoned to threaten the students with arrest. A lawsuit had to be filed to protect the students' rights.

University Prohibits Student Organization from Hosting Event with Prayer and Invitation to Follow Christ

Alliance Defense Fund, "Speak Up: University of Texas-Pan American," available at <http://www.speakupmovement.org/Map/CaseDetails?Case=226>

The University of Texas-Pan American did not allow a student group, Chi Alpha, to host an event at which a guest speaker would lead prayer and have a call to follow Christ. After receiving a demand letter, the university allowed the event to be held.

Students Told They May Paint Panels at School So Long As None Reference God or Jesus

https://www.rutherford.org/publications_resources/on_the_front_lines/pr411

When students at the Boca Raton School District in Florida were permitted to paint panels around the high school, members of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes were told that they could not paint messages with references to God or Jesus. The members and their parents were forced to file a lawsuit against the school to stop the discrimination.

ACLU Attempts to Remove "God Bless America" Sign Posted at School Following 9/11

Ryan McCarthy, "School Rallies to Retain Sign; The ACLU Says the Message 'God Bless America' Divides Kids by Religion and is Unconstitutional," The Sacramento Bee (Oct. 6, 2001)

In the wake of Sept. 11, 2001, Breen Elementary School posted a sign that said "God Bless America." The ACLU intervened in an attempt to have the sign removed, calling it a clear violation of the U.S. and California constitutions.



Elementary Student Prevented from Handing Out Religious Valentine's Day Cards

Freedom Forum, "Wisconsin School Board: Girl May Hand Out Religious Cards," available at <http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=14741> (Aug. 29, 2001)

Morgan Nyman, a second-grader at Cushing Elementary School in Delafield, Wisconsin, was told by school officials that she could not hand out her Valentine's Day cards because they contained religious messages and would violate the separation of church and state. The school district changed its position and apologized after a lawsuit was filed on Morgan's behalf.

Third Grader Forced to Turn Shirt That Says "Jesus Christ" Inside Out

Bangor Daily News, "School Cool to Girl's 'Jesus' Sweatshirt," available at <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=2457&dat=20010214&id=ea5JAAAAIBAJ&sjid=eg4NAAAAIBAJ&pg=4209,3647441> (Feb. 14, 2001)

Gelsey Bostick, a third-grader at Asa Adams School in Orono, Maine, was required to wear her shirt inside out because it had the words "Jesus Christ" on it. The principal defended the actions and stated that it was a matter of the shirt being interpreted by the students as bearing swear words. After a legal center intervened on Gelsey's behalf, the school reversed its position.

Middle School Student Prevented from Wearing Cross Necklace

Freedom Forum, "Alabama School District Settles Dispute Over Cross Necklace," available at <http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=11770> (Mar. 1, 2000)

Kandice Smith, a sixth-grader at Curry Middle School in Jasper, Alabama, wore a cross necklace to school and was told by her principal that if she did not conceal it she could be suspended. The school dress code barred jewelry worn outside of clothing. The school only reversed its position after a lawsuit was filed on Kandice's behalf.

Valedictorian Told He Must Give "Secular" Speech

Alliance Defense Fund, "ADF Achieves Victory for Valedictorian," available at <http://www.alliancedefensefund.org/Home/ADFContent?cid=2736>

Matthew Reynolds, the valedictorian at HLV Junior-Senior High School in Victor, Iowa, wished to express his faith and attribute his success to faith in Jesus Christ in his graduation speech. However, although Matthew planned to begin by clarifying that his views were not the views of the school or the administration, the school principal told Matthew that he must make his speech "secular." Following an attorney's letter explaining the law and

Matthew's rights, the principal allowed Matthew to give the speech as he intended.

Student Told She Cannot Tell Her Friends About Her Church Youth Group

Alliance Defense Fund, "Student Can Now Share About Her Youth Group," available at <http://www.alliancedefensefund.org/Home/ADFContent?cid=3176>

In Flagstaff, Arizona, sixth-grader Caitlin Ribelin was told that she was not allowed to give information about her church youth group to her friends, since school policies did not allow religious materials. After a lawsuit was filed on her behalf, the school changed its policy to allow all literature to be treated the same on school campuses.

Elementary School Student Punished for Praying Before Meals

Joan Little, "City Schools Issue Rules About Students, Religion," St. Louis Post-Dispatch, July 11, 1996, at 2B

Elementary school student Raymond Raines was "caught" praying over his meal at his elementary school. He was lifted from his seat and reprimanded in front of all the other students, then taken to the principal who ordered him to cease praying in school.

School Administrators Worry About Students Reading Bibles During Lunch Breaks

Barbara Vobejda, "School Officials Weigh Sachs' Ruling on Religious Gatherings," Washington Post, Dec. 8, 1984 at B3

Maryland's Attorney General ruled that Catonsville High School students could continue their informal religious activity of gathering to read the Bible during their Thursday lunch hours. School administrators were worried about the ruling because they feared it would create problems in a "sensitive area."



MANAGING EDITORIAL TEAM



Kelly Shackelford, Esq., has been President, CEO, and Chief Counsel of First Liberty Institute (formerly Liberty Institute) since 1997. He is a constitutional scholar who has argued before the U.S. Supreme Court, testified before the U.S. House and Senate on constitutional issues, and won landmark First Amendment and religious liberty cases. He was named one of the 25 greatest Texas lawyers of the past quarter-century by *Texas Lawyer*, and he is also the recipient of the prestigious William Bentley Ball Award for Life and Religious Freedom Defense for his leadership and pioneering work protecting religious freedom. He is on the Board of Trustees of the U.S. Supreme Court Historical Society.



Justin Butterfield, Esq., graduated from Harvard Law School in 2007. He served as the student coordinator for the well-known Veritas Forum, was a member of the Federalist Society, and was heavily involved with the Harvard Law School Christian Fellowship. A native Texan, Mr. Butterfield completed his undergraduate studies at the University of Texas at El Paso where he earned a bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering. He graduated *summa cum laude*, with honors, and was a University Banner Bearer.

The Managing Editorial Team also wishes to acknowledge the outstanding contributions of the attorneys, research fellows, and interns at First Liberty Institute, who both know the legal landscape of religious liberty and strive to keep religious liberty as America's first liberty.



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