

Texas Biology Professor Fired for Teaching Biology

First Liberty Institute sends a letter urging reinstatement and threatens a federal lawsuit for religious discrimination.

San Antonio, TX—First Liberty Institute today sent a letter to St. Philip’s College in San Antonio, Texas on behalf of Dr. Johnson Varkey, a former adjunct professor, demanding reinstatement to his position after the San Antonio public community college fired him for teaching standard principles about human biology and reproduction.

You can read the letter [here](#).

“It is preposterous that, after teaching for more than 20 years, St. Philips would fire Dr. Varkey for teaching basic, widely accepted biology,” said Keisha Russell, Counsel for First Liberty Institute. “Dr. Varkey received exemplary performance reviews for twenty years, teaching fact-based, widely accepted science. But now that cultural elites are at odds with these ideas, the school no longer supports professors who teach them. The college violated Dr. Varkey’s constitutional and statutory rights when it fired him, and it must reinstate him immediately.”

In his role as an adjunct professor, Dr. Varkey taught Human Anatomy and Physiology to more than 1,500 students since 2003. During Dr. Varkey’s twenty-year employment as a biology professor at St. Philip’s College, he received positive student feedback and was never disciplined.

In November 2022, a handful of Dr. Varkey’s students walked out of his class when he stated, consistent with his study of human biology, that sex was determined by chromosomes X and Y. In two decades of teaching these basic, scientific concepts, no other students ever complained. But on January 27, 2023, Dr. Varkey received a Notice of Discipline and Termination of Employment and Contract letter stating that the school “received numerous complaints” about his “religious preaching, discriminatory comments about homosexuals and transgender individuals, anti-abortion rhetoric, and misogynistic banter” and that his teaching “pushed beyond the bounds of academic freedom with [his] personal opinions that were offensive to many individuals in the classroom.” Dr. Varkey taught from school-approved and science-based curriculum, but the college claims his teaching was religious.

In the letter, Dr. Varkey’s attorneys state, “When St. Philip’s College terminated Dr. Varkey, it violated the Free Speech Clause and Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Texas Religious Freedom Restoration Act, among multiple other statutory provisions.”

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About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](#) is a non-profit public interest law firm and the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

To arrange an interview, contact Peyton Luke at media@firstliberty.org or by calling 972-941-4453.