



PRESS RELEASE from  
LIBERTY JUSTICE CENTER

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## **Parents sue Loudoun County School Board for pushing children to voice support for controversial political views**

***Students who don't comply face discrimination and  
in-school reprimands imposed by fellow students***

LOUDOUN COUNTY, Va. (June 2, 2021) — A group of Loudoun County parents have filed a federal lawsuit against school leaders for violating students' free speech rights. Over the past two years, the board and administrators have incorporated controversial and radical political theory into school curriculum. Now they are asking students to be vocal supporters of these political views or face being excluded from school leadership positions and reported through a new "bias reporting" system.

The parents are represented by the Liberty Justice Center, a national public interest law firm committed to protecting free speech. In the lawsuit, the parents say that the "Student Equity Ambassador Program" and bias reporting system are illegal and undermine students' free speech.

"Not only are Loudoun school leaders telling students what they can and can't say, they are imposing controversial political views on students and punishing those who don't agree," said **Daniel Suhr, senior attorney at the Liberty Justice Center**. "Loudoun County's policies are extreme and divisive. Every student has a right to express his or her views and to engage in a respectful, robust conversation about real issues without fear of retribution."

Loudoun County Public Schools serves over 80,000 students from kindergarten through high school in Virginia, outside of Washington, D.C. To implement a new equity curriculum, the Loudoun County School Board has instituted a set of initiatives that censor free speech and discriminate against students based on their race.

"The school board has been trying to pretend discrimination and suppression of free speech isn't happening in our schools, but we see it in class lessons, in the books being promoted or banned in the library, and in the creation of new school programs," said **Patti Hidalgo Menders, mother of an LCPS high school student**.

Only "students of color" or those who expressly attest to being "allies" are eligible for participation in the Equity Ambassadors Program. The program is paired with a "Bias Reporting System," essentially converting students into the speech police, with the power to name and shame peers for expressing viewpoints inconsistent with extreme racial political ideology. Selected students report to a "Supervisor of Equity" to expose those who have been detected of straying from the program's strict ideology.

"Our kids have the right to develop their own opinions, free from indoctrination and school-sanctioned bullying," said **Scott Mineo, parent of a Loudoun County high school student and founder of**

**Parents Against Critical Theory.** “Instead of opening young minds, Loudoun County school leaders are policing them. This is not education; it is coercion.”

***Menders v. Loudoun County School Board*** was filed June 2, 2021, in U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia. Case filings are available here:

<https://libertyjusticecenter.org/media/loudoun-county>

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**The Liberty Justice Center** is a nonprofit, public-interest litigation center that fights to protect school choice and fundamental constitutional rights. The Liberty Justice Center is best known for its 2018 U.S. Supreme Court victory in *Janus v. AFSCME*. Learn more about the Liberty Justice Center at [LibertyJusticeCenter.org](https://LibertyJusticeCenter.org).