

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR - DECEMBER 2025

December 4th, 2025
by Nicodemus Seiber



Letters to the Editor

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Editorial Opinion by Nicodemus Seiber

Recently, I read a post about two students whose school board denied them permission to start a Fellowship of Christian Athletes chapter at their school in Smith County Tennessee.

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I was outraged. These children have the same rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights that I do! I once signed my life away to Uncle Sam to defend those rights. My mind raced, thinking about what I could do to stand up for these kids.

Then, I did some research and began to understand why this action was taken. In November of 2019, the Smith County Board of Education was sued by the American Civil Liberties Union for promoting Christianity. <https://smithcountyinsider.com/home-page-featured/settlement-reached-in-aclu-school-board-lawsuit/>

The Smith County Board of Education is scared. There are many prohibitions detailed in the 2020 settlement of the lawsuit. Running afoul of the agreed upon settlement could result in severe penalties. However, in their fear, they may have violated the rights of the two students whose applications were denied.

The First Liberty Institute has taken up the cause of these students. <https://firstliberty.org/media/tennessee-school-district-urged-to-follow-the-law-and-allow-faith-based-athletic-student-clubs-to-meet/>

Precedent is clear in this situation:

- Tinker v. Des Moines (1969): Established that students do not "shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate".
- Westside Community Schools v. Mergens (1990): The Supreme Court upheld the Equal Access Act, which requires public secondary schools that receive federal funds to provide equal access to extracurricular clubs, including student-initiated religious groups, during non-instructional time.
- Equal Access Act (1984) - Prohibits federally-funded public secondary schools which allow non-school-sponsored groups of students to meet from discriminating against any meeting of students on the basis of religious content if: (1) the meeting is voluntary and student initiated; (2) there is no government sponsorship; and (3) no unlawful activity is

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permitted. To the Smith County Board of Education, I offer the following scriptures:

(Ephesians 6:12) We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

(Isaiah 41:10) Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness"


To the American Civil Liberties Union I say, if you will not stand for the rights of ALL the oppressed, you are standing for no one at all.

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