



Focus on Religious Freedom

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"Without freedom of thought there can be no such thing as wisdom; and no such thing as public liberty without freedom of speech." Benjamin Franklin

Banning Religious Americans from Teaching in Public Schools

New licensing rules in Minnesota that require teachers to "affirm" students' transgender identities will effectively ban religious Christians, Muslims, and Jews from teaching in public schools. MN state certified teachers will be required to "foster an environment that ensures student identities such as ... gender identity ...are...affirmed." ⁽¹⁾ Other states are also looking for ways to implement these unconstitutional licensing rules.

"...teachers are going to be faced with hiding their beliefs or getting denied (a state teaching license)," said Doug Seaton of MN Upper Midwest Law Center. "Christians, Muslims, and Jews need not apply for MN teaching jobs." ⁽²⁾

The new standard requires that a licensed teacher, "fosters an environment that ensures student identities such as sex and gender, gender identity, sexual orientation ... are historically and socially contextualized..." ⁽³⁾ Standard 6C requires that "The teacher understands the historical foundations of education in MN ...that have and continue to create inequitable opportunities, experiences, and outcomes for learners ... on the basis of ... gender, sexual orientation." ⁽⁴⁾

"The (licensing board) has made it impossible for those practicing orthodox Christianity and Judaism, for example, to freely exercise their religion and simultaneously hold a teaching license. ... It compels potential licensees to speak the (licensing board's) chosen beliefs as an established creed and live them out in order to have a job. It establishes (licensing board's) view of human sexuality and gender as orthodoxy despite sincere opposition based on biological reality and traditional theistic beliefs," wrote attorney Doug Seaton to the law judge who approved nearly all the new standards in December. ⁽⁵⁾

College teacher preparation programs will also have to comply with these new requirements. This sets up another constitutional conflict by requiring religious institutions to endorse behaviors and ideologies that conflict with their beliefs. When put into effect, these new rules will likely meet court challenges.

"When even one American - who has done nothing wrong - is forced by fear to shut his mind and close his mouth - then all Americans are in peril."

President Harry S. Truman

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