



Elad Hakim

Virginia Supreme Court to Hear Important School Pronoun Policy Case

The Virginia Supreme Court will hear arguments today in a case involving a teacher, [Peter Vlaming](#), who was terminated for refusing to refer to a transgender student by the student's preferred pronoun(s). After the Circuit Court for the County of King William dismissed the case, Vlaming appealed the case to the state's highest court.

Vlaming, a Christian teacher at West Point High School, was fired by the West Point School Board because he refused to refer to a transgender student in his class using pronouns that did not align with the student's biological sex. The school board required Vlaming to use pronouns in accordance with the student's preferred gender and in accordance with the school district's nondiscrimination policies.

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) represents Vlaming in this case. As reported by [The Christian Post](#):

Vlaming was placed on administrative leave in 2018 after he said he couldn't in good conscience comply with the superintendent's order to refer to a female student as a male.

However, the teacher consistently used the student's preferred name instead of the student's given name, and although he attempted to avoid the use of any pronouns in an effort to accommodate the student, he was nonetheless directed to cease "avoiding the use of male pronouns" to refer to the student, even when the student wasn't present, ADF said.

The New American

Author: [Elad Hakim](#)

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When Vlaming refused such demands, he was fired.

Ultimately, the Virginia Supreme Court will decide whether the board violated Vlaming's rights under Virginia law and the Virginia Constitution, including the right to free speech and the right to freely exercise one's religion. According to [ADF Senior Counsel](#) Chris Schandavel, who will argue before the court on Vlaming's behalf:

As a teacher, Peter was passionate about the subject he taught, he was well-liked by his students, and he did his best to accommodate their needs and requests. But Peter couldn't in good conscience speak messages that he doesn't believe to be true. And that was enough to get him fired by a school board that demanded absolute conformity to the school's ideological beliefs. That firing violated Peter's rights under the Virginia Constitution and Virginia law.

Vlaming's case is important. According to his [lawyers](#), he did his best to accommodate the student and even used the student's preferred name. However, as a Christian, he could not in good conscience speak messages that he doesn't believe to be true. According to a report by [CBN News](#), Vlaming was quoted as saying:

There's bound to be opposition to living for God. I was brought to a point where I had to make a decision that cost something. And when that happens it's an opportunity to grow in your faith. It's an opportunity to show the Lord, yes, I am for you. Yes, I trust you.

Time will tell if the Virginia Supreme Court agrees with Vlaming.