



Texas Student Suspended for Saying Homosexuality is Wrong

An honors student at a Fort Worth, Texas, high school was sent to the principal's office after he told a fellow student that he thought homosexuality is wrong. Fourteen-year-old Dakota Ary was in his German class "when the conversation shifted to religion and homosexuality in Germany," reported Fox News. "At some point during the conversation, he turned to a friend and said that he was a Christian and 'being a homosexual is wrong.'"



A short time later Dakota's mother, Holly Pope, received a call from an assistant principal at Fort Worth's Western Hills High School (left) informing her that her son would be serving an "in-school suspension," along with a two-day full suspension, for his offense. "Dakota is a very well-grounded 14-year-old," Pope told Fox News, adding that her son is not only an honors student, but plays on the school's football team and is involved in his church's youth group. "He's been in church his whole life and he's been taught to stand up for what he believes," she added.

What the young man believes, however, apparently did not square with the opinions of his German teacher, who took exception to the comment. Dakota told Fox News that his comment "wasn't directed to anyone except my friend who was sitting behind me." Nonetheless, the teacher apparently heard the statement and "started yelling. He told me he was going to write me an infraction and send me to the office."

According to a press release by [Liberty Counsel](#), the conservative legal advocacy group representing Dakota in the case, the German teacher had previously "displayed a picture of two men kissing on a 'World Wall' and told the students that homosexuality is becoming more prevalent in the world and that they should just accept it. Many of the students were offended by the teacher's actions and his continually bringing up the topic of homosexuality in a German language class."

Finding themselves in the awkward position of having a student's free speech guarantee collide with a politically correct stance they assumed they were required to endorse, Fort Worth Independent School District officials issued a statement explaining that they preferred not to comment "on specific employee or student-related issues. Suffice it to say that we are following district policy in our review of



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the circumstances and any resolution will likewise be in accordance with district policy.”

The morning after the incident, Dakota and his mother were joined by Matthew Krause, an attorney with Liberty Counsel, for a meeting with school officials, who quickly rescinded the two-day suspension, which freed the young man to participate in an upcoming football game.

“I told the school that he should never have been suspended for exercising his constitutional rights,” Krause explained to Fox News. “The principal is sincere in trying to do the right thing and hopefully they will tell the teacher, ‘Do not do that anymore.’ He won’t be pushing his agenda.”

Added Krause: “Just because you walk through the schoolhouse doors doesn’t mean you shed your First Amendment rights. Dakota wasn’t disrupting class. He wasn’t bullying or harassing anybody. He was just stating his personal opinion on a topic somebody else brought up and in a civil and respectful manner.”

Dakota’s mother said that she emphasized to her son the importance of treating his German teacher with respect, in spite of their differences of opinion on the issue of homosexuality. “He is your elder,” she said. “He is your teacher. What his beliefs are or what they are not — outside the school is none of our business.”

Liberty Counsel noted that several weeks ago it had defended award-winning Florida teacher Jerry Buell “after he was suspended for a comment he made outside of class on his personal Facebook page, expressing his disapproval of legalized homosexual marriage in New York” (Click to read [The New American’s](#) coverage of this story.) The group noted that following “a week-long ‘investigation,’ the Lake County School Board fully exonerated and reinstated Buell.”

Harry Mihet, a senior attorney with Liberty Counsel, said that the “double standard advocated by homosexual activists is mind boggling. Jerry Buell was suspended for opposing same-sex ‘marriage’ outside of class. This teacher in Texas is actually bullying his students into accepting the homosexual lifestyle inside the class. And yet it is his student, not him, that gets suspended.”

Liberty Counsel attorneys said they would continue to monitor the situation in Texas to ensure that the Fort Worth school district follows through on its promise to respect Dakota Ary’s First Amendment guarantees.



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