



Eighth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals Gives Huge Victory to Springfield, MO Educators Fighting Back Against Forced “Anti-Racism” Trainings in Public Schools

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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[December 30, 2025] Today, Southeastern Legal Foundation (SLF), a national nonprofit of top attorneys that regularly defend constitutional rights, proudly announced the Eighth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals [ruled in favor](#) of Springfield, MO educators who were forced to take part in racist and unconstitutional DEI training.

SLF President Kim Hermann said, “After years of fighting to be heard, we are thrilled that the Eighth Circuit ruled in our favor to allow our clients’ free speech challenge against mandatory anti-racism training to move forward. It’s appalling that a public school system was forcing educators to affirm ideas promoting racial division among its students and educators. These kinds of trainings have no place in our schools, and we are pleased the Court agreed that our clients suffered First Amendment injuries. We hope this win gives other public school teachers, parents, and students the courage to fight back against DEI racism trainings that separate people by the color of skin and restrict their freedom of speech.”

SLF filed the lawsuit against [Springfield Public Schools](#) (SPS) in 2021 on behalf of two educators who were forced, along with every single employee in the district, to partake in “equity training” which encouraged racial discrimination and embraced racial stereotypes like the teaching of Critical Race Theory.

SLF argued that the training violated the educators’ freedom of speech by forcing them to affirm ideas including that America was built on systems of oppression and that colorblindness is a form of white supremacy. If they didn’t, or if they spoke out in opposition to the school district’s views, they risked being removed from the training, losing required credit, and facing consequences. The Eighth Circuit said, “The evidence in the record . . . contains specific facts by way of declarations, deposition testimony, emails, training materials, etc. that show how the school district forced the plaintiffs to accept the school district’s views under threat of punishment.”



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