



ACLU OF IDAHO DEMANDS MISSING PUBLIC RECORDS RELATED TO NAMPA SCHOOL BOOK BAN

The civil rights organization cites potential First Amendment violations in follow-up letter to public records request

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BOISE — Today, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Idaho sent a letter to Nampa School District Superintendent Gregg Russell and the Board of Trustees for the Nampa School District demanding that the district produce the records it excluded when it responded to the ACLU's July 6 public records request. The ACLU's preliminary review of the records indicated that the School District and Board excluded certain relevant and responsive materials.

Before producing the records, the Trustees held a special July 25 closed meeting where they discussed "records that are exempt from disclosure." In its letter, the ACLU emphasized that the requested records are not exempt from disclosure under current public records request law and demanded that they be produced immediately, noting they are already overdue.

The ACLU has thoroughly reviewed the records produced so far. Those records suggest that the Trustees may have violated the First Amendment of the United States Constitution when they voted in May to permanently remove 22 books from school libraries and classrooms.

"The Trustees made their rash decision without following regular and unbiased procedures for reviewing the books after just one parent complained. That sole parent ultimately abandoned her challenge to four of those books. The Trustees also ignored the recommendations of School District staff that at least six and as many as 16 of the challenged books contained 'little or no sexual content' and should have remained on library shelves," said Aadika Singh, ACLU of Idaho legal director.

"The documents we've reviewed make clear that the Nampa School Board banned a number of books without any justification. The Board's assertion that students should

be denied access to these books because they are ‘pornographic’ is meritless,” said Colleen Smith, ACLU of Idaho cooperating attorney.

The ACLU’s public record request followed other requests filed by concerned citizens, community groups, and news media outlets, where Superintendent Russell and the Trustees have yet to produce complete and responsive records.

“It has been three months since the Trustees banned these books and, unless the Trustees reverse their decision, students will soon return to school with library shelves empty of these award winning and educational books,” said Singh. “If the Trustees had read the books, they would know that these books are not harmful but educational and even life-saving. Community members are right to be furious at the Trustees’ unjustified abuse of power and lack of subsequent correction.”

[Read the ACLU of Idaho letter to Nampa School District Superintendent and Board of Trustees and view this press release on the ACLU of Idaho website.](#)

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The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Idaho is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of civil liberties and civil rights. The ACLU of Idaho strives to advance civil liberties and civil rights through activities that include litigation, education, and lobbying. Learn more at acluidaho.org.