



ACLU OF IDAHO FILES FEDERAL COMPLAINT WITH DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ON DISCRIMINATION OF LATINE STUDENTS BY THE NAMPA SCHOOL DISTRICT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 23, 2023

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BOISE, Idaho – Today, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Idaho [filed a complaint](#) with the U.S. Department of Justice Civil Rights Division, Educational Opportunities Section, on behalf of Latine students impacted by the discriminatory dress code and discipline policies and practices of the Nampa School District.

The complaint states that policies of the Nampa School District are vague and undefined and target Latine students based on clothing and other items related to their ethnicity and culture. About 40 percent of the students enrolled in Nampa schools identify as Latine. The district's policies outlined in the complaint include an informal "no rosaries policy" that prohibits students from visibly carrying Catholic rosaries and "color contracts" that are administered on an individual basis that prohibit a particular student from wearing a particular color.

"We continue to learn from Latine families about discriminatory policies and practices by the Nampa School District," said **Erica Rodarte, legal fellow at the ACLU of Idaho**. The district provides sweeping discretion to discipline students for dress and expression, while simultaneously failing to provide defined guidelines. What's more, formal and informal policies maintain a culture within the school district that has targeted and disproportionately disciplined multiple generations of students. Latine students are a vital part of Idaho, and they deserve a seat in a classroom where they will not be mislabeled, pushed out, or punished for who they are."

“Schools should prioritize fostering an environment that celebrates and recognizes—rather than punishes—the culture, ethnicity, and religious identities of Latines and other students of color. Minor dress code violations can build up to expulsions that push out of schools Latine and other students of color who are more likely to be disciplined,” said **Sarah Hinger, senior staff attorney in the Racial Justice Program at the American Civil Liberties Union.** “We urge the Nampa School District to stop implementing gang dress codes, which have led to over policing and targeting, and have jeopardized the rights of Latine students to learn in an environment free of discrimination. All students, regardless of their race, national origin, color, or religious affiliation, should be set for success and not be unjustly targeted and labeled as gang members.”

The complaint comes after an almost year-long investigation and follows the publication of *Proud to Be Brown: Punishing Latine Culture in Idaho Schools*, an ACLU Idaho report that found widespread use of discipline policies in the Nampa and Caldwell School Districts that target and discriminate against Latine students.

A copy of the Department of Justice complaint can be found [here](#).

A copy of the Department of Justice complaint in Spanish can be found [here](#).

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