



## *E.W. v French* One Pager

**Case Name:** *E.W. v French*

**Status:** Filed on February 24, 2022.

**Significance:** Whether families who choose to send their children to religious schools will be treated equally by Vermont government officials.

**Background:** In Vermont there are small towns without public schools that provide families tuition benefits to attend the school of their choice. Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys represent the Williams family who attend Mount St. Joseph, a Catholic school under the Diocese of Burlington. Government officials in Vermont initially excluded the Williams family from the public benefit altogether because the school they chose was religious. Now they're refusing the Williamses equal access to the program. Government officials have an obligation to grant public benefits to all families, regardless of the children's schools' religious status, beliefs, and activities.

### Key Points

- Parents should have the choice to send their children to the school that's the best fit for their family.
- Every person should have equal access to public benefits no matter their religious beliefs or activities.

### Key Facts

- Vermont's Town Tuition Program is unlawfully discriminating against religious families and schools.
- The Williams family believe that their Catholic faith is part of their everyday lives, which is why they want to send their children to a school founded in their faith.
- These families are willing to pay out of pocket for the best school for their children even if it's not approved by the Town Tuition Program.
- On June 30, 2020, the United States Supreme Court issued its opinion in *Espinoza v. Montana Department of Revenue*, reminding government officials that states cannot deny students public education benefits because their school is religious, which reaffirms that families like the Williamses should not be denied this public benefit.
- The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Circuit has already halted similar discrimination against another Vermont Catholic high school in [A.H. v. French](#).

**The Bottom Line:** At the end of the day, this affects these children's future. They should be allowed to attend the school that is the best fit for them, no matter their religious beliefs.