

The *Geraghty* Case

Case Name: *Geraghty v. Jackson Local School District Board of Education*

Case Status: The case is currently before the United States Court for the Northern District of Ohio.

Significance: Whether teachers should be able to live and work freely, without being forced to violate their beliefs.



Background: Vivian Geraghty successfully taught for two years at Jackson Memorial Middle School as a English Language Arts teacher – she loved her students and her students loved her. In August 2022, Ms. Geraghty was informed that two of her students asked that she use different names and pronouns to refer to them in order to participate in their “social transition” – a process designed to validate the idea that a person is some gender other than the one inconsistent with their sex. As a teacher within the Jackson Local School District, Ms. Geraghty is required to participate in the “social transition” of any student that asks. She expressed concern to school administration, explaining that participating in social transition would violate her religious beliefs. Validating a child’s new gender identity is not only harmful to the child, but also increases the likelihood that the child will undergo irreversible forms of treatment that can harm children. Within two hours of learning that Ms. Geraghty’s religious convictions prevented her from participating in the social transition of students, the school denied any form of accommodation for her and forced her to write a letter of resignation effective immediately. The school has both controlled and compelled Ms. Geraghty’s speech by punishing her for not personally validating the preferred message of the school. The First Amendment protects the right to differ in personal conviction and religious belief, and the school has violated these fundamental constitutional rights. ADF has filed a lawsuit against the school to vigilantly protect the constitutional freedoms of teachers to do their jobs without violating convictions and without fear of punishment.

Key Points

- Public schools can’t force teachers to abandon their beliefs just to keep their jobs.
- The school is more interested in pushing radical ideologies than retaining qualified teachers like Vivian.
- The First Amendment protects teachers’ right to live and work freely without being forced to violate their beliefs.

Key Facts

- An administrator told Vivian that she needed to “set her religious beliefs aside.”
- The school refused to work with Vivian at all – within hours of her approaching the principal, she was forced to resign and escorted from the school.

The Bottom Line: Schools cannot force teachers to set aside their religious beliefs in order to keep their jobs.