



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on March 17, 2022

## Christian Middle-school Teacher Sues School Board for Religious Discrimination

A math teacher at Fort Riley (Kansas) Middle School found herself the target of an effort to remove all Biblical references to sexuality in the school last spring. As the school board running the Geary County School District, where her school is located, decided to move toward gender “fluidity,” Pamela Ricard pushed back. A Christian, Ricard refused to call her students by whatever first name they chose and instead continued to call them either “Miss” or “Mister,” depending on their biological sex. For that she was suspended for three days last April. When negotiations failed to resolve the matter, [she sued the board on Monday](#).



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She has enlisted the assistance of Josh Ney, a partner in the Kriegshauser Ney Law Group, who explained the basis for the suit:

Our suit contends that schools cannot force teachers to promote novel views about gender fluidity and ever-expanding pronoun categories without regard to the First Amendment or due process.

Throughout her career, Ms. Ricard has consistently treated every student in her classroom with respect and dignity; unfortunately, the school district has not treated Ms. Ricard with similar good faith or basic fairness.

When Ricard was initially disciplined, the board hadn’t completely sold out to the “woke” ideology, so it found her in violation of the district’s “generic” policies related to “diversity and inclusion.”

Later, as the board solidified its stance against the traditional cultural and Biblical understanding of two sexes and two sexes only, it issued its command:

Society has historically utilized “he/him” when identifying biological males and “she/her” when identifying biological females....

Employees should be aware and make an effort to utilize the pronouns an individual requests to be identified by.

This will assist in the prevention of discrimination and harassment. This appropriate usage of pronouns also contributes to a culture of unity and inclusivity.

Ricard, who has taught math at Fort Riley Middle School since 2005, refused to bend to the shifting



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winds of morality. Her lawsuit spelled out her position:

Ms. Ricard is a Christian and holds sincere religious beliefs consistent with the traditional Christian and Biblical understanding of the human person and biological sex.

Ms. Ricard believes that God created human beings as either male or female, that this sex is fixed in each person from the moment of conception, and that it cannot be changed, regardless of an individual person's feelings, desires, or preferences.

Any policy that requires Ms. Ricard to refer to a student by a gendered, non-binary, or plural pronoun (e.g., he/him, she/her, they/them, zhe/zher, etc.) or salutation (Mr., Miss, Ms.) or other gendered language that is different from the student's biological sex actively violates Ms. Ricard's religious beliefs.

Her suit deplores any requirement that she take a position counter to her faith, for a culture that shifts with each change in the wind and weather:

Under District policies, all teachers must now refer to each student — both in and out of class — using whatever names or pronouns the student claims reflect his or her particular gender identity on any given day.

The District now demands this of Ms. Ricard even though the concept of gender identity is entirely subjective and fluid, even though the number of potential gender identities is infinite (with ever expanding options currently available), and even though the number of potential pronouns has likewise exponentially multiplied in recent years — all for the purpose of lending credence to cultural ideas Ms. Ricard does not share or wish to advance that are contrary to her core religious beliefs.

The policies promoted by the school board are bad enough. To require that a Christian adopt them, under pain of punishment, is worse:

Defendants have retaliated against Ms. Ricard for exercising her First Amendment rights, including her right not be compelled to engage in particular speech or expression, have violated her First Amendment rights to free speech and free exercise of religion, have violated the unconstitutional conditions doctrine, have deprived her of due process and equal protection of law, and have breached their contract with her.

Thus, this action concerns the denial of Ms. Ricard's fundamental and clearly established rights under the Free Speech and Free Exercise Clauses of the First Amendment, the unconstitutional conditions doctrine, and the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.

As Ricard herself said, "No public school teacher should be forced to contradict [his or her] core beliefs in order to teach math to middle schoolers. I treat all students with respect, but the district has rejected any attempts to find a compromise that respects students without violating my convictions."

This is a skirmish in the larger war against the cultural foundations of the American Republic. At bottom, that war revolves around this question: "Is the Bible the Word of God and the rule for His



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creation, or isn't it?" As Scripture Itself says, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalm 11:3).

In Pamela Ricard's case, she can sue. And so, she is.



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