



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on April 1, 2013

## Oregon Teacher Says He Is Being Disciplined for Opposition to Planned Parenthood

A Portland, Oregon, educator who has been suspended from his job as a computer science and math teacher said he is being targeted because of his vocal opposition to Planned Parenthood. On March 19 Bill Diss, who is a pro-life leader in his church and community, as well as an outspoken advocate for teen abstinence, was notified that he was being placed on administrative leave “pending a recommendation to the superintendent that you be dismissed from your employment with Portland public schools for reasons that have been discussed with you.”



While letters and documents from the school appear to frame the issue around Diss’ professional behavior, Diss and his attorney argue that the actions of the district are tied to his outspoken opposition to Planned Parenthood.

On the day of his suspension Diss said that officials came into his classroom at Portland’s Benson High School, where he has taught for the past eleven years, and gave him just a few minutes to gather his belongings before police escorted him out of the building.

[American Life League](#) (ALL), which has been following the story, said that Diss has been harassed for his pro-life activities since at least 2007, when he began organizing efforts to stop Planned Parenthood’s infiltration into Portland’s poorer neighborhoods. According to ALL, in 2009 the abortion giant [attempted to have Diss’ teaching license revoked](#) after his attempts to halt construction of a Planned Parenthood abortion facility in a minority neighborhood in Portland.

Conflicts between Diss and the school became strained over the past school year when Planned Parenthood was invited into Benson High School through its Teen Outreach Program (TOP), the abortion giant’s version of teen pregnancy prevention, funded in part by the federal Department of Health and Human Services.

In September of last year, ALL recalled, Planned Parenthood representatives entered Diss’ classroom, where the teacher was conducting a computer science class. The representatives “expected to be given the floor to recruit students for the Teen Outreach Program,” recalled ALL in its coverage of the story. “Because Mr. Diss had been notified that TOP representatives were coming to speak to the class and they produced identification showing they were from Planned Parenthood rather than TOP, Mr. Diss asked them to leave his classroom. They left, and a few moments later the principal and vice principal came to remove Mr. Diss from class.”

The following day, Diss said, he was compelled to sit through a Planned Parenthood presentation during which the representative pressured students to join the program. “They were extremely aggressive in obtaining the children’s signatures by promising them all sorts of gifts and cash,” Diss recalled. Planned



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Parenthood officials subsequently filed a formal complaint against Diss for his intrusion into their efforts.

ALL reported that Diss “later discovered that the TOP permission form that was sent home the first day of school to Vietnamese-speaking parents used his name in a way that made it seem that he approved of the program. Diss’ attorney sent a notice to Planned Parenthood and Portland Public Schools complaining of defamation and demanding a retraction of information they sent to parents that indicated he approved of Planned Parenthood and the TOP program.” According to Diss’ attorney, the school never sent a retraction.

While Diss’ teaching evaluations and comments from school officials appear to tie his suspension and possible termination to job performance, it is difficult to ignore that a change in the district’s attitude toward Diss tracks with his efforts against Planned Parenthood.

Teaching evaluations through 2007 indicate that, at the very least, Diss was considered a competent teacher whose skills were steadily improving, “It was only in 2008, after he began speaking publicly about Planned Parenthood, that the official assessments turned negative,” recalled the [Catholic Sentinel](#). In fact, Diss had to battle with the district to get a 2008-09 evaluation removed from his file because of an inaccuracy.

Diss’ 2012-13 evaluation was the most critical, with claims that Diss lacks knowledge about the age group he is teaching and about issues of race and culture. Benson High School is in a largely black and Hispanic neighborhood of Portland. Diss, however, pointed out that the top two students in one of his most challenging computer classes this year have been Hispanic and Black females.

[World Net Daily](#) reported that in a letter from the school district that Diss provided to local newspapers, “officials claimed the teacher’s religious beliefs caused him to try to stop students from attending the pregnancy program” sponsored by Planned Parenthood. One of the letters also cited “unprofessional, intimidating and/or harassing behavior” on the part of Diss.

Continued [World Net Daily](#): “A letter from Principal Carol Campbell and human resources regional director Frank Scotto told Diss it was inappropriate to discuss chastity, purity, premarital sex, abortion, and religion in his math, computer science, and study hall classes, even though it was apparently appropriate to have a Planned Parenthood presentation on teenage sex and pregnancy in the same classroom.”

One school letter accused Diss of ordering his students to “shut [their] mouths,” adding that some of the students in his class “also quoted you as saying, ‘they would end up on 82nd (Avenue),’” a reference to an area of Portland with a reputation for prostitution. While Diss insisted that students had misunderstood his comments, he did acknowledge that he had discussed Planned Parenthood and religious beliefs in class — actions he insisted were appropriate because he allowed students to express their own views.

The [Catholic Sentinel](#) reported that among other examples cited against Diss was a school reprimand “for making calls during his lunch hour and attending a prayer vigil on Presidents Day.” At a hearing, a panel of school officials reportedly asked him the content of his prayer — to which Diss responded: “Next, you’ll want to know what I tell my priest in confession.”

While some students have targeted Diss for criticism, dozens of other past and present students and parents have stepped forward to support the teacher, many of them focusing on his faith and moral convictions, which they see as at the root of the school’s actions. “I know that many of your staff



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disagree with Mr. Diss on his religious views,” wrote Matthew Wade, a parent of two students at Benson, “but I think that is a very poor reason to persecute someone who has done as much good as he has for the children of Portland and for the students at Benson Tech.”

In response to the conflict, which has received both local and national media exposure, Portland Public School spokesman Matt Shelby insisted that the district would not target a teacher solely for how he lives out his religious convictions on his own time. “We fully expect all of our employees to have their own religious and political views and how they choose to express those opinions has no bearing on their employment...,” he said.

But Diss’ attorney, James Leuenberger, charges that the school district “has singled Bill out for punishment and expulsion because he stands as a beacon of Christian virtue,” specifically because of his attempt to protect his students from Planned Parenthood. Diss told a local newspaper that “I am a practicing Catholic and I am actively practicing my faith in the community. I look at these students as my own kids. I’ve never met a kid whose promiscuity or abortion was a positive thing. We are not built to be promiscuous. It breaks our hearts.”

Diss’ supporters note that he was recently recognized as the only teacher in Oregon who is qualified to teach college-level computer science classes to high school students for dual credit.

Diss acknowledged that such credentials appear to carry little weight with the school district. “It’s much more important for them to have Planned Parenthood in the schools than to have a really dedicated teacher who really teaches math well and goes the extra mile and does a whole bunch with the kids,” he said.

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