



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 18, 2023

Va. Supreme Court Reinstates Suit Over Teacher's Failure to Use Student's "Preferred" Pronouns

The Supreme Court of the State of Virginia [reinstated a teacher's lawsuit on Thursday](#), overruling a lower court's dismissal.

Peter Vlaming, who had been teaching French at West Point High School in West Point, Virginia, for more than six years, was fired in 2018 when, for religious reasons, he refused to refer to a female student who had undergone transition/mutilation surgery using male pronouns.

The female student had attended his classes for two years before, as a female, but with the approval of her parents, she decided she wanted to be a male and underwent ghastly transition surgery. She now wanted to be referred to by her male name, along with male pronouns — he, his, etc. — and Vlaming did his best to accommodate her.

He referred to her by her preferred male name which, in French, sounded equivalent, but he refused to use any male pronouns in referring to her. He was fired for not using those pronouns, and he sued the school, the school principal, and the school's superintendent.

From his lawsuit:

Vlaming referred to Doe by his new name, but [Vlaming] avoided the use of pronouns altogether when speaking to Doe.... Doe and his parents expressed frustration with Vlaming over this practice...

Vlaming told her that using male pronouns to refer to someone who was born a female violated his religious beliefs because it was untruthful.

The assistant principal, Suzanne Aunspach, got involved and, after hearing from the student (referred to in the lawsuit as John Doe) and her parents, told Vlaming that he "should use male pronouns to refer to Doe and that failure to do so could result in his termination."

He refused, was put on administrative leave, and then, following a meeting with the school board, was fired. It was because he violated the school district's policies that prohibited discrimination and harassment.

To illustrate the depravity of public education, here are those two policies:

The nondiscrimination policy states:

The West Point School Board is committed to nondiscrimination with regard to race, color,



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religion, national origin, ancestry, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, gender, *gender identity*, age, marital status, genetic information, or disability as defined by law. [Emphasis added.]

The nonharassment policy states:

It is a violation of this policy for any student or school personnel to harass a student or school personnel based on . . . sex, sexual orientation, gender, *gender identity* . . . as defined by law, or based on a belief that such characteristic exists at school or any school sponsored activity. [Emphasis added.]

Vlaming properly claimed, with the assistance of attorneys affiliated with Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), that the board's termination of his contract for refusing to use male pronouns when referring to a biological female "violated his due process, free speech and free exercise rights under the Virginia Constitution."

The lower court, without even hearing any evidence, tossed the lawsuit. As Thursday's ruling noted:

The West Point School Board terminated the employment of Peter Vlaming, a high school French teacher. Vlaming claims that he lost his job not because of something he had said — but because of what his conscience would not allow him to say.

In class, Vlaming referred to a transgender student by the student's preferred name and avoided the use of third person pronouns when referring to the student.

Vlaming claims that the School Board ordered him to use government-mandated pronouns in addition to using the student's preferred name.

The School Board fired Vlaming for refusing to do so....

For Vlaming, this request asked him to violate his conscience. He holds religious and philosophical convictions that reject the idea that "gender identity, rather than biological reality, fundamentally shapes and defines who we truly are as humans" and instead accept as a verity that "sex is fixed in each person, and that it cannot be changed, regardless of our feelings or desires."

The Supreme Court quoted from Vlaming's original lawsuit: "[His] conscience and religious practice prohibits him from intentionally lying, and he sincerely believes that referring to a female as a male by using an objectively male pronoun is telling a lie."

When Vlaming told Aunspach he wouldn't be able to use male pronouns in referring to a female now "transitioned" into a male, she told him that his "personal religious beliefs end at the school door."

Caleb Dalton of the ADF said:

Peter went out of his way to accommodate this student as he does all his students; his school fired him because he wouldn't contradict his core beliefs.

The school board didn't care how well Peter treated this student. It was on a crusade to compel conformity. He works hard to make his students feel welcomed. In his French class,



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he always calls his students by the name they choose.

He even used the student's preferred masculine name and was willing to avoid using pronouns in the student's presence.

He just didn't want to be forced to use a pronoun that offends his conscience. That's entirely reasonable, and it's his constitutionally protected right. Tolerance, after all, is a two-way street.

Readers should know what's involved in the mutilation that takes place when a female decides she really wants to ignore God's plan and become a male instead. It involves two phases: a "top" mutilation and a "bottom" mutilation.

The "top" requires a mastectomy, the removal of breasts.

The "bottom" is more complicated, involving first the removal of the uterus (called a hysterectomy), followed by removal of the vagina, called a vaginectomy. And then a penis is constructed using a testosterone-enlarged clitoris (called a metoidioplasty) to form a penis. It also involves facial "masculinization" surgery.

The lower court that originally ruled against Vlaming must now consider all the evidence and make a new ruling. Vlaming and his attorneys are demanding \$1 million in damages.

A final note: Vlaming was blacklisted in every school district in Virginia following his lawsuit and was forced to move. He now lives in France with his wife and family and works in an unrelated field. It's the price some pay for the freedom of others.





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