



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 1, 2023

## School District's Attempts to "Decenter Christmas" Challenged by Liberty Counsel

For at least the last two years, Holt Public Schools in Holt, Michigan (population 25,000), has adopted a Marxist, anti-Christmas agenda in advising teachers to not use Christmas symbols, decorations, or other such expressions during the Christmas holidays. In its annual memo, which demands that teachers "review the meaning of Decentering Christmas," the district promoted anti-Christian, anti-faith, pro-Marxist ideologies with the veiled warning to teachers to obey or else.



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During that time, teachers and parents have complained, and yet the school district has ignored them and kept in place its anti-Christmas, anti-Christian agenda. [Last week, Liberty Counsel intervened](#) and warned the district and its board members that it is ready to challenge their Marxist agenda in court.

Its letter pulled no punches:

Liberty Counsel provides pro bono advocacy and assistance on a variety of issues ... including the public education of traditional holidays such as Christmas.

We have affiliated attorneys across the United States, including Michigan.

After reviewing the horrific anti-faith memos and attached materials sent to the teachers in 2021 and 2022, Liberty Counsel demanded that the district retract all the scurrilous materials and memos that were previously issued, or else face "additional action." The board has until Thursday, December 7, to respond.

From its "demand" letter:

The FAQ and the "Decentering Christmas" Christmas 2021 emails are rooted in Critical Theory (CT), and the "Racial Justice Guide" which the email promotes is rooted in Critical Race Theory (CRT).

CT includes within its relentless criticism of cultural institutions an intense hatred for Christianity and associated holidays, such as Christmas. CRT seeks to upend the social order by recasting the Marxist ideology of CT in racial terms....

Critical Race Theory departs from Critical Theory in holding that "there is no human race



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per se; there are just white oppressors and the non-white oppressed.”...

CRT “uses race to continue CT’s intense criticism of the cultural institutions in order to fundamentally change society.”

In contrast to these ideologies, Christianity teaches that all people are made in God’s image, regardless of race, class, or sex, and have inherent dignity and worth.

Christmas is part of our Nation’s history and traditions and may not be banned by public schools....

The District has clearly communicated that Christianity, Christmas, and “whiteness” [93 percent of Holt is white] are problems to be remedied.

“Christmas” is a word to be excised from the vocabulary of District staff in favor of “winter season.” Decorations deemed “religious” by the District, including Christmas trees (or even the colors red and green associated with Christmas) must be eliminated in favor of “a tree that is winter themed or has plain white light bulbs.”

Liberty Counsel reviewed its recent First Amendment victories in similar circumstances: *Groff v. DeJoy* (in which a mailman was denied his First Amendment rights), *Kennedy v. Bremerton School District* (in which a football coach was denied his First Amendment rights), *Shurtleff v. City of Boston* (in which a Christian group was denied its First Amendment rights), and *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* (in which the school’s race-based admissions standards violated the Fourteenth Amendment).

It reminded the school board that their successful case against the City of Boston cost that city more than \$2 million in legal fees. The law firm declared that “after *Shurtleff*, *Kennedy*, and *Groff* such [Christmas] symbols *may not* be purged by the District.” (Emphasis in original.)

If that wasn’t enough, Liberty Counsel reached back to a Supreme Court decision from 1943 — *West Virginia v. Barnette* — to remind the board what the high court ruled then: “If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion, or force citizens to confess by word or act their faith therein.”

The demand letter concluded:

Liberty Counsel demands the immediate retraction of the District’s past (and proposed) unconstitutional bans on Christmas holiday symbols, decoration, and expression, and the “Racial Justice Guide.”

Please inform Liberty Counsel in writing by close of business on December 7, 2023, that the Christmas bans and “Racial Justice Guide” have been retracted and rescinded.

If the District fails to provide this response, Liberty Counsel will take additional action to prevent irreparable harm to cherished liberties.

In announcing its “demand” letter, Liberty Counsel issued a public statement:

Instead of being “inclusive,” these directives are rooted in Critical Race Theory and promote a hatred for and discriminate against Christianity and associated holidays, such as



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Christmas.

They violate school policy, the First Amendment, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 by showing hostility on the basis of religion and on the basis of race.

Dr. David Hornak, Holt's superintendent of schools, has a week to come to terms with Liberty Counsel or face the consequences.





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