

FIRM NEWS

Schulte lawsuit challenging Oklahoma classroom censorship bill still on hold by federal judge

Aug 7, 2023, 12:00 AM

Schulte Roth & Zabel, The American Civil Liberties Union of Oklahoma and Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights Under Law have been waiting for over a year and a half for the Court to rule on its Preliminary Injunction in *Black Emergency Response Team v. O'Connor*. This action was filed in October 2021 and challenges an Oklahoma classroom censorship bill, HB 1775, which severely restricts public school teachers and students from learning and talking about race and gender in the classroom.

The lawsuit alleges that HB 1775 is an unlawful restraint on freedom of expression by silencing students' and educators' speech through its vague and overbroad terms. It also intentionally targets and denies access to equitable, culturally relevant teaching and ideas that reflect the history and lived experiences of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color; women and girls; and LGBTQ+ students.

The ability for educators and students to have honest conversations around race, gender, and our country's history in schools carry particular importance in Oklahoma, whose history includes the 1889 Land Runs, "Indian" boarding schools, the 1921 Tulsa Massacre, and racially segregated schools.

With respect to the long delay in the Court deciding the Preliminary Injunction motion, *The Norman Transcript* spoke with Emerson Sykes, a senior staff attorney with the ACLU Speech, Privacy, and Technology Project, who commented, "The judge decided that no argument was necessary, and has not ruled on a single thing. There are pending motions

on both sides ... there has been no word from the court, no decision, no orders, no argument, no status conference, nothing.” Sykes added, “... because an injunction was not put in place, the law is in full effect, which is felt by students and teachers.”

The Schulte pro bono team is led by partners Doug Koff and Julia Beskin.

Read *The Norman Transcript* article [here](#).

Read about the filing [here](#).

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