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MEDIA ADVISORY
May 31st, 2023
#23-31

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TN AG SKRMETTI JOINS MULTISTATE BRIEF IN LAWSUIT AGAINST FLORIDA SCHOOL DISTRICT UNDERMINING PARENTAL RIGHTS

Nashville- Tennessee Attorney General Skrmetti joined a coalition of 21 state attorneys general in filing an amicus brief in support of two Florida parents who were stripped of their fundamental and longstanding right to direct the upbringing and care of their child when officials at Leon County Schools secretly held meetings with their child about gender identity.

In 2020, January and Jeffrey Littlejohn notified their child's middle school that they did not consent to their child changing names or using they/them pronouns while the child was experiencing "gender confusion." However, school officials proceeded to meet secretly with the child regarding preferred name, pronouns, restroom, and room-sharing arrangements for school field trips. The Littlejohns were never notified about the meeting or invited to attend, in accordance with the school district's policy.

"When a student considers transitioning gender, parents have a fundamental, constitutional right to be involved in that decision making process. Yet school districts across the country, strong-armed by ideologically driven advocacy groups, have shut parents out of the process and trampled on their fundamental rights," the attorneys general wrote in the brief.

The attorneys general are asking the Eleventh Circuit Court of Appeals in Florida to reverse the district court's ruling and "reaffirm parents' longstanding, and fundamental, right to be informed of critical information about their child's mental health and well-being."

The attorneys general note in the brief that students must get permission for lesser decisions and are restricted from a number of activities including the right to vote, enlist in the military without parental consent, and drink alcohol.

"That parental authority is based on the commonsense recognition 'that parents possess what a child lacks in maturity, experience, and capacity for judgment required for making life's difficult decisions,'" the brief states.

The attorneys general also note that presumably the school district does not treat a child's depression or other mental health issues without involving parents, and it has no duty or right to keep parents in the dark about gender-related distress either.

Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, and West Virginia also joined the brief led by Montana and Florida.

Click here to read the brief filed Tuesday.

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