

‘Absolutely Outrageous’: Smithsonian to Pay \$50K for Booting Pro-Life Students from Museum

A national museum in Washington, D.C. has agreed to pay tourists visiting their facility \$50,000 after they were kicked out for wearing pro-life apparel.

The National Air and Space Museum agreed to pay the settlement to cover attorney’s fees, expenses, costs and interest for the students of Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic School in Greenville, South Carolina, and their parents.

The group of 12 plaintiffs filed a lawsuit after visiting the museum on the day of the March for Life rally on Jan. 20, 2023.

They were all wearing beanies featuring the words “Rosary PRO-LIFE” as they toured the museum.

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According to the American Center for Law and Justice, which represented the plaintiffs, “Museum staff mocked the students, called them expletives and made comments that the museum was a ‘neutral zone’ where they could not express such statements.”

An employee “ultimately forced the students to leave the his hands together in glee as they exited the building.”

Meanwhile, other museum patrons were wearing all kinds of hats without issue, the ACLJ reports.

“It’s absolutely outrageous, it’s unconstitutional

discrimination, and the ACLJ is fighting back,” Jordan Sekulow, an attorney and executive director of the ACLJ, wrote at the time.

The plaintiffs filed a lawsuit accusing the federal museum of violating their rights under the First and Fifth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution, and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

“This was a clear-cut First Amendment violation, not only of their freedom of speech but of religion as well. The federal government simply cannot ban speech with which it or its employees disagree,” said Sekulow.

“Imagine this is your child being accosted, berated, and kicked out of a museum – that other children are allowed to attend – just because of their beliefs,” he added.

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The Smithsonian Institution, which oversees the Air and Space Museum and other museums in Washington, entered into a consent decree just one month after a lawsuit was filed.

They agreed to “reiterate to all security officers stationed at all Smithsonian museums open to the public and the National Zoological Park, that Smithsonian policy does not prohibit visitors from wearing hats or other types of clothing with messages, including religious and political speech.”

The two parties reached a settlement agreement last week where the Smithsonian not only agreed to pay \$50,000 but said they would allow the plaintiffs to privately tour the National Air and Space Museum and hear a video apology from museum officials.

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