

# Court Decides Pro-Life Teachers Can Be Forced to Facilitate Planned Parenthood Projects

For nearly 15 years, Bill Diss has taught technology, math, computers and electronics at Benson High School in the Portland, Oregon, public school system.

By all accounts, he's been an exceptional teacher, both at the high school and also at a local community college, where he's received accolades from students, parents and fellow teachers. Through his initiative and hard work, he was able to attract outside grant funding for Benson High School, opening greater opportunities for his students.

On his off time, as a devout Catholic, he has dedicated a considerable amount of his life to advocating for pro-life causes. He became a public figure in the pro-life movement by leading the opposition to a new Planned Parenthood "megacenter" in downtown Portland.

According to Life Legal Defense:

He tirelessly spoke about the problems Planned Parenthood would bring to Portland. He testified before local governmental bodies, organized peaceful protests against Planned Parenthood and led boycotts of businesses that supported the abortion facility.

Additionally, he served as the state director for the Culture of Life for the Knights of Columbus and founded Precious Children of Portland, a nonprofit organization that promotes the sanctity of human life and opposes abortion. Through these activities, Mr. Diss earned himself the status

of “Enemy No. 1” with the local branch of Planned Parenthood—the same affiliate that was caught on Planned Parenthood caught on tape giving a teenager advice on how to access pornography and engage in dangerous, deviant sexual acts.

Planned Parenthood went so far as to fund-raise in the name of Bill Diss—asking for solicitations based on the length of time Mr. Diss was present outside their facility, and then sending Mr. Diss a mocking list of the donors who contributed “in his name.”

Then, to top it off, in September 2012, Planned Parenthood employees came into his classroom to recruit for their in-school program, known as the Teen Outreach Program. When he asked to be excused from facilitating the program due to his faith-driven convictions, school administrators refused.

Diss was told by the school’s principal he must “work cooperatively” with Planned Parenthood. What followed, Life Legal alleges, was a “concerted plan” that ultimately resulted in his dismissal:

Throughout that school year, Mr. Diss continued to teach but was met at every turn by undue scrutiny, lack of support, hostility and other forms of harassment. He did his best to follow the directives he was given but did not abate his pro-life activities.

He actively protested the insertion of Planned Parenthood into the public schools, resulting in an avalanche of public opposition to the program. The more actively Mr. Diss followed his calling to promote life and purity, the more hostility he faced at his teaching job.

Diss was placed on administrative leave in March 2012, and his contract was terminated in December 2013. Left with no alternative, he sought legal advice from Life Legal Defense Foundation attorneys and filed suit for religious

discrimination in September 2014.

Last month, U.S. Magistrate Judge Paul Papak granted a motion for summary judgment on behalf of the Portland school district, stating there were no “legally significant facts” in dispute for the case to go before a jury. This despite the fact Life Legal attorneys presented compelling evidence of the sincerity of Diss’ religious objection.

Instead, Papak determined that schools may force teachers to allow Planned Parenthood employees into their classrooms to promote the abortionists’ program because it in no way burdens religious beliefs or activities. Life Legal Defense Foundation Executive Director Alexandra Snyder said her organization remains committed to representing his case, and she plans to appeal the decision to the ultra-liberal Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, which has jurisdiction over Oregon.

“The court’s ruling means that teachers such as Mr. Diss should not be afforded the full protection of the Constitution,” she said. “We vehemently disagree, and we look forward to pursuing his case on appeal.” {eoa}