

Christian Student Denied Virginia Tuition Aid Over Religious Major

A Liberty University student is taking legal action after Virginia revoked state tuition aid due to her religious major.

On Tuesday, August 11, 2026 prominent legal groups petitioned the U.S. Supreme Court for equal treatment after Liberty University student Bethany Hall's Virginia state-funded scholarship was revoked because of her religious course of studies.

Hall started her academic career as a "Music Education" major. Under this choice of study, she qualified to receive \$5,000 through the Virginia Tuition Assistance Grant (VTAG) program. Eventually, Hall changed her major twice – first to "Youth Ministries" and lastly "Music & Worship."

While Hall's change in major reflected normal academic shifts, the state of Virginia viewed it as a violation of the First Amendment.



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In 2004, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Locke v. Davey* that states can withhold state-funded scholarships from students pursuing a degree in theology. But religious rights groups still disagree with that ruling.

The National Legal Foundation, Claybrook LLC, Troutman Pepper Locke, First Liberty Institute and Alliance Defending Freedom are all supporting Hall in her challenge to the scholarship disqualification.

The legal groups filed a petition to the U.S. Supreme Court asking the justices to reverse the Locke v. Davey court decision on the grounds that it is discriminatory and violates Hall's and other students' religious liberty.

"Excluding students from a state scholarship or grant simply because their choice of major is religious is discriminatory," Jeremy Dys, Senior Counsel for First Liberty Institute, said in a public statement. "Locke betrayed the Founder's commitment to religious liberty. The Supreme Court should formally overrule it."

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