

Christian Student Muted and Booted from School's Free Speech Time for Sharing His Faith

A Christian high school student from Arkansas says his First Amendment rights were violated after he was silenced by school officials for speaking about his faith with his classmates.

Zion Ramos is now demanding that he not only be given an opportunity to share the Gospel with his classmates, but that school officials complete religious liberty training to ensure that students have the opportunity to discuss their faith in the future.

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First Liberty, a non-profit legal group, has sent a demand letter to Arkansas Connections Academy (ARCA) on behalf of the 11th-grade student.

In late September, Ramos, who attends the online academy, felt led to share about his faith after watching the memorial service for conservative influencer Charlie Kirk.

The student attempted to use the opportunity to share with his classmates during their designated "Social Time"—a half-hour daily Zoom call that allows students to talk with each other about whatever they want, as long as it's not violent, vulgar, or obscene.



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“Just as students would chat at lunchtime, in the hallway, or on the soccer field of a traditional school, ARCA students share about a wide variety of topics, ranging from current events, hairstyles, pets, relationships, and LGBTQ-related conversation,” First Liberty explained in their letter.

The conversations are monitored by a variety of the school’s staff, but teachers “rarely, if ever, intervene or mute students’ conversations.”

However, that was not the case for Ramos.

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During his two-minute statement, Ramos began by saying, “Hello, my name is Zion. I won’t be long, but I have something very important to say. You may not want to hear it, but it’s the most important thing you will ever hear.”

“We don’t know how long we have. One day, it’ll all be over. It may not be today, tomorrow, a month, or even years from now, but when our time is up, all we will have is eternity. And we only have two places to go; heaven or hell. And we need to decide where we want to spend it,” he said.

At that point, the teacher monitoring the social time, Ms. Kelsey Reid, muted Ramos without any warning or explanation.

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The student unmuted himself and tried to explain that he had a right to speak, “because he was not hindering the educational process as this was a non-educational session, and he attempted to finish,” First Liberty explains.

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