

College Professor Demands Students Support Homosexual Behavior

Alliance Defending Freedom sent a letter Monday on behalf of several Columbia State Community College (CSCC) students whose professor forced them to wear rainbow ribbons publicly supporting homosexual behavior in order to complete a class assignment.

“Colleges should be the marketplace of ideas, not environments where professors manipulate students into advancing particular political agendas,” says litigation staff counsel Travis Barham. “The Constitution does not allow any government official to force another person to adopt or advocate a particular moral or political view. But this professor did just that with this assignment and thus clearly violated freedoms protected by the First Amendment.”

This spring, Linda Brunton, the lead faculty member in CSCC’s psychology department, required her students to wear Rainbow Coalition ribbons in support of homosexual behavior for at least one day. Students then had to observe public reaction and write a paper about how they were allegedly “discriminated against” while wearing the ribbons.

When several students objected to being forced to support conduct that violates their faith convictions, Brunton brushed aside their concerns, described their views as “ignorant and uneducated,” and explained that she hoped this assignment would cause them to change their beliefs. Regardless of their convictions, students had to express the views she mandated in order to receive class credit.

The Alliance Defending Freedom letter explains that “for at least seven decades, the Supreme Court has consistently ruled

that the government may not compel a citizen to say what he does not want to say." The letter points out that the Supreme Court has specifically ruled that "the First Amendment protects the right of individuals ... to refuse to foster ... an idea they find morally objectionable."

"College officials must respect their students' constitutional freedoms, including freedom of speech and freedom of religion," adds senior counsel Kevin Theriot. "Compelling students to utter government-approved ideas is not education but an abuse of power. We hope Columbia State acknowledges this and ensures that its professors stop forcing any students to endorse views with which they disagree in order to receive a passing grade."