

School District Denies Girls' Team's Quest to Wear 'Pray for Peace' T-Shirts for Ukraine

The ongoing crisis in Ukraine has prompted people from all over the world to show their support for the refugees and those who are still under fire in the country.

But when a group of high school lacrosse players in Virginia wanted to display "Pray for Peace" on their warm-up shirts, they were denied the right by school officials. They were told that the positive message could be interpreted as "religious and political in nature."

Clare Levison's daughter plays on the girls' lacrosse team at Blacksburg High School. In a Facebook post, Levison explained that the girls' lacrosse coach spent 10 summers volunteering in Ukraine.

Levison wrote that the team considered it a kind gesture to promote peace by wearing the shirt; however, the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) thought otherwise.

"Pray for Peace is neither a religious nor political statement," Levison wrote. "It is a universally accepted sentiment."

Levison cited that even U.S. presidents have called on the nation to pray for peace during particular occasions.

"Pray for Peace is not a religious statement that requires separation of church and state. It is one that all Presidents in power, regardless of political party, reference on a regular basis," Levison shared.

When the attempt was denied, she asked school administrators if the saying could be changed to “Play for Peace,” but that was also shot down.

“I, like many of you, thought the primary objection to these t-shirts by Montgomery County Public Schools was the use of the word Pray,” she wrote. “Because the goal of the shirts was to promote Peace, regardless of religious or political affiliation, I asked if the shirts could be worn if they were revised to say Play for Peace.”

She mentioned that the Blacksburg High School principal addressed the matter with district officials, but the message was still unsupported. {eo}

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