



For Immediate Release

Wednesday, September 3, 2025

Media Contacts

media@naacpldf.org

press@splcenter.org

LDF and SPLC File Amicus Brief in Support of Challenge to Oklahoma's Classroom Censorship Law, HB 1775

Today, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) and the [Southern Poverty Law Center \(SPLC\)](#) filed an [amicus brief](#) in the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals in support of Plaintiffs-Appellants challenge to Oklahoma's HB 1775, a law that severely and impermissibly restricts classroom instruction on certain topics related to race, gender, and systemic inequalities in public schools and higher education institutions. The brief, filed in *Black Emergency Response Team v. Drummond*, highlights the harmful impacts of HB 1775 on the ability of students in Oklahoma public schools to receive important information regarding race and racism, including the systemic racism underlying the Tulsa Race Massacre, and urges the Tenth Circuit to reverse a prior district court decision that denied some claims as a basis for enjoining part of HB 1775.

The brief argues that HB 1775 unconstitutionally limits Oklahoma students' right to receive certain information and ideas about race and racism, which is protected under the First Amendment. The brief also outlines the damaging effects HB 1775 has on Oklahoma students' ability to receive accurate lessons on significant historical events in Oklahoma history, such as the Tulsa Race Massacre.

"HB 1775's sweeping curricular restriction of important information about race and racism in Oklahoma and the rest of the United States is an affront to the First Amendment and the rights of Oklahoma's students to learn freely," said **Avatara Smith Carrington, LDF Assistant Counsel**. "This dangerous law directly conflicts with our nation's core democratic principles, premised on a free exchange of ideas that is only possible through full access to accurate information in our public education system. Our amicus brief urges the Tenth Circuit to affirm that truth and inclusion, not censorship and erasure, are foundational to a rigorous public education system and a robust democracy."

"Oklahoma students are entitled to an inclusive and accurate education that is truthful about the legacies of racism and inequality, like the Tulsa Race Massacre, that have impacted our multiracial democracy," said **Mide Odunsi, LDF Equal Justice Works Fellow**. "HB 1775 denies K-12 learners this fundamental right, unlawfully censoring topics simply because they are disfavored by political leaders."

“Students should have the freedom to learn free of government censorship. This amicus brief highlights the devastating consequences of ignoring those rights. SPLC will continue to fight for students’ freedom to learn,” said **Sam Boyd, Senior Supervising Attorney at the Southern Poverty Law Center**.

Black Emergency Response Team v. Drummond was filed on October 19, 2021, by the ACLU, ACLU of Oklahoma, the Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, and pro bono counsel Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP on behalf of a group of Oklahoma public school teachers, a high school student, and various community, professional, and cultural organizations, including the Black Emergency Response Team (BERT); the University of Oklahoma Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (OU-AAUP); the Oklahoma State Conference of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP-OK); and the American Indian Movement (AIM) Indian Territory on behalf of itself and its members who are public school students and teachers.

[Access the brief here.](#)

###

About the Legal Defense Fund (LDF)

Founded in 1940, the [Legal Defense Fund \(LDF\)](#) is the nation’s first civil rights law organization. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the Legal Defense Fund or LDF. Please note that LDF has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights.

About the Southern Poverty Law Center

The Southern Poverty Law Center is a catalyst for racial justice in the South and beyond, working in partnership with communities to dismantle white supremacy, strengthen intersectional movements and advance the human rights of all people. For more information, visit www.splcenter.org.