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SPEECH FIRST

Speech First Appeals Lawsuit Against Indiana University to the Seventh Circuit

Washington, D.C. (August 28, 2024) –Speech First, a nonprofit membership association working to combat restrictions on free speech and other civil rights at colleges and universities across America, will be appealing the [District Court’s decision](#) in their [lawsuit against Indiana University](#) to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit over violations of students’ First and Fourteenth Amendment rights.

Speech First claims that the university’s Bias Incident Policy (also known broadly as a Bias Response Team), is an unconstitutional and far-reaching policy that is solely designed to deter, discourage, and otherwise prevent students from expressing disfavored views about the political and social issues of the day.

IU’s Bias Response Team (BRT) marshals the authority of university administrators to police speech that is motivated by “bias.” The University uses a circular and unclear definition of what a “bias incident” actually is, describing it as “any conduct, speech, or expression, motivated in whole or in part by bias...” IU continues to state that reports can include any form of expression “meant to intimidate, demean, mock, degrade, marginalize, or threaten individuals or groups based on that individual or group’s actual or perceived identities.” This policy is so overbroad that anything students find offensive can be reported. This could include something as simple as asking why they Biden Administration has added “gender identity” as a protected class under Title IX. Or stating that unchecked illegal immigration will lead to an increase in crime.

IU’s BRT policy actively chills the open discourse that should be central to higher education. IU’s bureaucratic disciplinary processes that rely on vague, overbroad, and viewpoint-based definitions of “bias incidents” violate students’ First and Fourteenth Amendment rights.

[Cherise Trump](#), Executive Director of Speech First, issued the following statement:

“We have filed an appeal with the Seventh Circuit and will continue to fight for ALL students and their free speech rights. We look forward to holding Indiana University accountable for its attempts to censor and coerce student speech with its unconstitutional policies.”

To schedule an engagement with Speech First, please contact Michael Hensley at michael@athospr.com and info@athospr.com.

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