



Standard of Liberty Foundation

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Stephen F. Graham, President

News Release

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CONTACT: Stephen Graham, President

National organization asks Utah Attorney General and State Office of Education to investigate breaking of state law by Lone Peak High School student newspaper.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah - A nationwide faith-based values organization today announced it has asked for the investigation of the publishing of illegal articles in the Lone Peak High school-sponsored student newspaper, The Crusader. One of the articles supports homosexuality for teenagers. Another suggests a mandatory vaccine for students entering high school to prevent the HPV virus, a sexually transmitted disease. The third discounts teaching abstinence before marriage, tacitly advocates sexual promiscuity, and shows contempt for the right and responsibility of parents to pass on their moral values to their children. To quote the student article, "Parents let their personal beliefs about abstinence, which may not be their child's, impose on their child's health."

Stephen Graham, of The Standard of Liberty Foundation (SLF) spoke with a representative of the Attorney General's office, then delivered copies of the illegal articles to Carol Lear of the Utah State Office of Education. Lear said she would look into the matter.

The Utah FERPA law (Utah Code 53A-13-301 & 302) forbids schools from allowing any activity which results in students revealing information concerning their sexual behavior, orientation or attitudes. Utah Education law (Utah Code 53A-13-101) requires that schools stress the importance of abstinence from all sexual activity before marriage and fidelity after marriage, and also forbids advocacy of homosexuality and of sexual activity outside of marriage.

Stephen Graham, parent of a Lone Peak High School student, said, "These three articles clearly are in violation of state law. I believe it is the obligation of the Utah Office of Education, in partnership with the Attorney General, to hold the administration of Lone Peak High School and the Alpine School District responsible for allowing illegal and harmful information to be published and distributed to thousands of impressionable and vulnerable young students. The law exists to protect the health and well-being of minors in their charge."

Graham and his wife met with Mr. Nate Phillips, faculty advisor for the student newspaper, and separately with Dr. Chip Koop, Lone Peak Principal, in late November, 2005, regarding the first article in the school paper, an opinion piece written by a student encouraging the establishment of a Gay Straight Alliance club at Lone Peak. The article broke the FERPA law, as the assignment caused the student to reveal information regarding her attitudes about sexual behavior. It also broke state education law when it went on to promote homosexuality. In both meetings, school officials expressed their opinion to Graham that no law had been broken. SLF representatives asked for a letter of apology to parents and a retraction to be printed in the student newspaper. Both requests were denied. During these communications between Graham and the school administration, Graham's daughter, a student at Lone Peak, was called into the principal's office for a private meeting in which Principle Koop discussed with her the controversy surrounding the article regarding homosexuality and asked her to deliver a letter to her father. This was done without permission from the student's parents (another infraction of state law), and resulted in her feeling singled out, embarrassed, and emotionally traumatized, begging her parents to drop their complaint. Graham believes this was an attempt by the school administration to intimidate and silence him.

Graham and the SLF offered inservice presentations on state laws regarding sexuality in schools to the Lone Peak PTA board and community counsel. In the end these offers were rejected. Graham says he has reason to suspect that the PTA president, Pam Cluff, who was at first very interested and concerned about the article in the school paper, was subsequently coerced by school administrators into discounting and ignoring the Grahams' parental rights and legitimate concerns as members of the community.

On May 15, 2006, the two additional illegal articles were printed in The Crusader. The first discussed human papilloma virus (HPV), and a new vaccine to prevent its spread. It was proposed as the method to protect the national population from this one STD by means of mandatory inoculations for all students entering high school hopefully before they have engaged in any sexual activity. Abstinence was not mentioned as a preferred means of avoiding the disease, nor were the dozens of other STDs epidemic among teenagers today which this vaccine would not protect against. The other article which appeared in the same issue of the school paper was a lengthy opinion piece also discussing the HPV vaccine, asserting that young people are going to be sexually active and so should be vaccinated. The article discounts abstinence education and disrespects parents' roles as their children's teachers of religious and moral values.

Identical information as was presented in the student articles in the Lone Peak Crusader is readily available on gay activist web sites such as those run by GLSEN and PFLAG. Said Graham, "Sex activists are targeting kids. They know that high school newspapers can be highly effective carriers of anti-parent, pro-sex propaganda. School administrators are either complicit or clueless. The kids' articles should be about sports, music, dances, academics, noise in the halls and lunch room menus. What in the world are school administrators thinking allowing twisted articles about homosexuality, genital warts and infections, rape, and promiscuity for minors from age 14 to read as facts? They seem to be purposely subverting wholesomeness, traditional morality, and parents' rights.

It is high time school administrators be required to adhere to the law. They have an obligation to protect the health and welfare of the students in their schools. Parents' concerns should be given utmost consideration, especially when matters of sexual morality and physical health risks are concerned. To do otherwise is unconscionable. "

The Standard of Liberty Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) corporation which exists to raise awareness of radical movements overrunning America's Christian-moral-cultural life and to promote public resurgence of religion and traditional sexual morality to counteract these trends.