

The ACLU and the ACLU of Arizona (2019) sent a letter to an Arizona public school district demanding that it permit a Native American student to wear beadwork and an eagle feather on her graduation cap in accordance with her religious beliefs. Our letter explained that Arizona's Free Exercise of Religion Act (FERA) provides heightened protection for religious exercise, including the wearing of sacred Native American symbols in ceremonial contexts, and that there was no compelling governmental interest in prohibiting the student from exercising her faith. <https://www.aclu.org/letter/aclu-urges-dysart-unified-school-district-allow-graduation-dress-accommodations-native>

The ACLU and ACLU of Delaware (2017) reversed a school's decision to suspend a Muslim high school student who wears a kufi. The school agreed to allow the student to wear his kufi in school, amend district policy, and provide training on students' religious freedom rights. <https://aclu-de.org/news/aclu-de-protects-students-rights-to-religious-freedom/2018/01/09/>

The ACLU of West Virginia (2017) contacted school officials on behalf a Muslim student who said his classmates and teacher harassed him for his faith. [https://www.wvgazettemail.com/news/education/aclu-seeks-investigation-after-muslim-teen-says-he-was-harassed/article\\_57dbfb2f-6504-5822-8f93-c565075654e0.html](https://www.wvgazettemail.com/news/education/aclu-seeks-investigation-after-muslim-teen-says-he-was-harassed/article_57dbfb2f-6504-5822-8f93-c565075654e0.html)

The ACLU and the ACLU of Arizona (2016) filed a complaint on behalf of a Muslim refugee student whose public-school teacher harassed and discriminated against him because of his faith and national origin. Our client's sixth-grade teacher choked him, called him a terrorist, refused to let him pray, and said she couldn't wait until Donald Trump was elected so our client would have his visa revoked and be deported. <https://www.aclu.org/legal-document/noor-complaint-department-justice-requesting-investigation-pursuant-title-iv>

The ACLU of Northern California (2015) represented a Native American public high school student who wanted to wear a ceremonial feather in his graduation cap. <https://www.aclunc.org/news/native-american-student-challenges-ban-ceremonial-feathers-during-graduation>

The ACLU of Louisiana (2014) secured a student's right to maintain his religiously mandated hairstyle. <https://laaclu.org/press/2014/082814.htm>

The ACLU of Tennessee (2014) defended an elementary-school student's right to read his Bible during a free-reading period. <https://www.aclu.org/religion-belief/aclu-tn-protects-students-right-read-bible-school>

The ACLU of Virginia (2014) supported the right of Christian students to proselytize on a community college campus. <http://acluva.org/14911/aclu-tells-virginia-community-college-system-that-campusdemonstration-policies-are-unconstitutional/>

The ACLU of Virginia (2012 and 2010) opposed bans on students' right to wear rosary beads at two public middle schools. The schools dropped the bans after receiving letters from the ACLU.

[/religion-belief/letter-matacoa-middle-school](#)  
[/religion-belief/letter-fairfield-middle-school](#)

The ACLU of North Carolina (2012) advocated for allowing a 6-year-old to read aloud a poem with the word "God" in it at her school's Veterans Day assembly, in response to school officials' decision to remove the word.

<http://acluofnc.org/blog/aclu-nc-op-ed-divining-the-tricky-line-on-god-free-speech-and-schoolshtml>

The ACLU of Pennsylvania (2012) filed a brief in support of a fifth grader's right to share her religious beliefs with classmates by distributing invitations to a Christmas party hosted by a local church.

<http://www.ca3.uscourts.gov/opinarch/121728p.pdf>

The ACLU of Virginia (2011) wrote a letter on behalf of a group of Christian athletes in Floyd County High School after the school removed copies of the Ten Commandments the athletes had displayed on the outside of their personal lockers.

<https://acluva.org/7257/aclu-tells-floyd-county-high-school-to-allow-students-to-post-ten-commandments-on-lockers/>

The ACLU of Texas (2011) opposed a school district's policy prohibiting students from visibly wearing rosaries, crosses, and other articles of faith.

<http://www.aclutx.org/2011/11/18/aclu-of-texas-demands-brownsville-isd-disclose-policies-banning-rosaries-and-crosses-at-school/>

The ACLU of Nebraska (2011) objected to a public-school district's policy barring students from wearing rosaries.

<http://www.torontosun.com/2011/10/04/nebraska-girl-told-she-cant-wear-rosary-to-school-because-its-a-gang-symbol>

The ACLU of Colorado (2010) opposed a public school's policy that barred students from wearing crosses and rosaries in public view.

<http://aclu-co.org/news/aclu-supports-students-right-of-religious-freedom>

The ACLU of New Jersey (2010) submitted an *amicus* brief in support of a public-school student's right to express her religious beliefs about abortion by wearing an armband with the word "LIFE" on it.

<http://www.aclu-nj.org/news/2010/03/24/aclu-nj-defends-anti-abortion-students-free-speech/>

The ACLU of Alaska (2010) advised the Alaska Department of Education to respect the religious freedom of Russian Old Believer families by arranging alternate testing dates for the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam, which conflicts with Holy Week for Russian Old Believer students.

[http://homernews.com/stories/022410/news\\_1\\_004.shtml](http://homernews.com/stories/022410/news_1_004.shtml)

The ACLU of Florida (2009) filed a lawsuit against the Alachua County School District because school officials prohibited students—in school and at football games—from wearing t-shirts bearing religious messages, including those that proclaimed the primacy of Christianity and stated that “Islam is of the devil,” even though there was no evidence that the t-shirts had caused a disruption to the educational process.

<http://www.gainesville.com/article/20091124/ARTICLES/911241001/1118?Title=ACLU-files-suit-over-Devil-shirts&tc=autorefresh>

The ACLU of Virginia (2009) wrote a letter school to a public school in support of students’ right to wear t-shirts encouraging school-sponsored prayer.

<https://www.aclu.org/religion-belief/aclu-tells-high-school-allow-students-protest-aclu-football-game>

The ACLU and ACLU of Texas (2008) filed a lawsuit on behalf of a five-year-old Native American boy who was forced into in-school suspension for wearing long braids as an expression of his religious beliefs and cultural heritage.

<https://www.aclu.org/religion-belief/arocha-et-al-v-needville-independent-school-district-complaint>

The ACLU of Pennsylvania (2007) came to the defense of a second-grade student who, in response to a class assignment to write a story, submitted a story about Easter and redemption. After the teacher rejected the submission because of its religious content, the ACLU wrote a letter to the school on the student’s behalf.

The ACLU of New Jersey (2007) filed an *amicus* brief in support of an elementary school student who was prohibited from singing “Awesome God” in a voluntary after-school talent show for which students selected their own material.

<https://www.aclu.org/religion/schools/25799prs20060605.html>

The ACLU of Michigan (2007) filed a lawsuit in Wayne County Circuit Court against Old Redford Academy, a public charter school in Detroit, for suspending, and trying to expel, a ninth-grade student who wore his hair long in accordance with a verse in Leviticus.

<http://www.aclumich.org/issues/religious-liberty/2007-10/1232>

The ACLU of New Jersey (2007) filed a religious discrimination case on behalf of a Muslim student who had to choose between following his religious beliefs that forbid him from entering buildings with foreign religious symbols and attending his public high school graduation that was scheduled to be held in a church. The ACLU argued that the school’s decision unlawfully forced the student to choose between attending his graduation and violating his faith.

The ACLU of Louisiana (2005) successfully represented a Rastafarian mother and her fourth-grade son, who was suspended for wearing dreadlocks in accordance with his faith.

<https://www.aclu.org/free-speech/aclu-says-louisiana-dress-code-denies-rastafarian-children-right-education>

The ACLU of Michigan (2004) represented a student whose yearbook entry, a Bible verse, was deleted because of its religious content.

<https://www.aclu.org/studentsrights/expression/12845prs20040511.html>

The Iowa Civil Liberties Union (2005) defended the religious expression rights of two teenage girls, who were threatened with punishment by school officials after seeking to wear, for religious reasons, anti-abortion t-shirts to school.

<https://www.aclu.org/studentsrights/expression/12852prs20050429.html>

The ACLU of Massachusetts (2003) filed an *amicus* brief in support of a group of students at Westfield High School who were suspended for distributing candy canes and a religious message in school.

<https://www.aclu.org/studentsrights/expression/12828prs20030221.html>

The Iowa Civil Liberties Union (2002) filed an *amicus* brief supporting a group of Christian students who sued Davenport Schools asserting their right to distribute religious literature during non-instructional time.

<https://www.aclu.org/religion-belief/aclu-supports-right-iowa-students-distribute-christian-literature-school>