

Cassia County School District to Change School Activity Policies under ACLU Settlement

Cassia County students will no longer be excluded from school activities due to enrollment status

For Immediate Release:

Wednesday, September 14th, 2016

Contact:

Jess McCafferty, ACLU of Idaho jmccafferty@acluidaho.org 208.344.9750 x1206

DECLO, Idaho- Sierra Norman and the ACLU of Idaho have reached a settlement agreement with the Cassia County School District. Under the agreement, the District will change its policies to prohibit the District from excluding students from student activities due to their enrollment status. The policy change will ensure that students who are taking online classes, seminary and other religious classes, or classes offered for college credit, as well as home school students, have equal opportunity to participate in the school activities, including student government.

"I'm so happy that we are finally seeing a positive change in the Cassia County School District and that no future student is going to have to go through what I did! I cannot thank the ACLU enough for all their help and support through this case," said Norman.

This policy change would not have come to be without the voice of Norman. In 2014, Declo High School refused to allow Norman to run for student body president because she was taking some of her classes online through the Idaho Digital Learning Academy, created by the Idaho Legislature to provide access, equity, and flexibility for Idaho students through online choices that would not otherwise exist. For almost two years the ACLU of Idaho has been working with Norman to fix the problems associated with the district's policy requirements for participation in school activities. If Norman had not come forward, we don't know how long these policies would have been negatively affecting students in Declo.

"Without brave students like Sierra Norman standing up for their rights, these kinds of exclusionary policies would go unchecked," said Leo Morales, Executive Director of the ACLU of Idaho. "We hope this decision and policy change will prompt other students to come forward if they feel their rights as students are being infringed on."

###