

Speech of Ray Hicks to the Rochester Public School Board on April 23, 2024

Our state constitution recognizes that the *stability of our form of government depends mainly upon the intelligence of the people*. It charges the legislature with the *duty to establish a general and uniform system of public schools*.

Since schools are funded by taxation, our children have a right to the education they provide. Minnesota courts acknowledged this right in 1993.

Though the U.S. Constitution doesn't explicitly establish such a right, two key Supreme Court rulings based on the 14th Amendment established that the government must not deny or deprive students from receiving education in existing schools. District practices here do deprive some of free tolerable public education.

Our 1st Amendment states, "*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; ...*"

People have moral and spiritual values and convictions consistent with their religious and non-religious beliefs. We have a sense of right and wrong.

District policies and practices directly conflict with values and convictions of people including district employees. They offend us and, unless we violate conscience and suppress our beliefs, they deprive us of full involvement in and benefits from our schools. This is unacceptable and untenable.

A caring, sensitive, brave counselor spoke publically about district transgender guidelines. She risked doing so after appealing internally to no clear avail. We know of other RPS employees who have problems with district practices. Most don't speak up for fear of being ostracized and losing employment. They're in the "closet". This isn't diverse, inclusive, or equitable.

Some of us have tried to reason and resolve this with district leaders for several years. It's only worsened. Despite claims that "All are welcome here", all are not welcome. Those of us (including employees) who understand that transgenderism and homosexuality aren't God's design aren't welcome. We can't affirm or approve them. Our various faiths make this very clear to us. We don't hate or condemn those caught in or who have chosen to live in such ways. God gives us freedom to choose whether we live those ways or not. Still, we can't encourage or celebrate them as RPS directs staff and students to.

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Some, who can afford to, move their students to alternative schools which let them openly express and live out their values. Supreme Court rulings say we shouldn't have to. District practices have made it miserable for us if we don't.

It's past time to fix this. I'm calling on you to do so. Will you surprise me? And will you involve us this time to do it right? These are our schools.

Excerpt from the MN Constitution:

ARTICLE XIII MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS

Section 1. Uniform system of public schools.

The stability of a republican form of government depending mainly upon the intelligence of the people, it is the duty of the legislature to establish a general and uniform system of public schools. The legislature shall make such provisions by taxation or otherwise as will secure a thorough and efficient system of public schools throughout the state.

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[Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) protects individuals against employment discrimination on the basis of race and color as well as national origin, sex, or religion.

Excerpts:

SEC. 2000e-2. [Section 703]

(a) Employer practices

It shall be an unlawful employment practice for an employer -

(1) to fail or refuse to hire or to discharge any individual, or otherwise to discriminate against any individual with respect to his compensation, terms, conditions, or privileges of employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify his employees or applicants for employment in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

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c) Labor organization practices

It shall be an unlawful employment practice for a labor organization-

(1) to exclude or to expel from its membership, or otherwise to discriminate against, any individual because of his race, color, religion, sex, or national origin;

(2) to limit, segregate, or classify its membership or applicants for membership, or to classify or fail or refuse to refer for employment any individual, in any way which would deprive or tend to deprive any individual of employment opportunities, or would limit such employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect his status as an employee or as an applicant for employment, because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin; or

(3) to cause or attempt to cause an employer to discriminate against an individual in violation of this section.

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