



Viewpoints

## First Circuit Court of Appeals Backs School that Barred Student's "There Are Only Two Genders" Shirt

The recent decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit underscores a complex intersection of free speech and school authority in handling sensitive issues like gender identity. In ruling against student Liam Morrison's right to wear a t-shirt declaring "There Are Only Two Genders," the court prioritized maintaining a conducive educational environment over individual expression. This decision reflects a broader trend among federal courts to support school administrators in regulating speech perceived as potentially disruptive or harmful to students' well-being.

While Morrison and his supporters argue for the protection of his viewpoint on a contentious societal issue, the court's rationale emphasizes the school's duty to prevent disruption and protect all students, particularly those vulnerable to discrimination or bullying. This ruling, though contentious, aligns with previous judicial interpretations that schools may restrict speech if it significantly interferes with educational goals or fosters a hostile environment. As our society continues to navigate evolving social norms and individual rights, this case prompts critical reflection on how educational institutions balance free expression with the imperative to maintain a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students.

You can read the full article at:

**In an important ruling on student expression, a federal appeals court has upheld the authority of Massachusetts school administrators who barred a middle school student from wearing a T-shirt that said, "There Are Only Two Genders."**

**A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 1st Circuit, in Boston, ruled unanimously that "precisely because the message was reasonably understood to be so demeaning of some other students' gender identities, there was the potential for the back-and-forth of negative comments and slogans between factions of students" that could lead to "a deterioration in the school's ability to educate its students."**



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