

Supreme Court Sides With Parents, Says Schools Can't Mandate LGBT Curricula

The court ruled against a Maryland school district.

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The Supreme Court ruled Friday that schools violate religious liberty when they bar parents from opting their children out of classroom instruction involving LGBT-themed books, a major win for religious conservatives.

Justices voted 6-3 along ideological lines to back a group of religious parents affiliated with Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland who argued they should be able to opt their children out of lessons with LGBT themes.

The Maryland parents who sued included Catholics, Muslims, and Ukrainian Orthodox.

The controversial LGBT books included "Prince and Knight" about a prince who falls in love with a knight instead of a princess and "Uncle Bobby's Wedding" about a girl's uncle who marries another man.

Justice Samuel Alito penned the opinion, writing that the school district burdened the parents' First Amendment rights.

"Today, we hold that the parents have shown that they are entitled to a preliminary injunction. A government burdens the religious exercise of parents when it requires them to submit their children to instruction that poses 'a very real threat of undermining' the religious beliefs and practices that the parents wish to instill," Alito wrote.

Alito said the "storybooks unmistakably convey a particular viewpoint about same-sex marriage and gender" and the school board has "specifically encouraged teachers to reinforce this viewpoint and to reprimand any children who disagree. That goes far beyond mere 'exposure.'"

Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote a dissent that was joined by the other two liberal justices in which she criticized the court allowing "parental veto power over curricular choices long left to the democratic process and local administrators."

"The reverberations of the Court's error will be felt, I fear, for generations," Sotomayor wrote.

Rosalind Hanson, one of the plaintiffs in the case, said she is "thrilled" with the decision.

"I am thrilled with the Supreme Court's decision to uphold religious liberty and parental rights against our authoritarian school district pushing a one-sided agenda," Hanson told The Daily Wire.

"Our children should never have been forced to learn about such sensitive topics without the ability for parents to know or opt them out," said Hanson, who also chairs the Moms for Liberty Chapter in Montgomery County.

The legal team for the plaintiffs called the decision a "historic victory."

"Kids shouldn't be forced into conversations about drag queens, pride parades, or gender transitions without their parents' permission. Today, the Court restored common sense and made clear that parents — not government — have the final say in how their children are raised," said Eric Baxter, vice president and senior counsel at the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, which represented the plaintiffs.

Trump called the decision a "tremendous ruling for parents."

"I think it's a great ruling for parents. It's really a ruling for parents. They lost control of the schools, they lost control of their child, and this is a tremendous victory for parents. And I'm not surprised by it, but I am surprised that it went this far," Trump said in the White House briefing room on Friday.

Parental rights advocates and religious groups celebrated Friday's decision as well.

"Storybooks like those at issue in Mahmoud convey normative messages on sex and gender, and those messages can and often do conflict with the beliefs of parents and their children," said Sarah Parshall Perry, vice president and legal fellow at Defending Education.

"Today's ruling should act as a directive to every American school district: notify parents of controversial material, and provide them the opportunity to opt their children out — especially if you provide opt-outs for other curriculum or other reasons," Perry said.

Kelsey Reinhardt, president and CEO of CatholicVote said the case was a "major victory" but that it should "alarm every American" that the high court had to step in.

"For over two years, Catholic parents alongside parents of other faiths have been forced to defend their constitutional right to opt their pre-K-8th grade children out of radical LGBTQ+ course materials that contradict their own religious beliefs," Reinhardt said, adding that Montgomery schools "insisted on forcing explicit curriculum about gender ideology on children as young as 3 years old."

"The Court's ruling sends a clear and powerful message: America still respects the rights of parents to raise their children in line with their faith and conscience," she said.