

Won a pro bono victory lifting the unconstitutional banishment of a former Woodland Park School District employee from school board meetings and other property. The case restored our client's First Amendment rights and earned national media coverage.

2023

WTO lawyers won a pro bono victory for a former public school employee who was harshly and unconstitutionally punished by the Woodland Park School District for his speech. The client, Logan Ruths, was a critic of the school board and district leadership. After Mr. Ruths made an off-hand joke at a school board meeting, he was informed that the district had banished him from future board meetings and all school property for more than a year.

Working with the ACLU of Colorado, WTO filed a lawsuit and a motion for a temporary restraining order and preliminary injunction. Faced with a lawsuit that clearly established it had violated our client's constitutional rights, the school district quickly withdrew its banishment order. The victory earned significant media coverage in Colorado and nationally.

Background

Mr. Ruths is a native of Woodland Park, Colorado. He worked

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for the Woodland Park School District for two years, handling the district's IT needs and responding to Colorado Open Records Act Requests. On a number of occasions, the district redacted or withheld records from CORA requests. Mr. Ruths made his disagreement with these decisions known to district leadership. In March 2023, the district fired Mr. Ruths.

Mr. Ruths attended a June 2023 board meeting. During the public comment portion, a speaker made remarks that Mr. Ruths understood as anti-LGBTQ. As the speaker handed out papers to the board, Mr. Ruths jokingly asked "Where else do you do comedy at? I'd love to see your show sometime." In response, the school board threatened Mr. Ruths with arrest if he did not leave immediately. The next day, Mr. Ruths received a letter advising that he was banished from all school property for more than a year.

WTO's Quick Advocacy

In partnership with the ACLU of Colorado, WTO agreed to represent Mr. Ruths. With the next school board meeting set for August 9, the firm acted fast. Relying on the U.S. and Colorado Constitutions and numerous federal rulings in similar cases, WTO filed its motion and complaint on Thursday, August 3. That same afternoon, a judge ordered next-day service on the district, with its response due on Monday, August 7 and a hearing reserved for Wednesday, August 9.

The next day, the district and board capitulated, advising WTO that it would rescind the banishment order. While this restores the basic liberties that Mr. Ruths is entitled to under law, it does not right the wrong. WTO's lawsuit for Mr. Ruths is still pending with the court.



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