



Statement re: LGBTQ+ Student Rights Case Before the U.S. Supreme Court

WLP filed a brief to the U.S. Supreme arguing that an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum is an educational tool that makes schools safer and more welcoming for all students

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PENNSYLVANIA // April 22, 2025: Today, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear arguments in [*Mahmoud v. Taylor*](#), a case centered on whether public schools burden parents' religious exercise by offering age-appropriate LGBTQ-inclusive books without notice or providing an opt-out option.

This case arose when Montgomery County School District in Maryland integrated LGBTQ-inclusive books into its language arts curriculum without allowing parents to opt their children out of being exposed to these materials.

Women's Law Project and Community Justice Project filed a friend-of-the-court [brief](#) to the U.S. Supreme Court in this case on behalf of Lebo Pride, Education Law Center, and Pennsylvania Youth Congress, Pennsylvania-based organizations dedicated to educational equity for LGBTQ students. Our brief supports respondent Thomas W. Taylor in his official capacity as Superintendent of the Montgomery County School Board.

"Schools should be safe and welcoming environments for all students, yet we know LGBTQ+ students are disproportionately likely to experience bullying, harassment, and discrimination in school," said Jackie Perlow, supervising attorney of Women's Law Project. "As we outline in our brief, research clearly shows LGBTQ-inclusive curricula help improve school climates and reduce discrimination, and that opt-out mechanisms undermine the efficacy of that protective effect. In other words, it defeats the point."

In *Doe v. Boyertown Area School District*, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals acknowledged that transgender students "face extraordinary social, psychological, and medical risks" and that schools have a compelling state interest in shielding them from discrimination.

Research shows that exposure to age-appropriate LGBTQ-inclusive materials improves the physical and psychological wellbeing of all students, including LGBTQ students. It also shows that providing opt-outs can undermine these positive effects on student wellbeing and, instead, further stigmatize LGBTQ students.

“Approximately one out of six young adults identify as LGBTQ,” said Sujaya Rajguru, staff attorney at Women’s Law Project. “Public schools have a legal obligation to provide a safe environment for all students—not to pretend LGBTQ people don’t exist to appease a handful of parents who would like to erase the existence of LGBTQ people from the school curriculum.”

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Founded in 1974, Women’s Law Project is a public interest legal organization focused on advancing and defending the rights of women, girls, and LGTBQ+ people in Pennsylvania and beyond.