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**SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
FOR THE COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE**

MAE M., through her guardian ad litem
Anthony M., SUSAN C., through her
guardian ad litem Sabrina C., GWEN S.,
through their guardian ad litem Ramona S.,
CARSON L., through his guardian ad litem
Nancy L., DAVID P., through his guardian
ad litem RACHEL P., VIOLET B., through
her guardian ad litem INEZ B., STELLA B.,
through her guardian ad litem INEZ B.,
TEMECULA VALLEY EDUCATORS
ASSOCIATION, AMY EYCHISON,
KATRINA MILES, JENNIFER SCHARF,
and DAWN SIBBY,

Plaintiffs,

v.

JOSEPH KOMROSKY, JENNIFER
WIERSMA, DANNY GONZALEZ,
ALLISON BARCLAY, and STEVEN
SCHWARTZ, in their official capacities as
members of TEMECULA VALLEY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD OF
TRUSTEES, TEMECULA VALLEY
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT, and DOES
1 – 100,

Defendants.

Case No.: CVSW2306224

**DECLARATION OF PLAINTIFF
JENNIFER SCHARF**

Judge: Honorable Irma Poole Asberry

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DECLARATION OF JENNIFER SCHARF

I, Jennifer Scharf, declare and state as follows:

1. I have personal knowledge of the facts in this declaration. If called upon to testify, I could and would testify competently to the following facts.
2. I have been a Temecula resident and teacher at Temecula Valley Unified School District’s Great Oak High School for 17 years. Both of my children attend Great Oak High School. I have been an educator for 23 years, and I have taught in Title I schools as well as a charter school. I have a B.A. in English and a M.A. in Teaching Literature for Young Adults, and I have been a National Board-certified teacher for over a decade.
3. I have been the head of Great Oak’s English Department for three years, and I am continuing to serve in this role in this school year. I teach A.P. English Language & Composition, which enrolls mostly 10th graders, and 12th grade Expository Reading and Writing. I previously taught 9th grade English for seven years and 10th grade English for two years.
4. Ever since Resolution 21’s enactment, I have been inundated with questions from members of my department about what books and ideas they can and cannot teach. For example, multiple teachers have asked me whether the Resolution permits them to continue assigning Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, and if so, how they can meaningfully teach the novel without talking about racial oppression and its lasting impacts. Because the Resolution’s language is so unclear, I do not know how to respond. The Board’s subsequent policy on teaching controversial issues also forces teachers to adopt viewpoints that diminish the lasting impacts of racial injustice.
5. This Resolution is part of a growing trend of ideological attempts to remove books from Temecula’s classrooms. For example, the District in 2021 required me—as an A.P. English Language & Composition teacher—to stop teaching Rebecca Skloot’s *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*. The widely-acclaimed book recounts the story of Henrietta Lacks, a Black woman whose cells were taken without her informed consent and then used to make medical advances that generated significant wealth, none of which redounded to her family. The

1 book has significant value for students learning to research, formulate, and articulate arguments.
2 It prompts them to engage with questions about ethics, scientific inquiry, human dignity, racial
3 inequality, and healthcare disparities. Notwithstanding these benefits, the District forced me to
4 stop teaching the book after a parent complained that the book's depiction of Ms. Lacks's
5 discovery of a cervical tumor was "pornographic."

6 6. Along with other teachers, I recently sought the District's approval to assign *The*
7 *Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* in 12th grade Expository Reading & Writing, a request that
8 would require the District to obtain additional copies. Even though we complied with all
9 applicable Board and District requirements, the District has yet to act on our request.

10 7. The Resolution has also limited my ability to teach books that are already part of
11 my curriculum, including *Just Mercy*, an award-winning memoir by the lawyer Bryan
12 Stevenson. *Just Mercy* recounts Stevenson's representation of low-income clients and clients of
13 color in the South, addressing the impacts of poverty and discrimination on the basis of race,
14 sex, and disability. When teaching the book, I typically contextualize it for my students by
15 discussing the origins of inequities in America's criminal justice system. However, I led those
16 lessons in a more circumscribed format after the Resolution was passed, and I did not discuss
17 persistent inequalities or draw connections to current events. I felt awful teaching the book that
18 way because I was introducing my students to these important and serious topics without the
19 support and guidance I normally provide. Students had questions about some of the big ideas in
20 the text, including the failures of the criminal justice system. While I did my best to address
21 their questions in an honest and factual manner, I found myself tempering those facts so as not
22 to be construed as teaching the Board's vague definition of "critical race theory."

23 8. As the Great Oak's Black Student Union advisor for the past 10 years, I can
24 attest that our meetings have normally been a safe haven for students of color and their allies on
25 campus. After the Resolution was enacted, students of diverse backgrounds voiced concerns
26 over whether or not true history could still be taught. Students said that they felt like their
27 history and experiences were "being erased." Many students had newfound reservations about
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1 discussing their experiences facing overt and systemic racism. They also described not being
2 seen and represented as equitably as their peers who may not experience racial discrimination.

3 9. As I have stated, the Resolution is censoring teachers, and in an increasingly
4 hostile partisan climate, many teachers are censoring themselves to avoid violating the
5 Resolution.

6 10. As a parent, I also see how the Board's policies are denying my two children an
7 education on par with what their peers are receiving in other school districts. I worry that the
8 Board's actions will prevent them from being competitive on national exams such as the SAT
9 and the numerous Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate exams they will take. I
10 am also aware that colleges and universities may view their education as less rigorous than
11 other California districts, decreasing their chance of admission. I simply want my children to
12 have the same educational opportunities as other students in California, including students that
13 have already graduated from Temecula schools.

14 11. The Board's new attacks on LGBTQ students have made my job even harder.
15 Since the beginning of this school year, I have fielded numerous questions and concerns from
16 teachers and students about forced outings. The day after the forced outing policy was enacted,
17 two junior English teachers in my department asked me how they should respond. One had
18 already received an email from a student expressing fear about how the policy would impact
19 their home life. I am worried about our LGBTQ students and also about these teachers, neither
20 of whom is tenured, who must somehow balance their own economic safety (keeping their jobs)
21 against their students' wellbeing.

22 12. The Board's decisions are causing severe harms to LGBTQ youth in Temecula.
23 Recently, a former student informed me that, following the enactment of the coercive outing
24 policy, LGBTQ students have been warning each other to not tell teachers anything about their
25 gender identities, which has effectively forced some students back into the closet. My own child
26 identifies as LGBTQ and is angered and frightened by the Board's targeting of the LGBTQ
27 community. My child is upset that their identity has been politicized, and they worry that the
28 Board's actions have emboldened bullying towards them and other LGBTQ students.

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I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on November 28, 2023.

Jennifer Scharf

Jennifer Scharf
Declarant