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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 EYTCHISON,
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 RACHEL
DENNIS**

Judge: Honorable Irma Poole Asberry

Dept.: 5

DECLARATION OF RACHEL DENNIS

I, Rachel Dennis, 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 am a resident of Murrieta, California and the adult facilitator of Emily’s Space. Emily’s Space is a student-run LGBTQ affirming youth program which offers support for students in grade 6 through grade 12 across southwest Riverside County. Emily’s Space—originally known as “Emily’s House”—was created in 2012 as an accepting community space for LGBTQ youth in and around Temecula Valley. It is named for Emily Blake, a Temecula Valley resident who, having experienced discrimination as a lesbian in non-affirming environments, sought to create supports for LGBTQ youth. Although Emily’s House eventually dissolved, I supported local students as they relaunched the group this October in response to the Temecula Valley Unified School District (“TVUSD”) Board’s ongoing attacks against LGBTQ youth, censorship of curriculum featuring LGBTQ individuals, and the lack of safe spaces for LGBTQ youth as a result of TVUSD’s increasingly hostile climate.

3. Emily’s Space is open to and led by young people from southwest Riverside County. As the adult facilitator, I am responsible for mentoring the student leaders and helping them to plan and carry out programs and activities. Emily’s Space has approximately 20 regular attendees, all of whom identify as LGBTQ and most of whom identify as transgender or nonbinary. Nearly every member is a student attending a TVUSD school.

4. Emily’s Space welcomes students to celebrate and learn about their diverse identities. Because the TVUSD Board has made it unsafe for LGBTQ students to express themselves and connect with their communities at school, Emily’s Space has become one of the only places where LGBTQ students can, for example, display a Pride flag or learn

1 together about LGBTQ histories and communities. The Board’s actions have driven these
2 students to hide these parts of their lives at school.

3 5. LGBTQ youth in Temecula are facing enormous hostility and hatred.
4 Students who attend Emily’s Space have seen anti-LGBTQ bullying and harassment spike
5 on their campuses. They have had hate speech shouted and food thrown at them. They have
6 seen Pride flags at their school taken down as required by the Board. Their own Pride flags
7 and those of their supporters have been stolen by other students, who have also ripped flags
8 from their hands and stomped them into the ground. Anti-LGBTQ sentiments have forced
9 out or silenced supportive teachers and advisors, who are being labeled “groomers.” The
10 students at Emily’s Space have shared that these animosities and threats have caused them to
11 experience daily anxiety and depression and to fear for their and their friends’ safety.
12

13 6. I have witnessed this harassment firsthand. Shortly after the Board enacted
14 its coercive outing policy, which exposes the identity of transgender and gender
15 nonconforming students to their parents, a group called Temecula Valley LGBTQIA+
16 Youth organized a protest opposing it. LGBTQ rights advocates, including myself and about
17 10 TVUSD students, were attending the protest at the Temecula Duck Pond when a group
18 of white, high-school age boys rode past us on e-bikes and verbally harassed us, calling us
19 “freaks” and “fucking liberals.” One boy stopped right in front of our group and yelled the
20 f-slur and N-word at us while his friends behind him filmed. There was one Black student
21 present. After the encounter, the students were visibly upset. Some were left in tears.
22

23 7. Troublingly, LGBTQ young people in Temecula are being targeted by both
24 other youth and adults. Adults have harassed and spread disinformation about LGBTQ
25 students through an Instagram account, @we_the_parents_of_tvusd_ (“We the Parents”).
26 The “We the Parents” page has grown infamous in Temecula for reposting personal photos
27 of students, parents, and Temecula community members in an effort to “dox” them, or
28 publicly humiliate and harass them online.

1 8. “We the Parents” has caused an immense amount of stress for LGBTQ
2 students in TVUSD. This past spring, Temecula Valley High School students nominated
3 their first transgender prom queen. “We the Parents” responded by posting a photo of the
4 student with text criticizing a “boy” for running for prom queen, inviting criticism in the
5 comments. After the trans prom queen was successfully elected by her peers, “We the
6 Parents” once again posted a photo of the student and asked parents if they would stand for
7 something so “wrong.” Similarly, a trans student who has led efforts to distribute Pride flags
8 to his peers at Temecula high schools has also had his photo posted onto “We the Parents”
9 and received transphobic backlash. These Instagram posts always misgender students by
10 using pronouns that do not align with their transgender identity. And posters frequently
11 refer to students using their “dead names,” which are transgender students’ previous names
12 that are used pejoratively to undermine their gender identity.
13

14 9. I have also been harassed on “We the Parents,” where one follower called me
15 an “LGBTQ whore for attention” because of my work with LGBTQ students and another
16 labeled me and my daughter “mentally ill.”
17

18 10. The Board’s enactment of its coercive outing policy has made an already bad
19 situation dire. LGBTQ youth, who already faced increased rates of victimization at school,
20 now cannot trust teachers and staff with key parts of their identity. In my experience
21 supporting TVUSD students, I know all too well that not all parents are supportive. Some
22 Emily’s Space members rightly fear abuse, violence, or even being kicked out of their home
23 if they are forcibly outed. One trans TVUSD student and Emily’s Space member was kicked
24 out of his home by unsupportive parents after his parents found a name change in his school
25 records. Following the Board’s actions, I repeatedly shared contact information for the
26 Rainbow Youth Project’s crisis hotline on my TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook pages,
27 which are followed by LGBTQ students in Temecula Valley. I have unfortunately had to
28 direct multiple youth to the crisis hotline since the Board passed its forced outing policy.

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11. Although Emily’s Space is a crucial resource for Temecula’s LGBTQ youth, it cannot replace a supportive school environment. It cannot rebuild trust between students and their teachers when those teachers are required to out them. Nor can it protect students from the very real threats and doxing they experience every day in Temecula, behavior that has been encouraged and empowered by the Board. I fear for their safety amidst all of the vitriol directed at them.

12. 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.

Rachel Dennis

Rachel Dennis
Declarant