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**University of South Carolina Nixes Bias Reporting System in Response to Southeastern Legal Foundation's Demands**

(Jan. 5, 2024) Columbia, SC: Following a [warning](#) from [Southeastern Legal Foundation](#) as part of a [legal campaign](#) on college campuses, the University of South Carolina (USC) has [taken down](#) its online bias reporting system. In true Orwellian fashion, USC's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [encouraged](#) students to "report incidents of bias or hate" to administrators using an online reporting form.

SLF [warned](#) USC that such regimes force students to self-censor. Instead of engaging in speech on current affairs and challenging their classmates' views, students are increasingly forced to remain silent so that they are not labeled bigots by their community. Bias reporting systems like USC's only make this worse because they encourage students to report anything that offends them to administrators.

As SLF pointed out in its legal demand [letter](#), the USC bias reporting system infringed on students' First Amendment rights. The university did not even define "hate" or "bias." That meant that students had no way of knowing what conduct could be reported. By failing to provide any parameters or guidelines, the university gave students broad authority to report each other for engaging in constitutionally protected speech.

Worse, anyone could submit the reports anonymously, meaning students could accuse each other recklessly or even falsely for engaging in so-called hateful or biased speech. And finally, it was unclear what happened to reports of bias. The university simply said that it would consider an "appropriate institutional response." Students could thus face a wide range of consequences simply for expressing their views if a classmate found them offensive.

Director of SLF's [1A Project Cece O'Leary](#) states, "This is a huge win for students everywhere. Conservative and libertarian students have been bullied into silence over the years because their views are in the minority on campus, and anonymous reporting forms only encourage such censorship. We are glad that USC has come to its senses and removed this barrier to free expression on campus."