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Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals to Hear Educators' First Amendment Challenge to School District's Anti-Racism Training

ST. LOUIS, MO (Feb. 15, 2024): Today, [Southeastern Legal Foundation](#) (SLF) will be appearing before the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of [Brooke Henderson and Jennifer Lumley](#), two educators at Springfield Public Schools (SPS) who were forced to commit to “anti-racism” as part of a mandatory workshop in violation of their First Amendment rights.

Following the civil and social unrest of the summer of 2020, SPS implemented a mandatory district-wide equity training where staff were told they needed to commit to anti-racism, which required advocating for political and social change. The training further taught that colorblindness and “white silence” were tools of white supremacy, that “white people” were privileged, and that equality was harmful. Ms. Henderson and Ms. Lumley believe in equality and colorblindness as enshrined in our nation’s civil rights laws, but SPS required them to abandon their beliefs and affirm “anti-racism” instead.

In their [appeal](#) before the Eighth Circuit, which has been [supported](#) by 16 states and 20 organizations, SLF is asking the court to rule that SPS violated Ms. Henderson’s and Ms. Lumley’s First Amendment rights when it compelled them to speak and discriminated against their views supporting equality and colorblindness. Oral argument will take place on Thursday, February 15, at 9:00 A.M. CST.