



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Assuring Tolerance for Students of Faith

South Kingstown, Rhode Island — July 2, 2018. Responding to a demand sent by the Center for Religious Expression (CRE), the South Kingstown School District has agreed to no longer discriminatorily ban first grader (going on second) Isabella Lomastro from giving Bibles and religious literature to her classmates at school during non-instructional free time.

On October 5, 2017, Isabella asked her teacher if she could hand Christian-themed coloring sheets to her classmates during non-instructional coloring time, and also give Bibles to her friends. But Isabella's teacher declined, stating that handing out "religious" material was not allowed at school, and escorted Isabella to the principal's office. There, the principal confiscated Isabella's literature and informed Isabella that there was no place for religion at school. Compounding the threat, when the principal returned the confiscated literature to Isabella's mother, she handed her a school district policy that selectively banned religious literature from being handed out at school. Isabella's mother spoke to the school district superintendent hoping to secure Isabella's rights, but to no avail. The superintendent confirmed that Isabella's friends could freely hand each other birthday invitations, but Isabella was banned from sharing her faith.

CRE sent a letter to the school district on Isabella's behalf, explaining how the district's selective ban on handing out religious literature clearly violated First Amendment rights. And, following negotiations with CRE counsel, the school district agreed to relent, and protect Isabella's rights in the future.

"Public schools cannot ban student expression based on its religious character," said CRE Chief Counsel Nate Kellum. "We are glad the school district agreed to correct its error and ensure Isabella may share her literature, and her faith, just like any other student."

Center for Religious Expression is a servant-oriented, non-profit 501(c)(3) Christian legal organization dedicated to the glory of God and the religious freedom of His people. For more information, visit <http://www.crelaw.org>.