

STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 942849
SACRAMENTO, CA 94249-0063
(916) 319-2063
FAX (916) 319-2163

DISTRICT OFFICE
1223 UNIVERSITY AVENUE, SUITE 230
RIVERSIDE, CA 92507
(951) 369-6644
FAX (951) 369-0366

E-MAIL
Assemblymember.Essayli@assembly.ca.gov



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August 7, 2023

The Honorable Rob Bonta
California Attorney General
California Department of Justice
P.O. Box 944255
Sacramento, California 94273

Re: Chino Valley Unified School District Civil Rights Investigation

Dear Attorney General Bonta:

You recently announced the opening of a civil rights investigation into the Chino Valley Unified School District (CVUSD) regarding its adoption of a parental notification policy. I write seeking clarification on the specific legal violations you are investigating, and on what basis your department initiated its investigation.

The need for local school districts to clarify the right of parents to be informed on the affairs of their children is predicated upon faulty advice issued by the California Department of Education (CDE) suggesting that students possess a legally cognizable privacy interest from their parents. The department does not provide any statutory or court authority supporting its position. Never in the history of our jurisprudence have we held that children have a right to privacy from their parents. Clearly, the advice was just that, a political opinion of a state government agency.

As a result of the CDE advice, public schools in California are increasingly implementing illegal, unconstitutional and unethical policies that exclude parents from the affairs of their children. One of those policies requires the secret transitioning of children of all ages to a new gender identity, complete with new names and pronouns, without notifying parents.

Any effort to circumvent or limit the right of parents to exercise their legitimate and legal authority over their own children violates 100 years of [United States Supreme Court](#) precedence that has consistently said that parents, not schools, possess the fundamental right to raise their children. More recently, the Court declared in *Washington v. Glucksberg*, 521 U.S. 702 (1997), that the Constitution, and specifically the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, protects the fundamental right of parents to direct the care, upbringing, and education of their children.

The policy actions of CVUSD are in keeping with fundamental constitutional principles ensuring parents continue to direct the care and upbringing of their children. It is for this reason I respectfully request your office explain the legal justification for the civil rights investigation. To the extent that your office proceeds with such an investigation, I would like to know if you will be similarly investigating school districts implementing policies that violate the civil rights of parents.

Without a transparent accounting of your department's actions, I will be left to conclude that your announcement was designed to chill the political activities of local school boards who disagree with the narrative of the ruling political party in Sacramento. I sincerely hope that is not the case.

I hope we can agree that it is critical the California Department of Justice remain politically neutral and maintain its fidelity to enforcing our laws fairly and equally. I look forward to your response and the legal basis for launching your investigation.

Sincerely,



Bill Essayli
Assemblyman, District 63