

FREEDOM TO BELIEVE

The recent history of campus religious freedom is marked by two major Supreme Court Rulings:

1981: WIDMAR V. VINCENT

WHAT HAPPENED?

In the late 1970's, Cornerstone, a Christian student group at University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC), was prohibited from using university space to meet solely because it was a religious group.

WHO WAS KICKED OFF CAMPUS?

Christian student groups like Cornerstone.

WHO WAS NOT KICKED OFF?

Atheist and humanist student groups, and all other campus clubs.

SCOTUS RESPONSE

The Supreme Court ruled that UMKC could not discriminate against religious groups and that campus space must be open to all registered clubs.

2010: CHRISTIAN LEGAL SOCIETY V. MARTINEZ

WHAT HAPPENED?

In 2005, UC-Hastings refused to recognize Christian Legal Society because it required student leaders to agree to a faith statement, which violated UC-Hastings' "all-comer" policy.

WHO WAS KICKED OFF CAMPUS?

Christian groups, including CLS, InterVarsity, Chi Alpha, and Cru, which require their leaders to sign faith statements.

WHO WAS NOT KICKED OFF?

Any other campus groups, including groups with clearly restrictive membership requirements, like sororities and fraternities.

SCOTUS RESPONSE

The Supreme Court ruled that "all-comer" policies are allowed, but not required.

THE END RESULTS?

- 1 Colleges across the country are increasingly adopting "all-comer" policies and enforcing them only against religious groups.
- 2 It is up to the states to proactively prevent this discrimination against religious groups. Eight states have successfully passed Campus Religious Freedom legislation.

WHO HAS BEEN HARMED?

Despite being written in viewpoint-neutral language, “all-comer” policies have only been enforced against religious groups. When groups are targeted, they lose access to vital resources, including meeting space, publications, use of name and logo, mail, email, and website hosting, club fair booths, and tech equipment. These are just a few examples:

KANSAS

Washburn University’s Christian Legal Society chapter lost recognized status after a student was asked to resign as bible study leader because his teaching did not align with the group’s faith statement. He was welcome to remain a member, but CLS was punished anyway.

MICHIGAN

Asian InterVarsity at the University of Michigan was derecognized then re-recognized after national groups intervened. InterVarsity’s national membership is 55% people of color, and chapters like Asian InterVarsity provide stability and religious foundation for students away from home for the first time.

CALIFORNIA

The California State System passed a system-wide “all-comer” policy, then derecognized CLS, InterVarsity, Chi Alpha, and Cru across all 23 campuses. Members of other minority religious groups, including the Muslim Student Association at Cal State Long Beach, spoke out in support of the Christian groups, despite not being targeted themselves.

IOWA

Several student groups at the University of Iowa have been investigated for using faith statements as criteria for leadership roles. National law firms had to intervene to keep these groups on campus. Passing legislation would ensure that these students are free to worship according to their faith.

TENNESSEE

After pushing Vanderbilt+Catholic, as well as evangelical groups, off campus, Vanderbilt threatened legal action if the group didn’t change its name to reflect the disaffiliation. University Catholic still works to serve the Nashville community as V+C did, but without vital university resources that are made available to other campus groups.

