

# Should this student have been expelled

Literature



In a case filed in Detroit by The American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan assailing that the Dearborn Public Schools violated the First Amendment when it prohibited a student named Bretton Barber from wearing t-shirt that depicted a picture of President Bush with the caption “ International Terrorist,” the Court find in the petitioner’s favor. The decision relied mainly on the fact there is no showing of any disturbance created by the display on the shirt and that it is in actuality covered by the freedom of speech. The main argument of the defense holding that the school ground is no place for political debate was unheeded by Judge Patrick J. Duggan (American Civil Liberties Union, par. 1-4).

The group has yet again stabilized the mission it has set forth to uphold students’ free speech as a matter of right. This is in consonance with the essay of Nat Hentoff entitled “ Should This Student Have Been Expelled?” which argues that the expulsion was based on a vague provision on the Brown University student handbook. The opposition on the regulation of the freedom of speech in the academic setting finds ground in the fact that this could easily lead to animosity among groups which most likely involve a minority and their consternation over the privileged majority. In the same way, it may also be the reactionary temperament of the minority who may be oppressed through various ways and means. As with the case of Barber, the school found that the discussion of a major political issue could give rise to problems. The Judge decided that the mere fear of the school principal that the shirt contained an unpopular political stance cannot impede free speech (American Civil Liberties Union, par. 4). In the end, there must be enough sensibility on both sides in a manner that one tolerates the other and

vice versa. One cannot express an opinion on the sole basis of making known of an opinion but it must be coupled with enough receptiveness and rationality to consider other people's feelings.

#### Bibliography

American Civil Liberties Union. " Judge Rules in Favor of Michigan Students Right to Wear Anti-War T-Shirt to School." American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). 1 Oct. 2003. Web. 29 Apr. 2012.