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Turning Point USA Students File Federal Lawsuit Against SUNY Cortland for Viewpoint Discrimination in Violation of the First Amendment

Attorneys for Alliance Defending Freedom filed Turning Point USA at SUNY Cortland v. Cortland College Student Association in federal court

PHOENIX, Feb. 22, 2024 — On Wednesday, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) attorneys representing two students and the Turning Point USA chapter at the State University of New York Cortland (SUNY Cortland) **filed a federal lawsuit against school officials and the student government association.** The lawsuit **alleges discrimination against the TPUSA chapter due to the group's viewpoints**, violating the students' First Amendment rights.

Gabriella Delorenzo and Megan Rothmund, SUNY Cortland students, sought to establish a TPUSA chapter on campus during the fall semester to encourage dialogue among students who support freedom, free markets, and limited government. However, their efforts were hindered by the Student Government's Student Senate, which **denied the chapter recognized group status, citing disagreement with TPUSA's national organization's views.**

Delorenzo and Rothmund encountered hostility and derogatory remarks from student senators and **SUNY Cortland Professor Nikolay Karkov, who actively questioned and disparaged TPUSA's perspectives.** Despite adhering to SUNY Cortland's Non Recognition Policy, which outlines the prerequisites any proposed student group must follow in order to achieve full recognition by the University, the students faced a premeditated effort to reject their application, resulting in a denial vote after a two-hour meeting marked by heckling and social media criticism.

ADF Legal Counsel Mathew Hoffmann condemned SUNY Cortland officials' actions, stating, "Colleges are meant to be marketplaces of ideas where students learn to respect and defend diverse beliefs held throughout the country, but unfortunately, many college officials are encouraging students to silence opposing views."

TPUSA spokesman Andrew Kolvet echoed concerns, emphasizing the necessity for constructive dialogue and the protection of free speech on campus. *“Free speech is our birthright as Americans, but we’re watching the real-time destruction of this sacred heritage in multiple settings. The only way to save free speech is to fight back when it’s under assault. We’re grateful to ADF for standing with Gabriela and Megan and the SUNY Cortland chapter. TPUSA will pursue all available avenues to address the injustices they’ve endured.”*

In response to the infringement of Delorenzo and Rothmund's rights, **ADF attorneys filed Turning Point USA at SUNY Cortland v. Cortland College Student Association in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York.** Michael G. McMartin of Michael G. McMartin Law PLLC, affiliated with the ADF Attorney Network, is serving as local counsel on behalf of Delorenzo and Rothmund.

The ADF Center for Academic Freedom remains committed to safeguarding First Amendment and related freedoms for students and faculty, ensuring an environment where everyone can engage freely in the marketplace of ideas without fear of government censorship.

For media inquiries or interviews with a TPUSA student and a legal representative, please contact Aubrey Laitsch, Public Relations Manager for Turning Point USA, at press@tpusa.com.

Read TPUSA's X/Twitter thread [HERE](#).

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About Turning Point USA (TPUSA):

Turning Point USA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 2012 by Charlie Kirk who was only 19 at the time. The organization’s mission is to identify, educate, train, and organize students to promote the principles of freedom, free markets, and limited government. Since its founding, Turning Point USA has embarked on a mission to build the most organized, active, and powerful conservative grassroots activist network on college campuses across the country. With a presence on over 3,000 college and high school campuses, Turning Point USA is the largest and fastest-growing youth organization in America.

About Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF):

Alliance Defending Freedom is a non-profit legal organization committed to protecting religious freedom, free speech, parental rights, and the sanctity of life. ADF provides legal representation, training, and resources to protect these essential freedoms. With an extensive network of attorneys and supporters, ADF takes on cases and provides legal expertise in defense of foundational freedoms. Learn more at www.adflegal.org.