

SUMMARY OF BERT V. DRUMMOND LAWSUIT AND KEY POINTS FOR OKLAHOMA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

About the Case

In October 2021, a multiracial group of Oklahoma students, parents, and faculty filed a federal lawsuit challenging H.B. 1775. H.B. 1775 is a classroom censorship bill that severely restricts teaching about race and gender in Oklahoma public education. The law has two sections: the first applies to colleges and universities, and the second applies to K-12 schools.

When they filed the case, this group of students, parents, and faculty asked the district court for a temporary order against H.B. 1775, barring the State from enforcing the Act until the lawsuit is resolved. On June 14, 2024, Judge Charles Goodwin granted, in part, this request.

Judge Goodwin's decision blocks any enforcement of H.B. 1775 in higher education classrooms and stops K-12 officials from enforcing H.B. 1775's most vague language.

This summary focuses only on the decision's impact on higher education.

Key Takeaways from the Ruling for College and University Instructors:

- Instructors are free to teach their classes without worrying about violating H.B. 1775.

What the Ruling Says About HB 1775:

H.B. 1775 is no longer in force inside college and university classrooms. Judge Goodwin's decision stopped the enforcement of H.B. 1775's one provision that reached inside college and university classrooms. This order protects the academic freedom of students and teachers in Oklahoma's public higher education institution to learn and teach about topics of their choosing.

The Court stopped the enforcement of the part of the law that had prevented university and college professors from teaching about racism and sexism. Specifically, here is what Judge Goodwin had to say about the higher education provision in H.B. 1775:

What H.B. 1775 says:	What the Court did:
“Any orientation or requirement that presents any form of race or sex stereotyping or a bias on the basis of race or sex shall be prohibited.”	The Court found that this language was so vague that a professor could not understand what they could or could not teach in the classroom. Therefore, he has stopped the State from enforcing this part of the law.

*Currently enjoined and not enforceable

If you have any questions or are concerned about potential enforcement, you can reach out to us at intake@acluok.org

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