

Department of Justice Slams First Amendment, Claims Parents Are Engaged in “Domestic Terrorism and Hate Crimes”

[Department of Justice Slams First Amendment, Claims Parents Are Engaged in “Domestic Terrorism and Hate Crimes”](#)

by [Patrick Wood](#), [Citizens for Free Speech](#)

October 6, 2021

Parents across the nation are outraged that their own Department of Justice has been weaponized against them, claiming that school board critics and protestors are charged with being instruments of “domestic terrorism and hate crimes.” How did this happen and how was it suddenly fanned into a raging fire? The timeline below shows the key events and players.

For all parents who have been engaging their local school boards over a number of concerning issues such as mask mandates, critical race theory and pornographic lesson plans, they are suddenly threatened with criminal legal action if they persist with their protests.

That the Department of Justice would dare to interfere in local matters to suppress legitimate civil discourse is an egregious offence against the First Amendment. In fact, it is so egregious that it should be summarily repudiated by the Attorneys General of all 50 states and territories.

Step 1: September 29, 2021

The [National School Boards Association](#) (NSBA) delivers a spurious [letter](#) to the Department of Justice charging school board critics and protestors with anti-government behavior:

“As these acts of malice, violence, and threats against public school officials have increased, the classification of these heinous actions could be the equivalent to a form of domestic terrorism and hate crimes.”

To clarify, local school boards are largely elected by parents of students who attend there. To assure parent input, school board meetings are open to the public and agendas for meetings are typically required to be posted a week or two in advance. Most importantly, no school policies may be decided in secret or behind closed doors without due process of public scrutiny.

The NSBA is a non-profit organization with no ties to government whatsoever. Over the years, they created a whole network of ancillary non-profit organizations that often act in concert to meddle in and promote some government action, usually oriented to radical, left-wing ideas on education.

The NSBA is a membership organization that charges as much as \$17,000 per school district to join, which means taxpayer funds largely support it. However, it also has many corporate sponsorship opportunities that are available at a much higher cost.

Step 2: October 1, 2021

Parents Defending Education, a coalition of organizations representing 427,000 parents of school-aged children, wrote a blistering letter of rebuttal to the NSBA stating in part, “We will not be bullied. We will not have our speech chilled. We have a constitutional right to petition our elected officials, and we will continue to do so.”

Step 3: October 4, 2021

According to the [Washington Times](#), the Department of Justice responded almost immediately to the NSBA's request:

"Attorney General Merrick B. Garland on Monday directed the FBI and state attorneys general to meet with leaders at all levels to develop strategies by Nov. 3 to deal with the threats. He also said the DOJ plans to announce a series of actions to address the uptick in criminal conduct against school officials."

A number of Senators and Congressmen immediately fired back with outrage over what is a direct attack on free speech, the right to assemble, freedom of the press and the right to ask for redress of grievances to a civic entity. Governor Ron DeSantis (R-FL) [promised to protect](#) parents in school board meetings against the DOJ:

"Attorney General Garland is weaponizing the DOJ by using the FBI to silence the concerned parents by stalking and intimidating them," DeSantis wrote. "Florida will protect the free speech rights of its citizens and will not allow federal agents to suppress dissent."

The next action that parents should take against their local school board is to demand immediate termination of membership in the *National School Boards Association* and an accounting of taxpayer funds used for membership fees.

In sum, *Citizens for Free Speech* strongly condemns the actions of the *National School Boards Association* and the action of Attorney General Garland on behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice. Parents everywhere who are concerned about their local education system are cautioned against being bullied or succumbing to these threats, and are encouraged to embrace civil discourse to exercise the full extent of their unalienable rights contained in the First Amendment.

[Connect with Citizens for Free Speech](#)