

Mom complains about sexually 'perverse' posters at elementary school; police, military officers, others...

Michele Blood

A New Jersey mother says multiple governmental entities and employees worked together to deprive her of her freedom of speech after she expressed her objection to sexual material displayed at her local elementary school.

"The harassment and intimidation from the military and people who believed what they had said was too much. I really felt my kids were not safe," Angela Reading told TheBlaze.

"This case involves a blatantly unconstitutional suppression of the protected speech of a concerned parent. ... More than a dozen government actors and several state and federal law enforcement agencies became involved in this First Amendment retaliation, which portrayed a concerned school mom as some sort of terroristic threat to the community, generating widespread hysteria over nothing," attorney Chris Ferrara told TheBlaze.

"This case is an alarming indication of the extent to which the entire executive branch under the current administration has become a surveillance apparatus targeting conservative opinion. [Thomas More Society](#) attorneys will aggressively defend Mrs. Reading's First Amendment rights," Ferrara also said.

TheBlaze has obtained copies of documents that appear to support Reading's allegations that 16 government actors and employees attempted to suppress Reading's speech using a variety of approaches.

The documents, generally email exchanges, detail interactions among and between multiple military officials from Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, the North Hanover Police Department, the New Jersey State Police, the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office of Counter-Terrorism, North Hanover School District, and others.

Chaos and Control reported on a portion of these documents in a recent Substack [post](#).

The Facebook post

Her crime? Angela Reading, a 35-year-old mother of two and a member of her local school board at the time of these events, took to Facebook to express her concerns about posters in North Hanover Township's Upper Elementary School. The posters, hand-drawn by children, contained terms like "polysexual" and "gender queer."

In the Facebook post, Reading questioned the elementary school's promotion of sexuality-based research

topics, noting that it was not in the curriculum approved by the school board. She called the action "perverse" and said it "should be illegal to expose my kids to sexual content."

Reading's young daughter was exposed to the posters during "Math Night" at Upper Elementary School and asked her mother about the unfamiliar terms.

In the Facebook post, which contained photographs of the posters in the school's hallway, Reading noted that she was speaking in a personal capacity and emphasized that her concerns were "rooted in long-standing scientific principles of age-appropriateness, parental rights, and the health and safety of elementary children."

The post's takedown

Maj. Christopher Schilling, an officer at nearby Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, objected to Reading's post and characterized it as placing "targets on many parents as well as the schools, their personnel and students" in a Nov. 29 email to Maj. Nathaniel "Nate" Leshner and to Lt. Col. Megan Hall as a CC.

After Schilling emailed him a second time, Leshner agreed to "push" Schilling's email to North Hanover Police Department's Chief of Police Robert Duff. This time, Leshner also looped in Joseph Vazquez, the Installation Antiterrorism Program manager at JB MDL.

Next, Vazquez emailed Schilling, Leshner, and Hall to inform the group that he was sharing their concerns with the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness and the New Jersey State Police Regional Operations Intelligence Center. In this email, he noted that the aforementioned agencies' analysts "keep an eye on far right/hate groups."

On November 30, Police Chief Duff asked Nicole "Nik" Stouffer to remove Reading's post. Stouffer is the administrator of the Facebook page on which Reading posted and also the writer of the Chaos and Control report. Per Stouffer, Duff said he was acting in cooperation with JD MDL and that Homeland Security was also involved. In consultation with Reading, Stouffer complied with the officer's suggestion and removed the post.

Reading's story quickly went viral after Stouffer's reporting was picked up by [@LibsOfTikTok](#) and Reading was interviewed on an episode of Fox News Channel's "[Tucker Carlson](#) Tonight."

The aftermath

Reading resigned from her position on North Hanover Township's Board of Education in December following the flurry of media coverage. Reading had served on the local board since 2018 and had held positions on the state board as well.

"It is a tremendous loss to our community that this extremist group intends to eradicate any and all differing opinions in an effort to control the narrative, where politics comes before children," Reading said

in her letter of resignation.

"When I resigned, I didn't realize the extent of the military and government involvement. I had hoped it was just one military official and the police. Now I know it was an army of people," Reading told TheBlaze.

"The military's actions not only caused significant harm to me but also undermined the principles of local politics and democracy, as they were meant to suppress my lawful political expression and force me to resign from my elected position," Reading said.

"This is a dangerous precedent and sends a chilling message to other elected officials and citizens who wish to participate in the political process while also wanting to speak as private citizens," she added.

At the time, Reading knew only of the involvement of Maj. Schilling and Chief Duff. Since that time, through Open Public Records Act requests, Reading discovered that several governmental entities had been interacting behind the scenes.

In Reading's opinion, those individuals and entities worked together to squelch her First Amendment-protected right to express her concerns about age-inappropriate sexual content for young children in public schools.

Responses to TheBlaze from allegedly involved government entities

Burlington County Prosecutor's Office of Counter-Terrorism

"We did not have significant involvement in this case," Public Information Officer Joel Bewley told TheBlaze in an emailed statement on behalf of the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office of Counter-Terrorism.

TheBlaze has reviewed an email from Joseph Vazquez to Chief Duff. The email says that the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness and the New Jersey State Police are part of the installation's "Threat Working Group." The email also says that NJOHSP shared information on Reading with the Burlington County Prosecutor's Office of Counter-Terrorism coordinator "for situational awareness."

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst

"Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst was made aware of the social media exchange involving a Soldier stationed at JB MDL. The opinions expressed were posted from a personal account unaffiliated with the military and were not official statements made on behalf of the Department of Defense," Derek VanHorn, chief of media relations at JB MDL, told TheBlaze in an emailed statement.

"Any information or concerns received by the installation were passed on to the local civilian law enforcement responsible for jurisdiction. As fellow members of the local community, the safety of our

service members, their families, and the community we live in, is of the utmost importance and we take every concern seriously," JB MDL's statement concluded, adding a note with contact information for media inquiries about "the Soldier" (i.e., Maj. Christopher Schilling).

TheBlaze has reviewed multiple email exchanges involving JB MDL officials including Col. Robert Grimmett, Lt. Col. Megan Hall, Maj. Nathaniel Leshner, and Joseph Vazquez. These JB MDL officials' email exchanges involved allegedly reporting Reading to the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, Burlington County Prosecutor's Office of Counter-Terrorism, and the New Jersey State Police Regional Operations Intelligence Center.

In one notable exchange, U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Megan Hall emailed Northern Burlington School District Superintendent Dr. Andrew Zuckerman and North Hanover School District Superintendent Helen Payne. In the email, Hall says Reading's posts "created a concern for safety of our military children and families as they could become targets from extremist personnel/groups." Hall requested that both superintendents "look into the matter." Further, Hall told the pair of administrators that "concerned parents" said Reading "should excuse herself for potentially violating ethics."

Other organizations

North Hanover Police Department, New Jersey State Police, the New Jersey Office of Homeland Security and Preparedness, North Hanover Township School District, and North Burlington School District did not respond to requests for comment in time for publication.

Update: NJSP's Lt. Erick Goncalves received an email from JB MDL's 87th Security Forces Anti-Terrorism Coordinator for "awareness," NJSP told TheBlaze in an emailed statement.

Lt. Goncalves forwarded that message to NJSP's Threat Analysis Unit members and advised that the unit would not be taking action, "as it was a local matter being addressed at the local level."

NJSP denies interacting with and/or participating meetings that involved Reading, including the "threat working group" to which Vazquez (i.e., JB MDL Antiterrorism Program Manager) referred.
