

## Vermont Principal Removed for Statement on Black Lives Matter

In June the Mt. Ascutney School District Board in Vermont put Windsor School Principal Tiffany Riley on administrative leave after she stated on her personal Facebook account that she disapproved of some of the tactics used by some Black Lives Matter activists. In addition to removing her from her position, the Board criticized Riley's failure to adequately "acknowledge . . . culpability" for exercising her First Amendment right to free expression. In response to the incident, NCAC wrote to the Board, noting that exercise of free speech is not "culpable" behavior, and that its removal of Riley violated her constitutional rights.

## Trump Campaign Attempt to Ban Cartoon Thwarted

In May the online marketplace Redbubble removed a cartoon, pictured here, by Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist Nick Anderson, after the Trump campaign (Donald J. Trump for President, Inc.) charged that the cartoon's depiction of "Make American Great Again" hats constitutes trademark infringement. In a letter to Redbubble, NCAC and the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund (CBLDF) asserted that the Trump campaign misused Redbubble's system for tracking trademark infringement to suppress a work that involves parody and critique, which are constitutionally protected forms of political expression. Redbubble ultimately reinstated the cartoon, and it is currently available on its website.



# CENSORSHIP NEWS

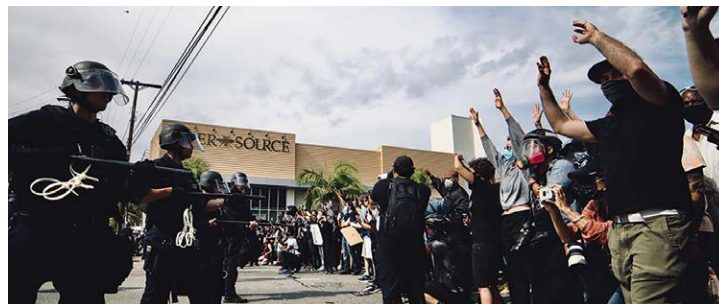


## TWO NEW NCAC TIMELINES

NCAC has created two timelines to identify and follow the free speech issues raised by the coronavirus epidemic and the George Floyd protests. Visit our website, [ncac.org](http://ncac.org), to view the latest news:



**FREE EXPRESSION DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**



**THE GEORGE FLOYD PROTESTS**

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## THE POWER OF FREE SPEECH

Once again Americans are exercising freedom of speech in a powerful movement for equal rights.

The death of George Floyd sent hundreds of thousands of protesters into the streets to confront police violence and systemic racism.

"...[T]he greatness of America is the right to protest for rights," Martin Luther King said.

After years of incidents of police violence against Black Americans attracting increasing public, media and activist attention, the death of George Floyd we released a statement on behalf of more than 50 national organizations and companies condemning the use of excessive force by police against peaceful protesters and members of the press. (Many of these incidents are highlighted in a timeline on the NCAC website, [ncac.org](http://ncac.org).)

While most acts of excessive force have been committed by local and state police, some of the most egregious cases involve federal officers. They led the charge against the peaceful protesters standing outside of the White House when President Trump wanted to cross the street for a photo op outside a church. They used tear gas and batons to clear his path.

NCAC joined Defending Rights and Dissent in issuing a statement in July protesting abuses committed by federal officers that Trump sent to Portland, Oregon, against the wishes of local

## THE POWER OF FREE SPEECH (continued)

officials. Untrained in crowd control and wearing military-style uniforms, they used projectile weapons in nightly engagements against protesters, chasing some and pulling them into unmarked vans for questioning.

Free speech plays another important role in the movement for change when it creates the dialogue that is essential for resolving the nation's deep divisions over race.

In June NCAC urged the University of Kentucky not to abandon its pioneering effort to encourage a conversation with Black students over a 1930s mural that they view as a symbol of the racist policies of the university.

The mural is a fresco that portrays state history in Memorial Hall, one of the university's signature buildings. Many students are deeply offended by its depictions of enslaved and indigenous people.

Two years ago, the university chose a creative solution to address the students' complaints by commissioning an art installation on the ceiling above the mural to portray the achievements of people of

color. The installation was intended to create an opportunity for students to discuss the history of race in Kentucky as presented in the two artworks. Karyn Olivier, a Black artist and educator, completed it in 2018.

But other issues raised by Black students remained unaddressed, including inadequate financial support, too few Black faculty and administrators, and failure to address incidents of harassment by white students.

In the days after the murder of George Floyd, the university president announced that the installation had failed to achieve its purpose and that the mural will be "removed," even though he has acknowledged that this will probably result in its destruction.

Olivier blames the university for failing to live up to its promise to use her installation as part of a broad response to Black students. "The day I completed my response to the mural was the day the real work needed to begin," she wrote in the Washington Post.

To end centuries of oppression, we need both protest and dialogue.



The University of Kentucky has announced it will remove this mural in response to student complaints.



## ALASKA COMMUNITY FIGHTS A BOOK BAN

When a school board in Alaska voted last spring to remove five classic books from a high school reading list, it had no idea that it would outrage many in the community, including members of Portugal the Man, a Grammy Award winning band, who are graduates of the school.

The books removed from the list for "controversial" content were Maya Angelou's *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*, Ralph Ellison's *The Invisible Man*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, and Tim O'Brien's *The Things They Carried*.

Following widespread protest by local citizens, NCAC and other national groups, the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Borough School Board reversed its decision. The controversy itself, however, continued to build. Two initiatives were launched that are putting thousands of copies of the challenged titles in the hands of students, parents, and other community members.

The books are being purchased with donations received from around the country after the book banning became national news. The largest donation came from the PTM Foundation, which was established by Portugal The Man. NCAC acted as a fiscal agent for the band, receiving a grant from the foundation to purchase 2,000 books and send them to Fireside Books, the bookstore in Palmer, Alaska, that is distributing them. Maryanne Cackle, an employee of the store, estimated that 5,000 books would be distributed by the end of the summer.

"This is an outstanding example of a community working together to protect free speech," NCAC Executive Director Christopher Finan said. "They not only defeated a book ban. They created an opportunity for thousands of people to read great books."



Rock stars and free speech activists: Portugal The Man

"The greatness of America is the right to protest for rights." – Martin Luther King

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