Rights of Trans Students

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A Fight Far From Over

We provide another YOU and YOUR RIGHTS feature on students and recent Supreme Court actions. The articles and activities in this resource guide focus primarily on the right of transgender students to access school bathrooms that align with their gender identities. Teachers who use the news articles about the Supreme Court decision and a school board meeting, editorial, and personal narrative/guest commentary have several entry points to begin discussion.

This is a sensitive topic — and only one of the concerns of the transgender community. The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) states that “staff, students, parents and community members need to support the rights of all students — and that diminishing those rights runs contrary to the values of the school.” NASSP has addressed concerns about privacy, name and pronouns, dress, restrooms and locker rooms, physical education and interscholastic athletic activities and overnight field trips. We have included In the Know and an activity centered on knowing the terms to clarify definitions and to give a vocabulary for discussion. See the sidebar for Transgender Guidelines for Schools resources.

Gavin Grimm’s case can be used to teach the appeals process in our judicial system. With more than 10,000 petitions for certiorari, the Supreme Court selects those they will hear — only about 80 of them per session. What does that mean for all the other cases that are refused? A Decision May Take Years helps to explain the stages beyond a student’s initiating a lawsuit.

The legal, health and mental health issues that revolve around LGBTQ students, military veterans and adults, in school, in the workplace and in public places are not resolved in this one case. Many acknowledge that securing equal rights and benefits is a fight far from over.
An appeals court ruling is an important victory for Gavin Grimm and other transgender students

“A SPECIAL kind of discrimination against a child that he will no doubt carry with him for life.” That was the biting assessment from a federal appeals court about the refusal of a Virginia school board to allow Gavin Grimm, a transgender student, to use the boys’ restroom at his high school. In ruling that the boy’s constitutional rights were violated, the court struck a blow for good sense and common decency that ought to spare other transgender students from the kind of cruelty experienced by Mr. Grimm.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit, in a 2-to-1 decision last month, found in favor of Mr. Grimm in his five-year-long battle with the Gloucester County School Board, a case that has become a flash point in the battle over the rights of LGBTQ students. The appeals court previously had backed Mr. Grimm, but the Supreme Court sent the case back to lower courts after the Trump administration in its first months in office rescinded Title IX protections for transgender students.

“At the heart of this appeal is whether equal protection and Title IX can protect transgender students from school bathroom policies that prohibit them from affirming their gender,” U.S. Circuit Judge Henry F. Floyd wrote. “We join a growing consensus of courts on holding that the answer is resoundingly yes.” The Supreme Court in June issued its landmark ruling that federal civil rights prohibitions of workplace discrimination “on the basis of sex” included protections against discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation. And earlier last month, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit upheld a lower-court ruling in favor of a Florida teenager who sought to use bathrooms that aligned with his gender identity.

Mr. Grimm was 16 and a sophomore at Gloucester High School when his desire to just be “a normal child and use the restroom in peace” became an ugly and unnecessary public controversy. The boy was undergoing hormone therapy, had legally changed his name and had been using the boys’ restrooms without incident for two months when the school board opened up a community debate and implemented a policy that required him to use separate bathrooms that, as the appeals court wrote, “might as well have said ‘Gavin’ on the sign.” Kudos to Mr. Grimm for his bravery in waging this battle, to the American Civil Liberties Union for its committed representation of him and to the appeals court for recognizing the important legal and personal principles at issue.

We hope the school board, which could still seek further appeal, finally gets the message. “The proudest moments of the federal judiciary,” the court wrote, “are when we affirm the burgeoning values of our bright youth, rather than preserve the prejudices of the past. … How shallow a promise of equal protection that would not protect Grimm from the fantastical fears and unfounded prejudices of his adult community. It is time to move forward.”

— September 8, 2020
I was a high school freshman when I first spoke at the Gloucester County School Board and said, “I deserve the rights of every other human being.”

It was 2014. The year when I first told my mom I was transgender, when I first used the boys’ restroom at school, and when the school board voted to deny me the right to use the same restroom as any other boy.

My school initially had no problems with my living as a boy. I was promised by administrators that I’d be referred to exclusively as “he” and “him,” and by my name, Gavin. At first, I avoided the boys’ restroom — I was too scared my peers might harass me or reject my presence. Instead, I used the bathroom in the nurse’s office. But my school was big, and having to book it from one side of the school to the other and back every time I needed to use the restroom quickly became unrealistic.

So I got the green light from my principal to use the boys’ restroom. That was when word started to spread. My peers began treating me differently, putting an uncomfortable distance between us, getting up from the lunch table when I sat down next to them. Within two months I became a top agenda item at the school board meeting, where parents directed vitriol at me and constantly misgendered me.

Now, over six years and several court decisions later, the Supreme Court has finally affirmed what should have been a simple request to live like any other kid, rejecting an appeal by the school board and allowing a lower-court decision in my favor to stand. It’s the third time in recent years the court has refused to take up a challenge to a legal triumph by trans youth whose constitutional rights were violated.

At last, my victory feels final. But I shouldn’t have had to fight this hard. Being a teenager is never easy, especially when society has rejected you almost from the day you were born. I’d always faced bullying and harassment at school, but it got worse right as I was getting a taste of what it felt like to be comfortable, to be seen, to love myself. I wish my case had been resolved years ago, while I was still in school. It’s been challenging fighting in court just to be me. Other trans youth shouldn’t have to fight this hard, either.

Thankfully things are changing. I’ve grown up with this case, and the country has as well. More people today say they know someone who is transgender than they did in 2014. More trans youth can say they have a supportive teacher or parent — a crucial factor in reducing rates of depression and suicide among trans kids.

But the work of advocates for trans justice is far from over.

We just had a year where more states passed bills targeting transgender youth than at any other point. Just like my fight was never really about restrooms,
these bills — targeting trans youth in sports, or the kind of health care trans youth can receive — aren’t really about sports or health care. They’re about ignorance and fear, and cisgender people’s responding to that fear by attempting to push transgender people out of public life.

Even if we weren’t under attack in state legislatures, trans people would not be liberated. Many of us — particularly trans women of color — are terrorized by harassment and violence.

To feel free, we need tangible things, like access to IDs that accurately represent our identities, competent and affordable health care, and the abolition of abusive carceral systems that harm trans people disproportionately.

We need support from allies who will defend us and keep sharing the stories of trans youth who continue to battle in court: like Dylan Brandt, who is fighting for health care in Arkansas; and Andraya Yearwood, who just wanted to run on the same team as other girls in Connecticut; and Becky Pepper-Jackson, from West Virginia, who comes from a family of runners, but who’ll be barred from joining her school’s cross-country team if the courts don’t act quickly to stop West Virginia’s new anti-trans sports bill from going into effect.

Not least, we need moral support. I urge you, when you see a trans kid hurting or fighting for their life: fight alongside them as if it’s your kid, your sibling or your best friend.

And for those of you reading this who might oppose us, I ask: Why? We’re going to be trans anyway. What do you gain by attempting to silence us? What do you gain by instilling ignorance and hate in your children who aren’t like us? What harm comes from allowing us to be who we are? Every trans youth deserves to grow up to be a trans adult — to live. ■

Know the Terms

You may encounter terms with which you are uncertain of the exact meaning as you read the news articles, editorial and guest commentary on transgender student rights. Listed below are some of the words and concepts you will read. They may be grouped as terms related to gender, to legal proceedings, to responses and to groups.

Define the terms as related to the topic on your own paper. Find the most reliable source for the definitions. These would include the glossary of the American Psychological Association and the American Bar Association.

GENDER RELATED
Gender
Cisgender
Gender identity
Non-binary
Preferred name and pronoun
Transgender
Uni-sex bathroom

LEGAL RELATED
Appeal
Hear an appeal
Injunction
School Board guidelines
U.S. Court of Appeals
U.S. Supreme Court

RESPONSES to TRANSGENDER STUDENTS
Advocate
Carceral
Curtail
Harassment
Vitriol

ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED
ACLU
Alliance Defending Freedom
FCPS Pride
GLSEN
LGBTQ
For trans students, fight is far from over
Gavim Grimm wins in Va. bathroom rights case, but battle continues

BY MORIAH BALINGIT AND HANNAH NATANSON

Gavin Grimm was a 16-year-old transgender boy in a rural Virginia community when he decided to sue his local school board, which had banned transgender students from using bathrooms that matched their gender identities after finding out that the teen was using the boys’ bathroom.

On Monday, a month after Grimm’s 22nd birthday, the U.S. Supreme Court brought the case to a close, saying it would not hear an appeal from the school board, which lost its bid to defend the policy in a lower court. It allows a ruling to stand from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, which had affirmed that Grimm had a right to use the restroom and that federal law protects the right of transgender students to use bathrooms that align with their gender identities.

“It’s an incredible relief to me because it is a victory for trans people and trans youth,” said Grimm, who has spent nearly a third of his life locked in a legal battle with the school district.

In the years since Grimm filed suit, new fronts of the battle over transgender rights have opened as conservatives have sought to curtail the rights of transgender people — including schoolchildren — in other arenas.

GOP lawmakers in at least 34 states have sought to ban transgender athletes from high school sports teams that match their gender identities. At least a dozen states have also weighed restricting transgender young people from receiving medical treatments — like puberty blockers and hormone therapy — that help them align their bodies with their gender identities. Two states — West Virginia and Arkansas — have signed medical restrictions into law.

Transgender people have also won key victories. In 2020, the high court ruled that firing employees because they are gay or transgender is a violation of federal civil rights law. And the Biden administration has worked to reverse many of the Trump policies that restricted the rights of transgender people. The Education Department this month said gay and transgender students should also be protected under federal civil rights law.

Those advancing bills to ban transgender athletes from high school sports say it is unfair to allow a transgender girl to compete against other girls, saying they have an unfair advantage. Opponents say that research on the topic is too limited to draw any sound conclusions and that the fights are putting a disproportionate spotlight on what amounts to a tiny fraction of athletes.

So while Monday’s development in the Grimm case was met with jubilation, advocates said there is still much work to be done.

“Sadly, no, the fight is not over,” said Melanie Willingham-Jaggers, the interim executive director of the LGBTQ student group GLSEN. While the “bathroom bill” fights no longer make headlines or dominate school board meetings, Willingham-Jaggers said there are still transgender students who struggle to gain access to restrooms and locker rooms.

“What were headlines about bathroom fights years ago has been replaced with
Willingham-Jaggers said. Sabrina Jennen, a 15-year-old transgene-
der girl living in Arkansas, said school officials have never barred her from using the girl’s bathroom. But lawmakers have passed a bill that would ban her from seeking gender-affirming medical care. She has sued the state and is asking for an injunction to stop the law from going into effect.

“It’s a mere steppingstone on the path towards true acceptance and equality,” Sabrina said. “It does not mean we are anywhere near finished with the work.”

In Virginia, where the Grimm case originated, conservative legal groups and parents are still waging a fight over where transgender students can use the bathroom, seeking to overturn a state law that requires schools to have inclusive policies. Two conservative groups sued the Virginia Department of Education this year in an attempt to block implementation of new guidelines.

In Loudoun County, one of the nation’s wealthiest, a teacher sued after the school system suspended him for saying during a school board meeting that he would not address a transgender student by their pronouns. A judge later ordered the school system to reinstate him.

The Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative legal group that is defending the Loudoun teacher and has a history of taking on lawsuits that question the rights of transgender people, declined to comment Monday. Through the alliance, the teacher, Tanner Cross, also declined to comment.

And recently, the Loudoun school board cut short a public board meeting after a large crowd — many of them there to protest transgender student rights — refused to quiet down. The raucous gathering resulted in one arrest and left Loudoun’s LGBTQ residents feeling shocked and scared.

Robert Norris Rigby, a longtime Northern Virginia resident and Fairfax teacher who co-founded and serves as president for an LGBTQ group, FCPS Pride, said he hopes the high court’s action Monday “will tamp down the anti-trans rhetoric on- and offline” that he and others are confronting in Northern Virginia.

“It may take the wind out of their sails,” Rigby said.

Kayden Satya Ortiz has been closely tracking the progress of Grimm’s case to the nation’s highest court. Ortiz, a 23-year-old transgender man, said his own experience attending Fairfax County Public Schools mirrored Grimm’s at his high school in Gloucester County, 150 miles away.

The court’s decision came too late for Ortiz, who was unable to use the boy’s restroom, faced bullying from peers and frequently heard teachers or classmates address him with the wrong name or pronouns. The resulting pain led him to try to kill himself a dozen times, he said.

But on Monday, all Ortiz felt was joy. “I know to many people bathrooms don’t seem like a huge deal, but to a trans kid … being able to use the right bathroom is amazing,” Ortiz said. “It helps validate to them who they know they are inside.”

He added that he views the court’s decision to not decide as a “monumental victory” for the transgender community. Many LGBTQ parents, children and teachers in Virginia took the same view — and said the boost could not have come at a better time.

Anthony Belotti, 21, a transgender person who identifies as nonbinary, helped craft the 2020 legislation requiring Virginia’s education department to issue updated guidelines regulating the treatment of transgender students. Like Grimm and Ortiz, Belotti attended high school in the state — he grew up in Stafford County — and struggled during his teens.

Belotti was barred from using the men’s restroom at school and developed urinary tract infections from having to wait until he got home. He, too, tried to harm himself.

He called Monday’s decision hurtful and disheartening, because it means the Supreme Court will not intervene to protect transgender rights in a lasting way.

“It shows how much work we have to do in the realm of trans rights,” he said, “and with the conservative majority on the Supreme Court I fear we may have to go state by state to do it.”
Amid skyrocketing tension and in a victory for LGBTQ advocates, the Loudoun County School Board voted Wednesday evening to allow transgender students access to school facilities and groups, such as sports teams, that match their gender identities.

The new guidelines, which take effect immediately, also require teachers to address transgender children by their names and pronouns.

The policy was approved by a 7-to-2 vote, with the board’s two conservative members — John Beatty (Catoctin) and Jeff Morse (Dulles) — opposed to it.

The evening saw open conflict between Beatty and Morse, and the liberal members of the board. Morse gave a lengthy, passionate speech denouncing the guidelines shortly before the vote.

“Tonight’s a difficult night for our community,” Morse said, asserting that the guidelines will hurt children and calling them “divisive, anti-family, anti-privacy, anti-teacher.”

He added: “It’s so unneeded … because if you are a [Loudoun] student today you are protected from bullying, harassment and abuse.”

Others on the board spoke up equally vehemently in favor of the guidelines.

“You seem to imply that bullying and harassment of our LGBTQ students is a thing of the past,” board member Ian Serotkin (Blue Ridge) told Morse. “I don’t know how you can say that with a straight face, I’m sorry.”

Loudoun County Public Schools was one of more than 200 school systems throughout Virginia considering revised guidelines for transgender students, after the state government passed a law in 2020 requiring them to do so to help protect students against harassment. But the issue has spurred more pushback in Loudoun, a Northern Virginia school district of 81,000 and one of the wealthiest counties in the nation, than almost anywhere else.

Supporters of the transgender student policy celebrate as the measures were approved Wednesday by the Loudoun County School Board.
its law requiring school systems to update their transgender guidelines in early 2020 at the height of alarm over the coronavirus pandemic, a time when “I’m willing to bet most of our constituents had not a clue this was being passed.” He also alleged that Loudoun’s transgender policy had not been vetted sufficiently — prompting a curt response from Sheridan.

“I just wanted the public to understand that this policy has been under review for more than a year,” she said.

Beatty’s motion to push back the vote ultimately failed, with only himself and Morse voting in favor of the delay.

Despite the sharp exchanges, the board cooperated on several amendments to the transgender policy.

Members voted almost unanimously — with only Beatty opposed — to add a requirement that all Loudoun school staff receive training on how to comply with the new guidelines and care for transgender students. The board also voted unanimously to add language requiring the school district to modernize all its bathrooms and locker rooms to improve student privacy, in part by adding unisex bathrooms.

The debate over transgender rights has been roiling Loudoun County since early this year. At the same time, the school system is facing backlash for its racial equity work — such as holding anti-bias trainings for teachers — from some parents and conservative activists, who have alleged Loudoun is teaching critical race theory, a charge the system has repeatedly denied.

Administrators first circulated a draft version of the transgender student guide-

lines last academic year. In May, Loudoun physical education instructor Tanner Cross said at a board meeting that his Christian faith meant he could not lie to children and therefore could not address transgender students using their pronouns.

School officials promptly placed Cross on paid leave and barred him from campus. The PE teacher sued the school district, and a judge later ordered Loudoun to reinstate Cross while his lawsuit continues.

Then in late June, the School Board met to publicly consider the proposed guidelines for the first time — and opponents and supporters showed out in force. After hundreds of angry parents repeatedly refused to quiet down during the meeting, Sheridan cut short public comment. When two men still refused to leave, law enforcement wound up arresting one and issuing the other a summons for trespassing.

For some School Board members, all the turmoil made the results of Wednesday’s vote bittersweet.

“The entire approach of this policy was to help the transgender kids, yet it put a big target on their backs,” said board member Harris Mahedavi (Ashburn). “We are responsible for that, and making our community divided.”

In a reflection of high community interest, the School Board meeting on Tuesday saw nearly 200 speakers file in one by one to share two minutes each of their views. Most spoke against or for the proposed transgender student guidelines, although some took the opportunity to denounce Loudoun’s decision to require all students and staff to wear masks this fall. Altogether, the speeches stretched from about 4 p.m. to close to 9 p.m., at which point the board voted to recess and reconvene fresh the next day.

The board had adopted this unusual setup for public comment for the new academic year — which forbids a public audience and limits the number of speakers allowed in the building at one time to 10 — in part as a response to the unrest that broke out at the June 22 meeting.

But it applies only during the public comment portions of a board meeting and not during the “business” sections of the meetings. That meant a full audience was permitted Wednesday when the board voted on the transgender guidelines.

Loudoun spokesman Wayde Byard told reporters on Tuesday that the school system was preparing to welcome as many as 200 attendees for the vote. But in the end, just under two dozen members of the public showed up Wednesday, sitting amid a sea of empty red chairs. A few women in the front row wore rainbow masks and cradled signs reading, “Trans rights are human rights.”

In a nod to recent events, though, everyone entering the building had to submit to a screening from security personnel that included body-wand waving and bag checks. A sign stuck in the grass outside warned attendees that “ALL PEOPLE AND ITEMS ARE SUBJECT TO SEARCH.”

The sign also listed nine categories of prohibited items, including “rods or sticks of any kind,” “mace,” “pepper spray” and “weapons.”
A Decision May Take Years

A nurse sued for the right of her husband to get the deworming drug that some people have used to treat or prevent covid-19 in recent months. A Louisville judge denied the request in a scathing ruling that called out people on the Internet who have promoted the drug.

— By Timothy Bella, “She demanded a hospital treat her husband’s covid-19 with ivermectin. A judge said no,” September 16, 2021

You might first talk to a group that can advise if you have a viable case or if there are other options. The Student Press Law Center, the ACLU and Southern Poverty Law Center are examples of such organizations. If you decide to undertake a lawsuit, find a lawyer who specializes in your type of case.

You will file a complaint and lawsuit in your state or federal court.

“The trial judge would hear evidence and consider legal arguments from each side before making a decision. If the judge decides all or part of the case against you, you can then appeal the case to a higher court,” according to FindLaw in “How Does the U.S. Supreme Court Decide Whether to Hear a Case.” “When you have appealed as far as possible, you can consider appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court. … Each year the Supreme Court receives about 10,000 petitions for certiorari, but only hears about 80 of them.”
What if you do not agree with a decision made in a lawsuit?

You see if you have the right to appeal. Do you have standing? The appellate process allows you to challenge a court’s decision and, maybe, receive a new judgment.

- You will file a Notice of Appeal within the required deadline. This initiates the process with the trial court and the appeals court. You must also give a copy of the form to your opposing party.
- Pay the filing fee. This is another expense you will encounter as you move through the appeals process.
- Confirm if your state requires other documents to be provided to the appeals court.
- Order the trial transcripts. As the appellant, you must order and pay for these documents. Be sure to find out if your state requires you to send your opponent a copy of the transcripts. (More money out of your pocket.)
- Know requirements for your brief’s content. If you are representing yourself, check your state’s Court of Appeals website for a guide. Look on other appellate courts’ websites for sample briefs.
- Wait to see if your case will be heard.

Now that we have a basic understanding of filing a law suit and appealing a decision, let’s read “The Supreme Court is hearing oral arguments over Obamacare today. Here’s what that means,” by Post legal reporter Robert Barnes. Although the case was heard in March 2015, the process is the same. “A case must involve an issue of federal law or otherwise fall with the jurisdiction of federal courts,” emphasizes FindLaw, before it will even be considered for appeal.

What did this process mean for Gavin Grimm?

Now that you know the process of appealing decisions, create a timeline of the case that began in Gloucester County, Virginia.
The Supreme Court is hearing oral arguments over Obamacare today. Here’s what that means.

BY ROBERT BARNES

*Originally Published March 4, 2015*

The Supreme Court on Wednesday will hear oral arguments in *King v. Burwell*, the most serious challenge to the Affordable Care Act (a.k.a. Obamacare) since the justices upheld it as constitutional almost three years ago. Here’s how this works:

What's the central issue in *King v. Burwell*?
The Affordable Care Act provides federal subsidies to low- and middle-income people who buy health insurance through individual marketplaces, or exchanges, in each state. The federal government sets up exchanges in states that do not do it for themselves. The law says the subsidies are available to those who buy insurance through an exchange “established by the state.” The IRS said that in the context of the entire law, that applied to exchanges in the state set up by the federal government. But challengers say that language means subsidies don’t apply to those exchanges set up by the federal government.

So why did the Supreme Court decide to take this case? Generally, the justices take a case if lower courts have interpreted the law differently. Here a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit ruled for challengers, and a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit ruled for the Obama administration. Although the full D.C. circuit nullified its panel decision so all the judges could weigh in, the Supreme Court did not wait for the outcome.

Lawyers will make their cases and answer questions from the justices today. How much do oral arguments affect the justices’ rulings? Justices say the arguments are a time for them to question the legal reasoning advanced by the parties in their briefs. The justices say that sometimes, but not often, oral arguments will affect the outcome of the decision.

What else do the justices consider? They consider the court’s precedents on the issue, their own theories of constitutional and statutory interpretation, and friend-of-the-court briefs submitted by interested parties. But, as Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has said, the case is most often decided based on the written briefs submitted to the justices.

What will we know at the end of arguments on March 4? The justices sometimes reveal their thinking on the case through the kind of questions they ask the lawyers in front of them. It is also the first time the justices discuss the case themselves, so the way they ask questions is sometimes a signal to the rest of the court.

What happens next? The court will meet on Friday and vote on the case. This will probably determine the outcome, though the public may not know the result for several months.

Well, when will we know? A case as important as this one tends to take some time. The ruling will be issued once the majority has agreed upon an opinion and, if there are dissenters, when those opinions are ready as well. The court’s only deadline is that it tries to finish its work by the end of June.

Did the justices already hear a case about the Affordable Care Act? In 2012, the justices ruled 5 to 4 that act was constitutional — meaning that Congress did not exceed its authority in passing it. Chief Justices John G. Roberts Jr. wrote the opinion, joined by the liberal justices Ginsburg, Stephen G. Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan. Justices Antonin Scalia, Anthony M. Kennedy, Clarence Thomas and Samuel A. Alito Jr. would have found it unconstitutional.

Does that case affect the *King v. Burwell* case? It shouldn’t. The previous decision found the act constitutional. This case is about how to interpret some of the wording in the law.

Which justice or justices might cast the deciding votes? Since Roberts cast the deciding vote last time, he will be most closely watched this time. Some contend that Kennedy and Kagan might also be “in play.”

Who writes the opinions? How many can there be? If Roberts is in the majority, he can choose to write the opinion or assign it to someone else in the majority. If he is not on the prevailing side, the senior justice in the majority gets that option. A justice who agrees with the outcome but not the legal reasoning of the decision may write what is known as a concurring opinion. Dissenters may also write for themselves.

Robert Barnes has been a Washington Post reporter and editor since 1987. He joined The Post to cover Maryland politics, and he has served in various editing positions, including metropolitan editor and national political editor. He has covered the Supreme Court since November 2006.
What Is Your Opinion?

Whether you are writing a persuasive essay, a column or an editorial, you begin with a specific topic and a point of view. What makes each distinct from just stating your opinion is that you are providing an informed opinion. You have read reliable sources on both sides of the issue, done research, interviewed experts and had eyewitness experiences.

The Topic
In 1-2 sentences make a straightforward statement of the issue, action or proposed action, or situation.

Your Point of View on the Topic
Clearly state your position on the topic. You may use such verbs as “should/should not,” “does/does not,” “must/must not” and “agree/disagree/partially agree.”

Best Arguments From Different Sides of the Question
Do your best to learn about the opposite point of view as well as your own. What are the best points that each sides gives for its position? State the three best below.

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Concession to the Other Point of View
To keep those who disagree with you reading and learning your arguments, include a concession. Concede the best point that the opposite side has. If your best position seems weak against it, you may need to reword it or rethink your position.

Your Most Persuasive Argument For Your Point of View
State your best argument in 1-3 sentences. You may quote a reliable source.