

45WORDS

In response to Neshaminy High School's Administration

Recently, the adviser and editorial board of Neshaminy High School's Playwickian newspaper have come under fire by school administration, which punished staff members for refusing to print the word "Redskins" in their publication. Neshaminy High School administrators have suspended Playwickian adviser, Tara Huber, for two days, removed co-editor-in-chief, Gillian McGoldrick, from her position for a month, and reduced the money in the newspaper's account by \$1,200.

While many members of the school community are viewing the staff's "Redskin" ban as a violation of First Amendment rights, it is actually the school administration's actions that are violating the First Amendment. The First Amendment allows the freedom of speech and freedom of the press, so if the Playwickian staff wants to refrain from using "Redskins," they, by law, may do so. 45words stands behind the editors of the Playwickian staff in their ban of the word "Redskins."

As student journalists from all over America, we understand the stress and hardships that go into producing a successful student newspaper. We also understand that as student journalists, we take on a responsibility to write not only the truth, but also to stick to the word of the First Amendment - whether the decisions we make are controversial or not. Managing a publication takes an incredible amount of time, energy, dedication, and leadership. Doing so with a significant decrease in funding, lack of an adviser, and lack of a head editor is unfathomable. By taking away the core fundamentals of a strong writing department, the administration is not just placing limits on what words the staff members must use: it is placing limits on journalism itself and denying the students of the Playwickian the opportunity to learn. The administration is sending the message that the students can play by their rules, or not play at all - a message that intrudes on the Playwickian staff's First Amendment rights.

Freedom of speech is the root of journalism and the staff members are being denied their rights as journalists. Not only do the Neshaminy School District's actions infringe on student journalist rights, but they are also unjustified. The editorial board's decision to remove the word "Redskins" from the newspaper is merely an exercise of the First Amendment rights guaranteed in the Constitution. The administration's decision to enforce the usage of the word "Redskin," a racial slur, is a violation of the First Amendment.

45words fully supports the students of the Playwickian staff. We believe student journalists are capable of anything, given that their administration and community allow them the freedoms that they are guaranteed by the Constitution. We have the power to change the injustice in Neshaminy and remind the nation that we have rights, and we will not stand idly by while this continues. It takes all of us to end censorship, but it is a movement that has been 26 years in the making. Since the Hazelwood v. Kuhlmeier ruling (1988), school administrators across the country have exploited the immoral practice of prior review. They have bullied, threatened, and abused scholastic journalism programs across the country. It is time that we, the young journalists of the United States, fight the Hazelwood ruling, fight censorship, and become the generation that changes things for the better. We are the voice of our generation, and it is time we speak up.