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Decisive Order Against Mead School District in High School Football Hazing Case

*Court Finds District Did Not Protect Students Entrusted to Its Care,
Violated Mandatory Reporting Laws, and Engaged in Discrimination*

Spokane, WA – In a significant ruling with implications for student safety and institutional accountability, a Washington state court has found that a public school district violated core legal duties owed to students entrusted to its care.

Spokane County Superior Court Judge Annette S. Plese issued a decisive order against the Mead School District, concluding there were no genuine issues of material fact and granting Plaintiffs' motion for partial summary judgment on all issues presented.

The Court ruled as a matter of law that:

- School districts, acting *in loco parentis*, owe a duty to safeguard the students in their care;
- Mead School District's agents breached their duty to protect students from foreseeable harm;
- The District's agents violated mandatory reporting laws after receiving numerous reports of sexual harassment and assault;
- The District's agents engaged in gender-based discrimination; and
- The District is liable for the conduct of its employees acting within the scope of their employment.

The Court further found the District failed to produce evidence to rebut the Plaintiffs' case and was not entitled to delay the Court's ruling.

The legal action stems from allegations involving repeated sexual assaults connected to the Mead High School football program.

“Schools are entrusted with the safety of children,” said Marcus Sweetser, who represents multiple affected families. **“That trust carries legal duties—duties to protect, duties to act, and duties to report.”**

“The Court has now made clear those duties were violated as a matter of law,” Sweetser added.

The decision underscores longstanding legal principles governing schools, including the obligation to protect students from foreseeable harm and to report suspected abuse. The Court’s findings confirm that those duties are enforceable—and that failure to meet them carries legal consequences.

“This case is about accountability,” Sweetser said. **“At the center of it are children who were entitled to protection, honesty, and adult intervention.”**

“Accountability is how institutions change,” he added. **“It is how we protect the next child—not just explain what happened to the last.”**

