

THE END OF TEENAGE RIGHTS?

Article summary

Teenage rights are often violated but in some cases teenagers themselves provoke authorities to introduce new harsh measures. There is a question if the crackdowns are a necessarily evil or just way over the top. Could they convert schools from learning centres to prison camps? In this article are described some cases of violating teenage rights.

Andy told an insulting joke about Peter to another student as they walked down the hallway, within earshot of Peter. Two days after he was arrested and his case was brought to court. Finally his case was thrown out of court. Only with his comment he ran a risk of creating an environment that is suspicious, hostile and intolerant.

Brian Wamsley got into trouble by creating a Website against his school called Stow sucks online. The site opened with a picture of Stow-Munroe Falls High in flames. He was immediately suspended and recommended for expulsion but ultimately the school couldn't treat the Website as disruptive because it had been created off-campus.

Katelyn Kimmons, 16, took her city to court – and brought a controversial youth curfew program to a grinding halt for more than a year. The program banned anyone under 18 from public places after 10pm on weekdays and midnight on weekends. Katelyn and classmates Anna and Lealah decided the curfew violated their constitutional rights and sued to stop the law. Less than a year later, the court ruled against the girls. Since then 52 kids have been arrested, received warnings or been sent home to their parents.

Kent McNew confesses that when it comes to fights, he is really a wimp. But last spring, when school administrators pointed to hi electric-blue hair and implied he was a threat to teachers and fellow students – and then suspended him from Surry County High. Kent went to court, claiming his rights had been violated - and won.

Lindsay Earls was in choir last year when they chose to take drug test. She protested that her privacy had been violated. Lawyer Graham Boyd says that drug testing turns teachers into cops and tells students they are less than full citizens.

May 14, Mother's Day in America, saw the largest demonstration for gun control in American history. The "Million Moms March" coincided with US President Bill Clinton's campaign to restrict gun usage. However both the President and moms are opposed by the highly powerful NRA (National Rifle Association) who cite a citizen's right to bear arms as it states in the US constitution.

Unknown words

1. to be harsh - to be unkind, strict or cruel unnecessarily
2. a measure - a method of achieving something as a new rule
3. a crackdown - severe actions to prevent something from happening
4. to be over the top - to be too much/excessive
5. to be within earshot - to be close enough to hear what people are saying
6. to be an honour student - a student who consistently gets top grades
7. disorderly conduct - disruptive behaviour
8. to throw out - to be rejected
9. to suppress - to prevent something from being said or to end something by force
10. to show up - to arrive somewhere
11. a copycat crime - a crime that is committed to copy a crime that has been done before
12. a curfew - a rule that says that people must be at home past a certain time
13. to bring something to a grinding halt - to completely stop something because of a problem
14. a scapegoat - person who is chosen to be blamed for something because everyone wants to blame that person
15. to stand one's ground - to refuse to surrender during an argument
16. to lampoon - to criticize something in an amusing way so people see how silly it is
17. profanity - swearing
18. a wimp - a person who is either weak or a coward
19. to be devout - to be a devoted follower of a religion and obey all the rules
20. the Constitution - the written document which lists the laws and principles upon which the USA is governed