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NCLA Suit Demands End to Gov't Censorship of Support Groups for Victims of Covid Vaccine Injuries

Brianne Dressen, et al. v. Rob Flaherty, White House Director of Digital Strategy, et al.

Washington, DC (September 13, 2024) – The New Civil Liberties Alliance has filed an [Amended Complaint](#) in the *Dressen, et al. v. Flaherty, et al.* lawsuit against the federal government's ongoing efforts to collude with social media companies to monitor and censor online support groups for those injured by Covid vaccines. This censorship campaign has combined the efforts of numerous federal agencies and government actors—including within the White House, as well as the Surgeon General's Office and the CDC—to coerce, induce, and collude with social media platforms to censor, suppress, and label as "misinformation" speech expressed by those who have suffered vaccine-related injuries. That includes private speech in online chat groups. The Amended Complaint exposes how the illegal scheme has continued since this lawsuit began last year. NCLA urges the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas to enjoin this government-sponsored censorship and declare it unlawful state action to prevent these Defendants from further censoring such free speech and free association in violation of Plaintiffs' First Amendment rights.

NCLA represents Brianne Dressen, Shaun Barcavage, Kristi Dobbs, Nikki Holland, Suzanna Newell, who have suffered vaccine-related injuries, and Ernest Ramirez, who lost his son to a vaccine-related death. Plaintiffs are not anti-vaxxers. Ms. Dressen, for example, was injured by the AstraZeneca vaccine after she volunteered to participate in vaccine trials for that vaccine. Mr. Ramirez received a Moderna vaccine himself without incident, but his 16-year-old son died of vaccine-induced cardiac arrest five days after Ernest, Jr. received the Pfizer vaccine. The First Amendment forbids Defendants from suppressing the speech and association rights of innocent victims like these, who are seeking to commiserate with other sufferers and to share ideas for medical treatments.

The Plaintiffs have all been heavily censored on social media for sharing their personal experiences, supporting others, and exchanging advice and medical research with others who were medically harmed after taking the vaccine. For posting about their personal experiences and trying to connect with others in the vaccine-injured community, Plaintiffs' speech has repeatedly been flagged as misinformation or removed entirely, and they have had their private support groups shut down. This risk is ongoing, as Plaintiffs continue to be censored on social media platforms. Importantly, their censorship is the direct result of the Biden Administration's campaign to stop them from discussing their inconvenient truths by threatening, coercing, pressuring, inducing, and colluding with social media companies to silence them.

NCLA released the following statements:

"If there is any case that exemplifies why the First Amendment exists—as well as the abominable and Orwellian consequences that take place when the government evades its restraint—it is this one. The time has come for the federal government and its private partners in this cruel censorship scheme to be held to account for the ongoing harm that they have caused our clients, along with so many other Americans across the country who were simply

trying to do their part by getting vaccinated—and who were then silenced and made to be pariahs by their own government.”

— **Casey Norman, Litigation Counsel, NCLA**

“The plaintiffs in this case posed a threat to the Biden Administration, because their personal experiences conflicted with the government’s heavy-handed approach to Covid-19 vaccination, which was predicated on the false claim that vaccine injuries were virtually nonexistent. The response of the government defendants here—to wield their authority to get social media companies to silence these individuals, who had suffered serious injuries and in the case of Mr. Ramirez lost his own son—should shock the conscience of all Americans. Through this lawsuit, we will hold the Administration and these wayward officials accountable for their flagrantly unconstitutional conduct.”

— **Jenin Younes, Litigation Counsel, NCLA**

For more information visit the case page [here](#).

ABOUT NCLA

[NCLA](#) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit civil rights group founded by prominent legal scholar [Philip Hamburger](#) to protect constitutional freedoms from violations by the Administrative State. NCLA’s public-interest litigation and other pro bono advocacy strive to tame the unlawful power of state and federal agencies and to foster a new civil liberties movement that will help restore Americans’ fundamental rights.

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