

The *Cerankosky v. Washington* Case

Case Name: *Cerankosky, et al v. Washington*

Case Action: Case filed on November 1st, 2024

Significance: Universities cannot censor students because of their views.



Background: Selene Cerankosky and Maria Arcara are third-year law students at George Mason University's Antonin Scalia Law School. In September 2024, one of their classmates asked for opinions on a proposal to put tampons in men's restrooms on campus. Selene voiced her concern that if females were welcomed into male restrooms, then males would receive access to female restrooms. This would make women feel unsafe and uncomfortable on campus. Maria agreed with her. Two weeks later, Selene and Maria were issued no-contact orders from GMU's Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, prohibiting them from having any contact with their classmate. Selene and Maria were unaware that anyone complained about them and had no opportunity to defend themselves or appeal the orders. Alliance Defending Freedom has filed a lawsuit against GMU for violating Selene and Maria's freedom of speech, free exercise, and due process rights.

Key Points

- Universities – especially law schools – should be the marketplace of ideas. There is no room for censorship in academia or American law.
- Under the First Amendment, Selene and Maria are allowed to express their convictions without fear of punishment.

Key Facts

- It is unconstitutional for public universities like GMU to punish a private speaker because of the speaker's motivating ideology, opinion, or perspective or because of the content of that speaker's expression.
- GMU violated Selene and Maria's free speech, free exercise, and due process rights by issuing no-contact orders against them for simply expressing their opinions.

The Bottom Line: No student should be punished for sharing their views peacefully on campus.