

RULING AGAINST PRAISE ACADEMY OF DANCE BARBADOS RESCINDED! SENATOR ACCEPTS BIAS!

PRESS RELEASE

Christian dance group call for investigation after senator accepts bias and rescinds ruling that cancelled performance that challenged gender identity

The senator, at the centre of a cancel-culture storm on the Caribbean Island of Barbados, has admitted 'there was a real perception of bias' when he made a ruling which upheld the disqualification of a Christian dance group from a national competition for challenging gender identity.

In a letter to Praise Academy of Dance Barbados' legal representatives, Mr. Gregory Nicholls, a Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, stated: "I accept... that a fair-minded informed observer would conclude that there was a real possibility of bias in the present matter. I have therefore decided to rescind my arbitral decision of November 17th, 2023, in the interest of fairness to all parties concerned."

In October 2023, Praise Academy of Dance Barbados was disqualified by the National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA) for allegedly breaching the rules by exceeding "the bounds of good taste" and making 'defamatory claims.'

The Praise Academy of Dance Barbados is a registered Premiere Arts School with affiliations with schools in Jamaica and Trinidad. For the last 20 years it has produced dances and theatrical productions which specifically deal with various relevant social issues.

They had never been disqualified from any performance due to their Christian beliefs.

The performance called 'Speak Life', a video of which went viral after the group launched legal action, presented a Christian viewpoint of gender identity and sexual orientation and declared the Christian world view that there are only two genders.

Performed by teenage students, the piece rejected progressive gender education and instead promoted the protection of parental rights and the freedom to bring children up in line with Christian beliefs and not LGBT ideology.

The piece is abstracted from a show about a 15-year-old girl who is struggling with gender identity but found her true identity through reading the Bible and God. The stage had banners with the verses from

the Book of Genesis which says: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

Ruling Appeared In The Media

Following the disqualification, the group raised an official complaint with the arbiter for the National Cultural Foundation (NCF).

They argued that the decision of the NCF and NIFCA judging panel was illegal and unconstitutional. They said it was unclear what exactly in the production had contravened the rules and what was ‘bad taste.’

Acting as arbiter for the dispute, Senator Gregory Nicholls, however, upheld the decision to disqualify the group. The ruling then appeared in the media before it was communicated to Praise Academy Of Dance Barbados.

In arbitration law, the impartiality of arbitrators is fundamental to the arbitral process. Any actual or perceived bias on the part of an adjudicator warrants setting aside a decision. The determination of an arbitrator's impartiality or bias is evaluated using the common law test of apparent bias, which states:

The question is whether the fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts, would conclude that there was a real possibility that the Tribunal was biased.

While Mr. Nicholls has revoked his decision, the ruling of the NIFCA judges remains unchanged.

After reaching out to the Christian Legal Centre in the UK for support, Praise Academy is currently consulting with its legal team to determine its next course of action and is calling for an investigation into the actions of Senator Nicholls.

‘Investigation into Senator’s actions needed’

Attorney Davida Maynard-Holligan, who is representing Praise Academy of Dance Barbados, said: “While we are encouraged that Senator Nicholls has withdrawn his ruling, the original ruling against the group remains in place and justice is being delayed.

“If we had not challenged and exposed what had happened to the group, there is no way that Senator Nicholls’ would have withdrawn his ruling. What he did therefore remains a highly concerning precedent which must never happen again on this island.

“The ruling sent a chilling message to Christians in Barbados, especially young students, who do not believe in and refuse to conform to confusing and harmful gender identity ideology and extreme teaching.

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