

October 4, 2005

David Greco, Principal
Hutchinson Central Technical High School
256 South Elmwood Avenue
Buffalo, NY 14201
716.816.3888

BY FAX 716.838.7530
AND REGULAR MAIL

Re: JROTC

Dear Mr. Greco:

The office of the New York Civil Liberties Union has been contacted by two parents with respect to the involuntary enrollment of their daughters in the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Hutchinson Tech.

Elizabeth Breyer, along with the entire incoming freshman class, was "automatically" enrolled in JROTC. As I understand, her parents were advised that they only had until the second day of school to "dis-enroll" and could only do so via a special "opt-out" form.

Jennifer Brown was also involuntarily and "automatically" enrolled in JROTC. The efforts of her mother, Ms. Wendy VanSchoeter, to object to her enrollment fell on deaf ears, as she was specifically advised by Assistant Principal Rose Schneider that Jennifer could not drop JROTC. Now Jennifer has been informed that she will face adverse consequences if she does not come into compliance with the dress and hair code of JROTC.

This practice of your school is in direct violation of state education law. Education Law Section 802(3) provides, in pertinent part:

the board of education . . . may offer during school hours a junior reserve officer training program . . . to those students in grades nine through twelve who are at least fourteen years of age provided that enrollment and participation in such program is voluntary on the part of the student and written consent of a parent or guardian is submitted by such student . . .

As you can see, a school must have the affirmative written consent of the parent before a child is allowed to enroll or

David Greco
October 3, 2005
page 4

participate in JROTC. The indoctrination of children into military life is a serious matter and should not occur without the specific consent of the parent or guardian. That is precisely what the education law states, and Hutchinson Tech is in serious violation of both the letter and spirit of that law.

We expect that you will take prompt measures to rectify this situation not only with respect to the two students whose parents contacted us but with respect to all students in your school. I look forward to hearing from you that Hutchinson Tech has been brought into compliance with the law.

Very truly yours,

Donna Lieberman
NYCLU Executive Director

Jeffrey E. Fogel
NYCLU Attorney

CC: Bruce Beyer
Wendy VanScoeter