

Contact: Gloria Allred

Phone: 323-653-6530

Email: gallred@amglaw.com

Statement of Leyna Nguyen

My son Dylan is a good kid. He gets good grades, he's respectful and helpful, he's kind and funny, and he's brave. I've always taught him to help anyone who needs it, and if he sees someone being mistreated to speak up.

So when Dylan felt that his own teacher discriminated against him for being Asian, Dylan spoke up. And for that he was retaliated against. There've been a lot of painful lessons learned here. One, that adults, and teachers in particular, don't always do the right thing although they should. Two, that speaking out and telling the truth doesn't always fix the problem, and in fact can create more problems. This is the reason why victims don't speak up. For me, I learned how frustrating, disheartening, and impossible it is to go up against a large institution that seemingly is only interested in protecting its own employees.

My son did nothing wrong here—and yet the solution was to remove him from class because school administrators—in their own words - “can't control the teacher.” All we wanted was an apology so that we can move on, but the teacher has refused to do so. The teacher has not once DENIED he targeted my son for being Asian, and he has not once apologized for what happened. What kind of

message does that send to my son, and what kind of message does that send to all the other students sitting in that classroom?? That it's ok to single someone out because of their ethnicity?

I know for a fact that many Asians prefer to keep their heads down, stay quiet and forge ahead in the face of humiliation, discrimination, and mistreatment. Since this incident happened, I've received many, many messages and voicemails from other Asian parents telling me of similar stories and telling me they're afraid to say anything. Some feel their English isn't good enough to talk to administrators. Some feel they won't be taken seriously because they're Asian. There IS a general feeling out there that it's ok to make fun of Asians. It's not. So the reason why we are filing this complaint is to hold the school accountable, but also to let other parents know there IS something you can do if your child has suffered discrimination and the school doesn't respond adequately.

Lastly, and it's important that I mention, there are a lot of great teachers. There's one in particular at Walter Reed who, a couple of weeks ago, was out for a few days and my son asked me to email the teacher to make sure he's ok. That's the kind of caring, impactful relationship I want to see. I don't want my son to be afraid to go into class, I don't want him to dread facing his teacher, and I never again want to have to say to my children, "Don't do what your teacher just did."

Leyna Nguyen

Mother of Dylan Muriano, Student

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