

Newsletter

PREPARING YOU FOR A FUTURE IN LAW

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IMPORTANT CASES THIS WEEK



Engel v. Vitale



Near v. Minnesota



New York Times v. Sullivan

Engel v. Vitale

Prayer requirements in schools.



Photo from Freedom From Religion Foundation

Under New York state law, schools adopted a policy that required a daily prayer. Parents were infuriated, but the school board defended themselves by noting that students could opt

out of saying the prayer. Parents still filed suit, arguing that the state law violated the religion clause of the First Amendment. The Court ruled in favor of the parents and held that any state law requiring an official prayer at school was unconstitutional as it was inconsistent with the Establishment Clause. This was a landmark case enforcing the separation of church and state. Read the full decision [here](#).

Near v. Minnesota

The censorship of journalists.

In 1925, Minnesota passed the Public Nuisance Bill, which allowed judges to shut down newspapers that were deemed "obscene and slanderous." When a local newspaper called the Saturday Press started publishing articles attacking certain public officials, those officials complained, and a judge granted a temporary restraining order against the newspaper. The Saturday Press then filed suit, claiming it was a violation of the First Amendment. The Supreme Court ultimately ruled in favor of the Press and held that the state law was unconstitutional and that "the liberty of the press and of speech is within the liberty safeguarded by the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment from invasion of state action." Read the full decision [here](#).



Photo from Middle East Monitor

New York Times v. Sullivan

The limitations of defamation.

The New York Times published an ad for donations for Martin Luther King and criticized the Montgomery police. Despite not being mentioned in the ad, the city commissioner sued the Times for defamation as their ad included factual errors. The Court unanimously held that when defamation involves a public figure, the defendant must act with "actual malice" and have "reckless disregard for the truth." Read the full decision [here](#).



Photo from The New York Times