

For Immediate Release
November 26, 2013
Bradenton, FL

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REFORMA Files Brief in Lawsuit Challenging Arizona's Ban on Ethnic Studies

On November 25, 2013, REFORMA, the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, joined the Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) and several other education, library, and free-speech organizations in filing an amicus brief with the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in *Arce v. Huppenthal*, a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of Arizona Revised Statute § 15-112(A).

The amicus brief filed by these organizations supports Arizona's students and teachers who challenged the statute that led to the disbanding of Tucson's Mexican-American Studies (MAS) program. The claim argues that the law violates Arizona students' First Amendment rights to receive information and is unconstitutionally overbroad. The Tucson Unified School District (TUSD) dismantled the MAS program and removed books from classrooms as a result of the passing of the statute.

To view the text of the amicus brief, visit http://www.ftrf.org/?Current_Cases

"In REFORMA we are concerned with the needs of Latino communities with regards to information and library materials such as books and online sources" said Isabel Espinal, REFORMA's president. "It is important that Latino children have access to books and curriculum about their own heritage and in their own languages. Without this information they simply cannot thrive as full human beings." Espinal also remarked that the availability of these materials and the teaching of these historical notions are important not only for Latinos but for all members of society: "resentment and damage are created when there is exclusion of our history and our stories," she pointed out.

In 2012, REFORMA condemned the dismantling of the MAS program and spearheaded an effort to get the library community to take a stand. REFORMA's 2012 resolution can be found here: http://www.reforma.org/resolution_az

REFORMA's partners in filing this brief are the following organizations: the American Library Association, Freedom to Read Foundation, American Booksellers Association for Free Expression, Asian/Pacific American Librarians Association, Black Caucus of the American Library Association, Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, National Association for Ethnic Studies, National Coalition Against Censorship, and the National Council of Teachers of English.

REFORMA is a national organization of library and information professionals committed to promoting the development of library collections that include Spanish language and Latino oriented materials. The organization strongly advocates for culturally relevant and linguistically appropriate library services, programs and materials to meet the information and cultural needs of the Latino community. For more information on REFORMA, visit www.reforma.org.

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