

RICHARD GRAND LEGAL WRITING COMPETITION
FALL 2009

For this Competition, you are to write an editorial or an op-ed piece arguing either that the U.S. Supreme Court opinion in *Safford Unified School Dist. No. 1 v. Redding*, 557 U.S. ___, 129 S. Ct. 2633, 174 L. Ed. 2d 354 (2009) was rightly or wrongly decided. In *Redding*, an 8-1 Court held that a strip search of a middle school student violated the Fourth Amendment where the school lacked reasonable suspicion that the student was concealing drugs in her underwear. The Court also held that the officials involved were not personally liable. Justices Stevens and Ginsburg concurred separately. Justice Thomas dissented.

This case raises several interesting questions about (1) the measures that school officials can take to protect students, and (2) the liberty interest that students have on school property. Justice Ginsburg made a rare comment about the case while the decision was still pending, saying that some of her male colleagues just did not “quite under[stand]” the pain that a strip search can cause a 13-year-old girl.

You can find the case on Westlaw or Lexis. You can also find it many places on the web, including at this link: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/08-479.ZS.html>. (Note that this links to a web page with tabs at the top for the majority, concurring, and dissenting opinions. The syllabus is not part of any official opinion.)

Moreover, you can find a wealth of materials on the SCOTUS Wiki web site: http://scotuswiki.com/index.php?title=Safford_United_School_District

Further analysis of oral argument, the decision, and Justice Ginsburg’s comment is available here: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/22/us/22search.html?scp=6&sq=safford%20redding&st=cse>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/26/us/politics/26scotus.html?scp=1&sq=safford%20redding&st=cse>

http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/judicial/2009-05-05-ruthginsburg_N.htm

You may choose your audience for this editorial. Include a separate sheet of paper—not counted within the page limit—indicating the target readership of the publication. For instance, you could write the editorial for a publication of criminal defense lawyers, prosecutors, young lawyers, the National Lawyer's Guild, or the Federalist Society. These are only examples. The choice is yours. The only limitation is that the target audience must be made up of lawyers. You need not specifically name the publication. It is sufficient just to name your target readership.

If you fail to designate your target readership, the judges will assume that you are writing an editorial for *Arizona Attorney*, the official publication of the State Bar of Arizona. For some examples of recent editorials and opinion articles in *Arizona Attorney*, see:

http://www.myazbar.org/AZAttorney/PDF_Articles/0406Hedonic1.pdf

http://www.myazbar.org/AZAttorney/PDF_Articles/0905Con3.pdf

http://www.myazbar.org/AZAttorney/PDF_Articles/0408cocaine.pdf

http://www.myazbar.org/AZAttorney/PDF_Articles/0907AvoidPernicious.pdf

http://www.myazbar.org/AZAttorney/PDF_Articles/1106edpro.pdf

http://www.myazbar.org/AZAttorney/PDF_Articles/1106con.pdf

http://www.myazbar.org/AZAttorney/PDF_Articles/0606MemoPRO.pdf

This is a writing competition. We encourage you to be interesting, to communicate a point of view, to educate your reader, to make a compelling argument, to turn a phrase here and there. We anticipate that Competition participants will have a variety of opinions. Some will support the Court's opinion in *Redding*. Some will oppose it. Different reasons will be offered for these conclusions. Moreover, we are not looking for one particular writing style. Your target audience will likely inform much of how you approach writing this editorial. By the Rules of the Competition, all entries must be typed and double-spaced, with 13-point font or larger. Block quotes may be single-spaced. The maximum length of the paper is eight pages. Margins must be one inch or larger on all four sides. But, please don't feel compelled to fill the full eight pages. Fill just as much space as necessary to write a complete, persuasive editorial.

Please carefully read the Richard Grand Legal Writing Competition General Information, Rules, and Frequently Asked Questions, which are posted on the College of Law web site.