



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Congressman's Demands Found Unjustified
Valedictorian's Claims Unsubstantiated**

JULY 24, 2015 (Longmont, Colo.) – On Saturday, May 16, 2015, Twin Peak Charter Academy hosted its Senior Graduation Ceremony. The Valedictorian was not permitted to deliver his speech at this ceremony because he failed to abide by the school's guidelines for screening student commencement speeches, which were reasonable and appropriate. Jared Polis, a congressman without authority over the school, called for an investigation into alleged discrimination. The investigation has been completed. The investigator found that the school acted lawfully and appropriately and exonerated it of all discrimination charges.

Specifically the independent investigator found that:

- "The events through the graduation itself did not entail any violation of applicable law by the School."
- There was no evidence to suggest the school discriminated because the student was gay.
- The student was recognized as Valedictorian in the graduation program.
- There was no violation of student's privacy right's because he was clearly in the process of "coming out."
- Courts have ruled schools are "entitled to exercise editorial control over [the student's] speech as long as its action was reasonably related to pedagogical concerns. Among such pedagogical concerns are "discipline, courtesy and respect for authority."

The student charged the institution, on national television, with discrimination and "trampling his rights," and yet he refused to participate in this investigation. At no point did the student speak with the investigator. This Board of Directors desired his direct input but found his lack of cooperation with the investigation frustrating.

As to the matter of "outing" the student to his parents, there is no foundation for this claim. The investigator confirms the student was clearly in the process of "outing himself" to the entire world and did so merely days later. No claim can be made after the fact that he was "outed" by the principal.

The Board of Directors for Twin Peaks Charter Academy believes that this incident will have significant impact for schools around the country. According to Kathy DeMatteo, Board President, "This incident should be taken seriously by everyone who cares about education. The impact that outside organizations can have on schools' autonomy is evident, and school leaders need to be vigilant."

DeMatteo continues, "At Twin Peaks Charter Academy, we consider this incident resolved. We will move forward focused on providing, as we always have, a quality education for all our students."

Twin Peaks Charter School is a multi-year winner of the Colorado Department of Education's John Irwin School of Excellence Award. All students are known, valued, and challenged to achieve personal best.

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