

Maine GOP Announces FOAA Of Portland Superintendent

AUGUSTA- Maine GOP is filing a Freedom of Access Act Request with Portland Superintendent, Xavier Botana.

This past Sunday, Mr. Botana penned an open letter to the parents of Portland students in response to a recent alleged hate crime. While Maine GOP felt it was appropriate to address the crime and the potential affect it could have on the community, a portion of the letter stood out as inappropriate:

“More importantly, I want to take this opportunity to encourage all of us to understand the noxious environment in which this deplorable event took place. On Friday, the president signed an executive order barring immigrants from several Muslim-majority nations from entering the United States. This came on the heels of another order to build a wall along the United States’ southern border.

For a long time now, the rhetoric accompanying these actions represents a radical and disturbing departure from the principles on which this country was built and which so many have fought to protect and extend.”

Maine GOP has received numerous complaints regarding these particular paragraphs, some even from school district employees.

Today, Mr. Botana issued a press release explaining that students would be making signs in class and spending the last ten minutes of the school day protesting. The event is organized by students who are currently in a Human Rights course.

While Maine GOP applauds the students for coming together to stand up against allegations of racism, it is these sentences that are concerning and seem to echo Mr. Botana’s political agenda:

“...it is necessary to address both the recent attack at Casco Bay High School **and the new government policies targeting refugees and immigrants.**”

Maine GOP supports a school environment in which all students and faculty feel welcome regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation **and political beliefs.**

Forcing students and teachers to give up time taxpayer-funded school time to engage in a partisan agenda promoted by school district officials fosters a hostile environment for anyone who may not share the same political beliefs.

“We have doubts that Mr. Botana is operating alone, and that there may be a bigger partisan agenda at play here,” said Maine GOP Executive Director Jason Savage, “We feel that it would be appropriate to organize this protest outside of school hours with only students and faculty who want to participate.

“Instead, we have taxpayers funding a hostile environment for faculty and students. Students who do not participate during school hours can be singled out for their political beliefs. School is supposed to be an environment where people feel safe and free to learn and express different thoughts and ideas. We do not believe state or local taxpayers send tens of millions of dollars per year into the Portland school system to promote a political agenda or create a hostile environment for faculty and students.”

Maine GOP's FOAA request will focus on the Superintendents written communications with both outside and internal forces related to his political agenda and activities, as well as groups that may be influencing the Superintendent's actions