



TEXAS FACULTY ASSOCIATION

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Texas Faculty Association outraged over Collin College firings; exploring legal options

Pat Heintzelman, president of the Texas Faculty Association, released the following statement:

The Texas Faculty Association is outraged that Collin College has fired two of its valued faculty members for exercising their First Amendment rights during a health emergency.

Suzanne Jones and Audra Heaslip were fired last week because they challenged the college's COVID-19 reopening plans out of concerns for their safety and the safety of their colleagues and students. The firings apparently were also in retaliation for the professors' active membership in the Texas Faculty Association, an affiliate of the Texas State Teachers Association and the National Education Association.

I am reminding the Collin College administration in no uncertain terms that college professors have the same rights to free speech and association as other Americans do, and we are exploring legal options on Jones' and Heaslip's behalf.

Before the start of the fall semester, Jones and Heaslip had promoted and signed a resolution urging the college, where possible, to move classes online. Nearly 130 other people also signed the resolution. Both women were outspoken in their concerns about the health and safety of faculty and students being on campus during the deadly pandemic. They also had helped create a local Texas Faculty Association affiliate at the college.

Jones said the administration complained because the college's name had appeared on the Texas Faculty Association website.

According to media reports, the Collin College district president believed the pandemic had been "blown utterly out of proportion," despite the deaths of at least one student and one faculty member to COVID.

There have been 2.1 million confirmed COVID cases in Texas, and more than 62,000 in Collin County. More than 36,000 Texans have died from the disease, including more than 570 in Collin County.

<https://www.dallasobserver.com/news/two-collin-college-professors-say-they-were-fired-for-challenging-covid-19-reopening-plan-11983023>