

# **WILL: Sheriff, school administrator used COVID crisis to violate first amendment**

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The News: The Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty (WILL) issued letters to [Marquette County Sheriff Joseph Konrath](#) and [Westfield School District Administrator Robert Meicher](#) demanding recompense after an Oxford, Wisconsin teen was threatened with arrest if she failed to remove [a social media post](#). WILL is representing the teen and her parents, Rick and Angela Cohoon, after a Marquette County Sheriff's Patrol Sergeant threatened to cite or jail their teen daughter or them on March 27 for disorderly conduct if she did not remove an Instagram post indicating she was recovering from COVID-19 (despite a negative test).

Background: Rick and Angela Cohoon's teen daughter, Amyiah, developed a severe respiratory illness in March after a spring break trip to Florida. Doctors at Divine Savior Hospital in Portage indicated to the Cohoons that their daughter likely had COVID-19 but could not be tested due to the testing criteria at the time. She was sent home with instructions to strictly self-quarantine but [ended up in the hospital](#) three days later after symptoms worsened. She tested negative for COVID-19 in Madison, but doctors suggested she likely had the virus but had missed the testing window.

While in the hospital, Amyiah posted to [Instagram](#) that she was recovering from COVID-19. Westfield School District officials then swung into action to tell district parents that Amyiah was not telling the truth about her COVID-19 experience and complained to the Marquette County Sheriff. On March 27, a Marquette County Sheriff Patrol Sergeant was dispatched to the Cohoon's home to demand the Instagram post be removed or face arrest for disorderly conduct. The Instagram posts were removed after the threat from law enforcement.

WILL's Demand Letter: The demand letters issued to Marquette County Sheriff Joseph Konrath and Westfield School District Administrator Robert Meicher require

three specific actions to avoid a lawsuit:

1. A written apology.
2. Acknowledgment that the Cohoons have a First Amendment right to freely express themselves on social media, including the post they removed under threat.
3. The Westfield School District remove a March 27 news update on the incident.

The Quote: WILL Deputy Counsel Luke Berg said, “School district officials and law enforcement used a public health emergency to overreact and violate the First Amendment rights of the Cohoons. During this unprecedented and challenging time, government officials cannot be allowed to trample civil liberties without the clearest justification.”

Read More:

- [Demand Letter to Marquette County Sheriff Joseph Konrath](#), April 3, 2020
- [Demand Letter to Westfield School District Administrator Robert Meicher](#), April 3, 2020
- [Instagram Photo 1](#)
- [Instagram Photo 2](#)