



Fired Gay Superintendent Files Discrimination Suit

By GayWebMonkey.com

Chicago, IL - Lambda Legal filed a discrimination complaint Wednesday against a suburban Chicago school district and its board, saying they fired the former superintendent because he is openly gay.

The Associated Press reports that Bremen High School District 228 has insisted Dr. Richard Mitchell was fired last month for other reasons, including a joke video that portrayed teachers as killers, strippers and drug users.

Members of the school board "tried to keep Rich Mitchell from being hired because he is gay, and when they failed to do that, they stopped him from doing his job - all at the expense of the students of Bremen," Lambda staff attorney James P. Madigan said Wednesday in a statement.

The complaint by Lambda Legal, a gay rights organization, with the Cook County Human Rights Commission accuses the district, board of education and school board president with sexual orientation discrimination, reports the AP.

Ray Hauser, an attorney representing the district, has called the discrimination allegation "ridiculous," and told the AP that Mitchell was fired for poor leadership.

Mitchell, 42, had been superintendent since 2004 and was fired last month after a 4-2 vote.

Madigan told the *Daily Southtown* that several people will testify that some school board members did not want to hire Mitchell and then prevented him from doing his job because he is gay.

One of them is Kathy Novak, who has tried to get appointed to the District 228 board and plans to run for a board seat in April. She told the *Daily Southtown* that school board president Evelyn Gleason asked her last summer if she knew Mitchell was gay.

"As long as he's doing his job, I don't care," Novak said she told Gleason, reports the *Daily Southtown*.

The commission will send a formal request for more information to the parties named in the complaint, then they'll have 30 days to respond, said Human Rights Commission Director Jennifer Vidis.

Written By Anthony Cuesta