

§ 115C-407.18. Construction of this Article.

(a) This Article shall not be construed to permit school officials to punish student expression or speech based on an undifferentiated fear or apprehension of disturbance or out of a desire to avoid the discomfort and unpleasantness that always accompany an unpopular viewpoint.

(b) This Article shall not be interpreted to prevent a victim of bullying or harassing behavior from seeking redress under any other available law, either civil or criminal.

(c) Nothing in this Article shall be construed to require an exhaustion of the administrative complaint process before civil or criminal law remedies may be pursued regarding bullying or harassing behavior.

(d) The provisions of this Article are severable, and if any provision of this Article is held invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the invalidity shall not affect other provisions of this Article which can be given effect without the invalid provision.

(e) The provisions of this Article shall be liberally construed to give effect to its purposes.

(f) Nothing in this act shall be construed to create any classification, protected class, suspect category, or preference beyond those existing in present statute or case law. (2009-212, s. 1; 2009-570, s. 39.)