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"John Freshwater, an eighth-grade science teacher facing dismissal for allegedly preaching in the classroom, is suing the Mount Vernon City School District, saying it violated his constitutional and civil rights," the *Columbus Dispatch* (June 11, 2009) [reported](#) [4]. Freshwater was himself sued in federal court in June 2008 for allegedly inappropriately bringing his religion into school — including by posting posters with the Ten Commandments and Bible verses in his classroom, branding crosses into the arms of his students with a high-voltage electrical device, and teaching creationism. The Mount Vernon City School District Board of Education quickly voted to begin proceedings to terminate his employment with the district, and administrative hearings have been proceeding intermittently since October 2008. (Detailed reports on the hearings by Richard B. Hoppe are [available](#) [5] on The Panda's Thumb blog.)

In his lawsuit, Freshwater names as defendants the Board, two individual Board members and four other district administrators, a investigative firm and two of its employees commissioned by the district to investigate his teaching, and up to eight unknown (even to him) "employees, agents or others associated" with the Board who may have "conducted or facilitated" actions against him. The suit contains sixteen counts, including religious discrimination, defamation, conspiracy and breach of contract, and seeks \$500,000 in compensatory damages and \$500,000 in punitive damages. Documents associated with the case, [Freshwater v. Mount Vernon City School District Board of Education et al.](#) [6], are available on the "Creationism and the Law" section of NCSE's website, as are documents associated with the suit against Freshwater, [Doe et al. v. Mount Vernon City School District Board of Education et al.](#) [7]

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[4] [http://www.columbusdispatch.com/live/content/local\\_news/stories/2009/06/11/freshwater.ART\\_ART\\_06-11-09\\_B4\\_TUE56L0.html?sid=101](http://www.columbusdispatch.com/live/content/local_news/stories/2009/06/11/freshwater.ART_ART_06-11-09_B4_TUE56L0.html?sid=101)

[5] <http://pandasthumb.org/cgi-bin/mt/mt-search.fcgi?IncludeBlogs=2&limit=20&offset=0&search=freshwater>

[6] <http://ncseweb.org/creationism/legal/freshwater-v-mount-vernon>

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