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Fireside Chat With Chief Judge Jeffrey S. Sutton And Professor Nikolas Bowie: A Discussion About The Relevance And Impact Of State Constitutional Law

Roger Williams University School of Law

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FIRESIDE CHAT WITH CHIEF JUDGE JEFFREY S. SUTTON AND PROFESSOR NIKOLAS BOWIE: A DISCUSSION ABOUT THE RELEVANCE AND IMPACT OF STATE CONSTITUTIONAL LAW

Fireside Chat with Chief Judge Jeffrey S. Sutton and Professor Nikolas Bowie - Thursday, March 7 @ 1:30 PM

REMINDER to RSVP [Here!](#)

ATTN: RWU Law Community

On behalf of the Rhode Island Judiciary and RWU Law Dean Gregory W. Bowman, they cordially invite you to a **Fireside Chat with Chief Judge Jeffrey S. Sutton and Professor Nikolas Bowie** on Thursday, March 7, 2024.

FIRESIDE CHAT – A discussion about the relevance and impact of state constitutional law.

Thursday, March 7, 2024

1:30 – 2:30 PM

Law 283 | Simulcast Overflow Room in Law 262

A reception will immediately follow – 2nd Floor Atrium.

[RSVP HERE!](#)



Roger Williams University
SCHOOL OF LAW

FIRESIDE CHAT

"A discussion about the relevance and impact of state constitutional law"

Thursday, March 7, 2024 | 1:30 - 2:30 PM

Sponsored by the Rhode Island Judiciary & Roger Williams University School of Law



Nikolas Bowie
Louis D. Brandeis Professor of Law
Harvard Law School



The Hon. Jeffrey S. Sutton
Chief Judge of the United States
Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit

RWU Law Bristol Campus
The Hon. Bruce M. Selya Appellate Courtroom - Law 283

Reception Immediately Following Fireside Chat

RSVP Required by March 5

Statement about Fireside Chat with Judge Jeffrey Sutton and Prof. Bowie (Sent on behalf of the LGBTQ+ Alliance)

3/6/24

To our fellow members of the RWU Law Community:

This Thursday at 1:00 p.m. in Room 283, Roger Williams University School of Law and the Rhode Island Judiciary will jointly host a “Fireside Chat” with Judge Jeffrey Sutton, who is currently the Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit.

Even if you have not heard of Judge Sutton himself, you are likely aware of his impact on the LGBTQ+ community. In 2014, he authored the opinion upholding same-sex marriage bans in four states. This opinion would eventually be overturned by the United States Supreme Court in *Obergefell v. Hodges*. In 2023, he overturned an emergency injunction granted by a district court to prevent a Tennessee law from being enacted which bans minors from accessing gender-affirming care. In his ruling, Judge Sutton asserted that there was no “deeply rooted” history of permitting access to such care in the nation. This most recent ruling coincides with other bans on care and gender expression across the nation, empowering those who wish to dehumanize the transgender community at large.

We appreciate that the law school strives to reflect the greater legal community by educating and hosting a diverse population that brings with it diverse schools of thought and legal analysis. Conflict and confrontation are essential to growth and intellectual development. We also understand, as the only law school in the state of Rhode Island, that there is a special relationship with the Rhode Island Judiciary that we are all invested in maintaining.

To provide a platform for someone who not only believes that the Constitution has no space for the queer community, but also utilizes their power to enforce that belief in a way that directly harms our community does not comport with the law school’s goal to support their LGBTQ+ student body. We are alarmed that the Rhode Island Judiciary would choose to host Judge Sutton at a time where increased attacks on LGBTQ+ rights are happening across the nation—including legislation proposed here in Rhode Island.

On Thursday, please visit the Second Floor Atrium and help yourself to transgender pride ribbons to wear during the event and throughout the day in solidarity with our transgender students and transgender Americans at large harmed by Judge Sutton's decisions. Judge Sutton is just one of many legal scholars continuing to stand in the way of relief in the justice system, despite being fully aware of the injustices imposed on the LGBTQ+ community in America. Furthermore, we ask that if you attend this event, do so with intellectual curiosity. Any opportunity to learn is one that should be engaged enthusiastically and wholeheartedly.

In the coming weeks, please look forward to a fundraiser for OUTMemphis, a nonprofit which serves LGBTQ+ people in Tennessee, one of the several states directly impacted by Judge Sutton's decisions.

Yours in Solidarity,
Alliance Executive Board

The LGBTQ+ Alliance

alliance@g.rwu.edu

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The Rhode Island Judiciary held its fireside chat co-hosted by RWU Law School, with Chief Judge Jeffrey Sutton of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit and Harvard Law Professor Nikolas Bowie for a discussion about state constitutional law held at the RWU Law Hon. Bruce M. Selya Appellate Courtroom.













































