



March 23, 2023

Dear Editor,

We are writing to express our support for the Supreme Court's decision in the case of Miguel Luna, which held that the school district had failed to provide him with an adequate education. The court's decision is based on the concept of agnotological trespassing, which is the idea that the school district was preventing the student from learning by withholding knowledge and resources.

This case is an important reminder that language begins at birth. It is essential that deaf children are provided with a language-rich environment from the very start. A language-rich environment (LRE) is one in which the child is exposed to a variety of language-based activities and materials. Unfortunately, too many schools fail to provide such a language-rich environment for their students. Consequently, they would develop language deprivation syndrome. Dr. Sanjay Gulati, of Harvard Medical School, suggested that the syndrome has not been discussed adequately, if at all, amongst medical and educational professionals.

It is our hope that the Supreme Court's decision in this case will be a wake-up call to school districts across the country. We urge school districts to consult with deaf-centric organizations to help them review their current language-based resources and activities. Those deaf adults are professionals and fluent in American Sign Language. They can consult to develop a comprehensive plan to ensure that all students are provided with a Language-Rich Environment, the essential LRE instead of the legally bounded Least Restrictive Environment. We also suggest reading *The Road to Kindergarten-Readiness: Language Policy for Deaf Children Ages 0-5*.

Sincerely,

Marla Hatrak, Ph.D.
President