

Penn Law School Board Member Paul Levy Resigns over Handling of Amy Wax Scandal



Summary: After Penn Law Professor Amy Wax was removed from a mandatory first-year course for making a comment about black students, a board member resigned in support of Wax.

When [Penn Law School](#) learned that one of their professors made inappropriate racial comments, they removed the teacher from teaching first-year classes but not directly from the school. Penn Trustee Emeritus and Law School Overseer Paul Levy announced his resignation over what he views as an unfair punishment against Professor Amy Wax.

Levy sent his letter of resignation to Penn President Amy Gutmann and a copy to [The Daily Pennsylvanian](#). He is no longer listed as a member of their Board of Trustees or as a member of the Penn Law Board of Overseers.

Levy wrote in the letter, "Preventing Wax from teaching first-year students doesn't right academic or social wrongs. Rather, you are suppressing what is crucial to the liberal educational project: open, robust and critical debate over differing views of important social issues. ... A serious error has been made; please reconsider that illiberal ban on Wax's pedagogy."

Penn Law Dean Ted Ruger made the decision March 13 to remove Wax from teaching required first-year classes after campaigns from students and alumni called for his action against the controversial professor. Wax is known for her promotion of a "bourgeois culture" but she recently made comments during a video interview about the lack of black graduates at the top of their class at Penn Law School. She said, "I don't think I've ever seen a black student graduate in the top quarter of the class and rarely, rarely in the top half ... I can think of one or two students who've graduated in the top half of my required first year course."

This comment, seen as a unfair target towards black students, prompted Ruger to ban her from teaching the mandatory first-year law course so that black students would not feel as if she was treating them unfairly or grading them differently than their peers. Ruger claimed the reason for removing her from the course was for violating the law school's policy of not divulging student grades.

Levy accuses Ruger of not wanting "to encounter opposing views" so he went with an easy out of just removing her. University spokesperson Stephen MacCarthy told the DP that the administration stands by Ruger's actions. MacCarthy wrote, "Teaching assignments are handled exclusively at the decanal level, and Dean Ruger has thoroughly explained his thinking on the matter and the Administration supports his decision."

Levy, a 1972 Penn Law graduate, chaired the Board of Overseers from 2001 to 2007. He has given large donations to the school, including gifts for the Levy Scholars Program and reconstruction of the Levy Conference Center. His two daughters, Rebecca and Charlotte, graduated from Penn Law. The school honored him just two years ago with the Alumni Award of Merit, acknowledging his extensive contributions to the school. Levy has also been very active in campaigning for the school, helping their fundraiser "Bold Ambitions: The Campaign for Penn Law" exceed its goals by millions of dollars.

View the full resignation here: [Levy_resignation](#)

Do you think Wax's comments were that inappropriate or are they protected by freedom of speech? Share your thoughts with us in the comments below.

To learn more about Penn Law School, read these articles:

- [University of Pennsylvania Law Student Dies at Age 31](#)
- [Penn Law Appoints Professor Theodore Ruger as New Dean](#)
- [Law Student Found Dead at Penn Law](#)

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