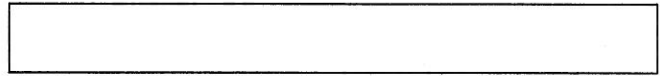


## Students discuss rights

By Megan Kehoe / *The Bulletin*

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On Friday, students in Monica Freeman's AP Government class learned that when they walk through the doors of their high school, they can be subject to locker and backpack searches. Even though it may seem unfair.



"Pieces of the Fourth Amendment are very reasonable, and I can understand the need for it," said Mike Eberitzsch, 16. "But there is definitely a certain line you can't cross."

Forty Mountain View students got a lesson on the Fourth Amendment by a local attorney, as part of National Constitution Day — a day that marks the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution in 1787.

"The goal is to get kids fired up about the Constitution," said Alycia Sykora, an attorney at Miller Nash and the local program coordinator for The National Constitution Society. "We're hoping to spark their interest."

Sykora was one of 12 volunteer attorneys who visited schools in Crook and Deschutes counties Friday, talking to students about the Fourth Amendment. As part of a nationwide effort, the American Constitution Society coordinates the program to educate children on the importance of amendments.

This was the second year Monica Freeman, social studies teacher at Mountain View, has had Sykora visit her classroom for Constitution Day.

"It's really important to have community involvement in the classroom," said Freeman. "Having a professional come in and talk to them can give them a path to follow in the future."

Sykora started her presentation with a basic review of the Constitution, asking general questions about when it was signed and the reasons for its creation.

"I know the Constitution doesn't seem like much now because we've never known anything different," Sykora said. "But consider how it is in other countries. Imagine if you were a woman living in Afghanistan and you weren't able to vote."

A major part of the lesson involved students learning about how the Fourth Amendment applied to them attending public schools.

Drug testing and random searches were a topic of conversation that led to a discussion of just how far the students' Fourth Amendment rights reach when they walk through the high school's doors.

Mike Eberitzsch, 16, said his older siblings went to public schools in Portland, where students were subject to locker searches.

The discussion led to a case study that Sykora presented to students, in which a 13-year-old student was strip-searched while school officials searched for pain medication at a school in Arizona.

The student's parents sued the school.

"Are they really allowed to search like that?" asked one student.

Sykora said the case was fought all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled that the school had gone too far and violated the student's Fourth Amendment rights by strip-searching her.

Rene Giamanco, 16, said the lesson was particularly valuable because she is involved with the Bend Police Department's cadet officer program and hopes to become a police officer one day.

"I didn't know just how far the Fourth Amendment went," Rene said.

"It'll help when I become an officer," she said. "I'll know what I can and can't do."

Wrapping up the lesson, Sykora stressed the basic importance of the Fourth Amendment, saying its purpose is to protect citizens' dignity.

"Students come away from this lesson learning to respect the Constitution, and also, thinking critically about it," Freeman said after the talk. "You could really see their light bulbs coming on."

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