

Press Conference Remarks of Laila R.

“Good morning, everyone. I am the mother of two children bringing this case – who I will refer to as Leo and Levi R. My two sons are bright and thirsty for knowledge, but they have never been given the opportunity to learn at the Havasupai Elementary School.

My oldest son, Leo, graduated from the 8th grade at the school, but he didn't leave with an 8th grade education. He missed out on the subjects that all kids in Arizona public schools learn – like science, history, or any of the Common Core subjects. The school did not prepare him even in basic subjects like reading; as a result, Leo struggled in high school when he finished the 8th grade and barely passed many of his classes.

My youngest son Levi has a disability. He never got the help he needed from the school. Instead the school would send him home early because they didn't want him there. They didn't even help me get him evaluated. I have been fighting for my kids for years to get what they deserved in Havasupai. I sued the BIE once, I wrote letters to BIE officials in Washington D.C., nothing worked. My sons are so far behind now because of everything they didn't get in Supai. Now, I have had to make the hard decision to take my family from their home, from their community and to leave Havasupai just so they can get a better education and have a future. I hope this lawsuit changes something at the school, because what's been happening at the school for years is wrong.”

- Laila R., mother of Plaintiffs Leo R. and Levi R.