

**Advocates for Faith and Freedom News Release**  
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## **COURT REJECTS CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**

**Los Angeles, CA** – Late Friday afternoon-8//8/08, a Federal District Court entered a final ruling rejecting the lawsuit brought by Calvary Chapel Christian School (Murrieta, CA) and the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) against the University of California (UC) school system. That same day, Advocates filed an appeal to the Ninth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals. The case is named *Association of Christian Schools International, et al., v. Roman Stearns, et al.* (Case No. CV 05-06242 SJO (RZx)).

This unprecedented lawsuit centers on whether the UC school system can discriminate against private religious schools by denying recognition of college preparatory courses taught by religious high schools, merely because the courses are taught from a religious perspective. In most cases, students applying for admission to a UC school must show that they have taken a minimum number of pre-approved college prep courses at their high school. In order for courses to be approved, each high school must submit their curriculum in advance to the UC for approval.

The lawsuit contends that the UC school system has recently refused to approve over 150 courses that were intended to be taught by Christian, Catholic, and Jewish high schools merely because they were to be taught from a religious viewpoint. The lawsuit argues that the UC has a practice of requiring private religious schools to essentially teach from a secular perspective if they want recognition of their college preparatory courses.

Calvary Chapel and ACSI argue that the UC is attempting to force Christian schools to water down their teaching. Jennifer Monk, Legal Counsel for Advocates, stated, “The UC's actions amount to unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination. It appears the UC is attempting to secularize private religious schools.”

Judge Otero’s opinion argued, the “Defendants necessarily facilitate some viewpoints over others in judging the excellence of those students applying to UC.” This statement, however, opens the door for the UC to reject the admissions applications by students from Christian high schools merely because their high school courses are taught from a religious perspective that university officials disagree with – as opposed to courses having sub-standard curriculum.

According to Robert Tyler, General Counsel for Advocates, “The UC is a public agency and is required to remain neutral when it comes to religion, politics, or other philosophical viewpoints. Instead of remaining neutral, the UC is discriminating against our clients’ viewpoints merely because they are religiously based.” He further commented, “This case is about the future of private religious education.” Although private religious schools, like Calvary Chapel, may currently have sufficient college-prep courses previously approved by the UC, they are at risk of having future courses denied approval if they express any religious viewpoints.

The appeal to the Ninth Circuit will argue that the District Judge applied the wrong legal principles as articulated by the U.S. Supreme Court and disregarded mountains of evidence

showing the UC's practice of rejecting courses merely because the officials disagree with the religious perspective from which a course may be taught.

Calvary Chapel and ACSI specifically presented 38 courses that were denied credit because of their Christian viewpoints expressed. For example, the UC rejected one Calvary Chapel course titled "Christianity and Morality in American Literature" and stated, "Unfortunately, this course, while it has an interesting reading list, does not offer a non-biased approach to the subject matter." Calvary Chapel questions why a private Christian school must teach morality from a non-biased perspective.

Advocates for Faith and Freedom is a national non-profit legal organization whose aim is to protect religious liberty in the courts. To learn more about our organization, please visit [www.faith-freedom.com](http://www.faith-freedom.com).