

Advocates for Faith and Freedom News Release
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ORANGE COUNTY, Ca. – A federal district court rendered a first-of-its-kind decision late Friday. A high school student, Chad Farnan, filed a lawsuit against his teacher alleging the teacher was hostile toward Christians and religion in general. After both sides filed motions asking the court for a final ruling, the Judge heard oral arguments and held that Dr. Corbett did violate the Establishment Clause by stating “an unequivocal belief that creationism is ‘superstitious nonsense.’” The Court went on to hold that Dr. Corbett’s statement “constitutes improper disapproval of religion in violation of the Establishment Clause.”

A sophomore honors student at Capistrano Valley High School, Chad Farnan, is a student in Dr. Corbett’s Advanced Placement European History class. While teaching the class, Farnan alleged that Dr. Corbett spent an extended period of time at the beginning of each class discussing topics that are not only irrelevant to history, but also inflammatory and often altogether inappropriate for high school students. As a result of Dr. Corbett’s statements, Mr. Farnan filed a federal lawsuit for a violation of his First Amendment rights.

“Dr. Corbett stepped over the line of what is constitutionally permissible,” said Advocates’ General Counsel, Robert Tyler. “This opinion is constitutionally unique because the Establishment Clause is usually used against religion under guise of the so-called “separation of church and state”, but this case shows that the Establishment Clause prevents hostility towards religion and is a promising step towards protecting every students’ constitutional rights.”

This case recognizes that far too often the Establishment Clause is invoked when there is a perceived promotion of religion by a governmental actor, but is not applied with equal force where a government actor like Dr. Corbett shows disapproval of religion. The Honorable Judge Selna stated the following: “The Supreme Court’s comments with regard to governmental promotion of religion apply with equal force where the government disapproves of religion.”

“The constitutional rights of the students were compromised by Dr. Corbett.” said Advocates’ Associate General Counsel, Jennifer Monk. “It is constitutionally impermissible for Dr. Corbett to use his classroom as a bully pulpit to display his personal disapproval of Christianity. As the Court correctly determined, Dr. Corbett violated the Establishment Clause.”

The Farnan family released the following statement: “We are proud of Chad’s courageous stand. We are thrilled with the Judge’s ruling. It is a vindication of his constitutional rights.”

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. [A copy of the Court’s ruling can be found here.](#)

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