

AMICUS BRIEF FILED

The Catholic League has filed an amicus brief in the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals case, *Association of Christian Schools International, et al. v. Roman Stearns, et al.* We are supporting students who are being denied credit by the University of California for high school courses in which religious viewpoints are discussed.

Drafted by the American Center for Law and Justice, the brief argues that this discrimination is a violation of the First Amendment because it demonstrates hostility toward religion. The state's action is unjustified since the school system cannot establish that the courses in question cause the students to be any less prepared for college level work.

The brief further contends that such discrimination, in excluding students who have studied such courses, defeats the university system's goal of diversity. Finally, there is no case law to support these actions, which do not further a compelling state interest.

The categories of courses that are disfavored include those that primarily address one religion, particularly Christianity; those that address the Holocaust's impact on the Jewish faith from a Jewish perspective; those that state God has influenced and directed human history; courses that address morality, ethics and social justice from a religious viewpoint; courses that address religious elements in a non-religious subject matter; and courses that address religious viewpoints only in one section of the course.

Our brief cites numerous examples of rejected courses. Here are some brief descriptions:

- A "History of Christianity" class was rejected even though it not only addressed Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox viewpoints, but also the Jewish roots of Christianity and the

impact of Islam in the Middle Ages

- A "World History" course was rejected because it presupposed a Christian God created and governed the world
- A class called "Moral Theology: Introduction to Ethics" was rejected for addressing ethics from a Catholic perspective even though it also examined many other ethical viewpoints, such as those of the Greeks, Buddhists, Muslims and indigenous peoples
- A course, modeled after a local university's class, called "Theology in Literature, Film and Music" was rejected for being too narrow theologically despite students being assigned a variety of movies to analyze including "Schindler's List," "The Color Purple," and "My Big Fat Greek Wedding"
- A "Women's Studies" class with readings that included Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique*, Anita Diamant's *The Red Tent* and Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz's *Hispanic Women: Prophetic Voice in the Church* was rejected because some of the readings had a Catholic viewpoint

In contrast, the University approves courses that focus on a particular culture, such as Chinese civilization, or certain topics, like women's history or African American history, as long as religious perspectives are absent.

A decision is expected by the end of the year.