

HIGH COURT APPEAL

The Catholic League has filed a friend-of-the-court brief with the Pacific Justice Institute appealing a decision by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals that denied standing to the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) in an important free speech and association case. At stake is the right of the University of California system to reject high school courses in its admission process which have a religious viewpoint. It is our hope that the U.S. Supreme Court will hear the case and overturn this decision.

The idea that courses taken at Catholic, Protestant and Jewish high schools merit recognition by any state system of higher education should not even be an issue. But it is. For example, a course taken at a Catholic high school was rejected for the following reason: "We expect a course in the History of Christianity to include more than one Christian viewpoint." Similarly, a Women's Studies course was found wanting because it had "a Catholic point of view."

While these are very important matters, the more immediate problem is the right of ACSI to secure standing, or the right to challenge these decisions. It is vitally important for organizations like the Catholic League to know that its members need not personally participate in lawsuits which affect their interests in cases like this one.

This is a test case that will help decide just how far the state can go in neutering the rights of sectarian schools, and whether associational standing will be respected.