

138-5
A.P.S. & ASSOC. TEL NO. 510-748-0121 FAX NO. 510-748-3541

JUL 09 1997 12:29 P. 01
JUL 09 1997 01:22PM P3

PRESS RELEASE

Pacific Justice Institute
Brad W. Dacus, President

July 9, 1997

For Immediate Release

Contact: Attorney Brad Dacus (916) 646-6232

COMPLAINT FILED WITH TEACHER CREDENTIALING COMMISSION

Sacramento, CA- Pacific Justice Institute filed a complaint today with the California Teacher's Credentialing Commission. The complaint is being filed because a fifth grade girl's mother had a class discussion the day after the controversial "coming out" episode of the *Ellen* show.

During the discussion, the teacher stated that Ellen was "brave" and "proud" and asked how many students agreed. A few did not. One of the students who disagreed was singled out and targeted for having a different opinion. The parents of the girl had previously filed an affidavit that their daughter was to be excused from any discussion or assignment relating to homosexuality.

"Public school teachers must not allow any pro-homosexual agenda to infringe on the rights of parents," said Brad Dacus of Pacific Justice Institute. "Furthermore, no student should ever be ridiculed to the point of tears by a teacher simply because of her religious convictions. These actions are a clear breach of parental trust and state law, for which this teacher must be held accountable."

The principal defended the teacher, claiming that the subject was acceptable under a district-wide diversity plan. The girl's parents believe that the school district has been uncooperative in their investigation. Attempts to obtain the diversity plan were unsuccessful. Later, a meeting with the school superintendent revealed that there was no board approved district diversity plan.

Pacific Justice Institute is an organization specializing in the defense of religious freedom, parents' rights and other important civil liberties.

165A Commerce Circle, Sacramento, CA 95815
Phone (916) 646-6232 Fax (916) 646-3041

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: July 9, 1997

Contact: Mike Trelow

Phone: [REDACTED]

Fax: [REDACTED]

INAPPROPRIATE ACTION BY TEACHER TO FIFTH GRADERS

On July 1, 1997 U.S. [REDACTED] of my daughter's fifth grade class in Alamogordo opened the class by discussing the previous night's television show in which the character Ellen openly proclaimed her homosexuality.

The teacher stressed that Ellen was "brave" and "proud" for what she did in proclaiming her homosexuality. She wrote "brave" and "proud" on the board before the children. In discussions with the children, the teacher cited incorrect statistics to the children.

The teacher then asked the children who agreed with her that Ellen was "brave" and "proud" to raise their hands. My daughter, as well as some others did not raise their hands. The teacher then singled out my daughter by asking what she thought. My daughter said she did not agree with the teacher and began to cry under the pressure of embarrassment. Later that same day the teacher again took my daughter aside and targeted her for having a different opinion. My daughter wanted to go home but was afraid to ask the teacher for permission to call her mother.

As a concerned parent, I contacted the other parents in the class to ask them to question their children about any unusual happenings in the class on that day. Other parents were troubled by the events surrounding the discussion of Ellen.

I asked for a meeting with the principal and teacher. The principal defended the actions of the teacher by stating that she was covered in her discussion of Ellen under the district wide cultural diversity plan.

I went to the school district to get a copy of the district wide diversity plan. My efforts were met with resistance and confusion. In a meeting with the school superintendent he revealed that there was no board approved district diversity plan.

My wife and I requested a complaint form, which we filled in and turned in asking for an inquiry into the matter. The school superintendent refused to sign the form, as required, which I went to turn it in at his office.

Following district policy and procedure with our complaint, we felt strong resistance by school personnel. In subsequent interviews with school superintendent and school district attorneys, we received no answers to our concerns and were given no information as to any steps that would be taken.

To date there has been no response from the school district, except to request more time, which was given. But again the deadline came and passed with no information forthcoming. We believe the school district has been uncooperative and misleading to us throughout this entire process. It is our belief that they are more concerned with protecting a teacher, whose actions were clearly incorrect and inappropriate before fifth graders, than they are over our daughter and others in the class, as well as the reputation of our district. We feel that the public is being misled over a cultural diversity plan for our school district.