

# Singled Out?

*A California professor embarrassed a Christian student, calling him a “fascist b – rd” for giving a class speech about traditional marriage, according to attorneys with the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) Center for Academic Freedom.*

✖ **Feb. 18, 2009** – A lawsuit filed last week against officials of the Los Angeles Community College District claims a professor censored and threatened to expel a student at Los Angeles City College following the student’s speech about marriage and his Christian faith during a public speaking class assignment.

“Christian students shouldn’t be penalized or discriminated against for speaking about their beliefs,” said Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) senior counsel David French. “Public institutions of higher learning cannot selectively censor Christian speech. This student was speaking well within the confines of his professor’s assignment when he was censored and ultimately threatened with expulsion.”

According to the ADF, college professor John Matteson interrupted and ended Jonathan Lopez’s class speech on Nov. 24, calling him a “fascist b – rd” in front of the class for a speech about gay marriage, which included reading the dictionary definition of marriage and reciting two Bible verses. Matteson apparently told other students they could leave if they were offended by Lopez’s speech, but no one reportedly left.

The alleged incident came days after California voters passed Proposition 8, a measure on the election ballot last November defining marriage as between a man and a woman.

After Proposition 8 passed on Nov. 4, gay rights activists protested throughout California and launched a legal fight to overthrow the ban on gay marriage. At the time, according to

the ADF, Matteson told his entire class, "If you voted yes on Proposition 8, you are a fascist b – ard."

Matteson also allegedly threatened Lopez one week later, telling him he was committed to getting him expelled from the school.

"Professor Matteson clearly violated Mr. Lopez's free speech rights by engaging in viewpoint discrimination and retaliation because he disagreed with the student's religious beliefs," French said. "When students are given open-ended assignments in a public speaking class, the First Amendment protects their ability to express their views. Moreover, the district has a speech code that has created a culture of censorship on campus.

"America's public universities and colleges are supposed to be a 'marketplace of ideas,' not a hotbed of intolerance."