

Suspended Over Christian Music

✖ **Feb. 23, 2009** – In a lawsuit filed earlier this month, a veteran group home counselor says she was suspended for exposing teenagers to Christian music.

A veteran group home counselor is suing a California children's home that suspended her for exposing four teenagers to Christian music.

In the lawsuit filed on Feb. 13, Maureen Loya accused Orangewood Children's Home of religious discrimination after she was given a six-week suspension for "exposing children to unapproved religious activities."

According to the lawsuit, during the summer of 2006 Loya took four teenage girls on an approved outing to a 5K run and then to Huntington Beach. At the beach, the group encountered the Surfrider Foundation's Celebrity Surf Jam, where they overheard Christian music for roughly 10 minutes while eating lunch.

After the field trip, the counselor, who had worked at Orangewood for 18 years, was summoned to a disciplinary meeting about the Christian music. Several months later, the incident was brought up again, and the counselor was suspended.

According to the Pacific Justice Institute, which is representing Loya along with attorneys John and Laurie Messerly Stewart, Moya is suing to recover financial losses from the suspension and to defend her constitutional rights.

"What happened to this counselor was insane and unjust," said Brad Dacus, president of Pacific Justice Institute. "Allowing teenagers to overhear a few minutes of Christian music while

at the beach should not result in a six-week suspension.”