

US Supreme Court Rejects Christian Campus Group's Appeal

In a loss for **religious freedom** advocates, the Supreme Court on Monday decided not to review a case involving a Christian sorority and fraternity at San Diego's State University. The Christian clubs were told they must be willing to accept atheists as leaders.

The High Court's decision lets stand a federal appeals court ruling that the policy does not violate the Constitution stands. The university's policy states that sanctioned campus groups cannot discriminate based on sexual orientation or religion.

"Public universities should encourage, not censor, the free exchange of ideas. But for now, the supposed marketplace of ideas at San Diego State University will remain a stronghold for censorship," says Alliance Defense Fund senior counsel David Cortman. "We wish the Supreme Court would have used this opportunity to make clear that the **First Amendment** protects the right of student groups to employ belief-based criteria in selecting their members and leaders."

In the case of *Alpha Delta Chi-Delta Chapter v. Reed*, the student groups sued San Diego State University in 2005 with a religious freedom argument.

"Throughout the years of defending its policy, the university did not tell the Democratic club it must be led by a Republican, or the vegetarian club that it must be led by a meat-eater, but it did tell Christian groups that they must allow themselves to be led by atheists," Cortman said.

"Even its purported, 11th-hour policy change made at the

doorstep of the Supreme Court continues to treat religious groups less favorably than many other student groups. When political conformity is placed ahead of the constitutionally protected rights of students, all students—including students of faith—suffer.”

The outcome does not bode well for a Christian student club at the University of North Carolina that is fighting a similar battle. The university is saying the “Make Up Your Own Mind” club must allow students from other religious and belief systems to become members and leaders in order to get formal group recognition from the university. ADF filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of the club in March.