



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 1, 2024

## California to Pay \$190,000 to Church School It Illegally Pressured to Follow “Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity” Guidelines

Rather than going to trial, [the state of California agreed yesterday to pay a Christian church and school](#) more than \$190,000 instead. At issue was the state’s insistence that the Biden administration’s illegal expansion of Title IX to include sexual orientation and gender identity required it to withhold federally funded food assistance refunds from Christian schools.

There are many lessons to be learned here, including the “hook” that always comes along with “free” anything from the federal government. But the present lesson is that, regardless of a ruling in a nearly identical situation a year earlier, California and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) ignored that ruling in its continuing zealous attempt to erase Christianity from the culture.



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For nearly 20 years the Church of Compassion in El Cajon, operating its Dayspring Christian Learning Center, has received federal (i.e., taxpayer) monies to reimburse its costs under the federal “Food Program.” Around 100 students from low-income families in the area attend the school, and about 40 of them have their lunches paid for under that program.

When the present occupant of the White House, Joe Biden, issued an executive order expanding Title IX — passed in 1972 to prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex — to include sexual orientation and gender identity, California was only too willing to adopt it. In May 2022, the state notified the church that it wasn’t in compliance with the new rules, and when the church didn’t kowtow, they turned off the funds in December.

Enlisting the assistance of the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a public-interest law firm with thousands of attorneys in its network around the country, the church filed suit last June.

This week, as noted, the state [settled with the church](#), agreeing to pay \$160,000 in legal fees to ADF and over \$30,000 to the church for past refunds that were denied.

Language from that lawsuit no doubt factored into the state’s decision not to go to trial:

By implementing their new mandates, Defendants [the state of California and the USDA] seek to force the Church and Preschool to surrender their sincerely held Christian beliefs and practices regarding human sexuality, including their right to hire those with shared beliefs.



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Defendants demand that the Church and Preschool agree to fully comply with new “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” nondiscrimination provisions, including in their religious employment practices (“SOGI Rules”), or forfeit the right to receive generally available public funds used to feed needy children, including immigrants, in their community....

Ironically, in the name of combatting discrimination, Defendants have excluded the Church and Preschool based solely on their religious character, beliefs, and exercise. This is antithetical to the First Amendment’s promise of religious freedom and only hurts families and children.

The church’s religious beliefs are pure orthodox Christianity:

The Bible is the Sovereign Word of God. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, born of the virgin Mary.

Jesus died to atone for our sins. Jesus rose on the third day, lives today, and is coming again to receive those that believe and wait for His return.

Salvation is obtained by grace alone through faith.

The Holy Trinity includes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

But this is anathema to the state. Compliance with the new rules would require the church not only to bend the knee to Baal, but also to hang posters around the church and the school announcing that, despite its beliefs, it would follow the federal “guidelines.” It would also need to create genderless bathrooms, use preferred pronouns (remember, these are preschool children), allow the youngsters to cross-dress, and only hire people who go along with the federal religion of humanism, excluding Christianity.

The amount of money is insignificant, amounting to between \$3,500 and \$4,500 a month. The principle, however, is foundational. That’s why Title IX now provides a religious exemption. But, [according to the lawsuit](#),

Nevertheless, despite this clear federal guidance which respects religious freedom, Defendants continue[d] to coercively force their SOGI Rules on the Church and Preschool, without making any attempt whatsoever to accommodate or exempt the Preschool from its draconian requirements, but rather seeking to force the Church to abandon its religious tenets in order to continue serving the community.

Officials in California and the USDA knew they were illegally violating those religious beliefs because just a year earlier, in an almost identical case, a court ruled in *Grant Park Christian Academy v. Fried* that the state could not force the school to surrender its religious beliefs for a handout from the federal government.

In fact, the ADF was instrumental in obtaining that victory as well, [announcing in August 2022](#):

On behalf of the students at Grant Park Christian Academy in Tampa [Florida] we filed a lawsuit against the Biden administration 16 days ago, and in that time, we are pleased to see the administration grant not only that Christian school’s request, but rightly honor the



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religious beliefs of *every other religious school in the country* by allowing them to continue operating according to the core tenets of their faith. [Emphasis added.]

While it shouldn't have taken a federal lawsuit, at least now, all religious schools like Grant Park Christian Academy who rely on the USDA's funding to serve nutritious meals to kids in need can continue this vital service in their communities.

That would include Dayspring. But no. The zealots at the USDA ignored that ruling and proceeded against the California preschool and the church that sponsors it.

Which reminds one of the game of Whac-A-Mole. When one mole is beaten back into its hole with a mallet, another one pops up elsewhere. That is why this quotation (attributed to various historical worthies such as Thomas Jefferson, Frederick Douglass, James Buchanan, and William Henry Harrison) remains relevant and timely today: "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."



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