



## ***FACT SHEET*** ***Lopez v. Candaele***

### ***ABOUT Lopez v. Candaele***

Attorneys with the Alliance Defense Fund Center for Academic Freedom filed a lawsuit against officials of the Los Angeles Community College District after a professor censored and retaliated against Jonathan Lopez for attempting to deliver a speech about his Christian faith, including passing reference to the topic of marriage. ADF is challenging not only the discrimination and retaliation against Lopez, but also the district's repressive speech code that violates the fundamental rights of every student on campus.

### ***FACTS***

- On Nov. 24, 2008, Los Angeles City College speech professor John Matteson called Jonathan Lopez a **“fascist bastard”** in front of his public speaking class and stopped the student's presentation mid-speech.
- Lopez's presentation was well within the requirements of the open-ended assignment and included reciting the dictionary definition of marriage and two Bible verses.
- After Matteson interrupted the speech, he told the other students they could leave if they were “offended.”
- When no one left, Matteson dismissed the class before it was scheduled to end.
- Matteson then refused to grade the speech, instead writing on his evaluation sheet, **“Ask God what your grade is.”**
- Lopez reported the censorship and ridicule to school officials, who did nothing.
- Matteson continued to target Lopez's faith for public ridicule throughout the semester.
- Matteson, upon discovering Lopez's appeal to school officials, retaliated against Lopez by threatening to have him expelled.
- Lopez reported these threats to school officials, who instead of protecting the student's constitutional rights, accused Lopez of “offending” other students and engaging in “hate speech.”
- In an earlier incident, Matteson “informed” the class that, **“If you voted yes on Proposition 8, you are a fascist bastard.”**
- The Los Angeles Community College District is the *largest community college system in the United States*. A defeat of its unconstitutional speech code would be a victory for more than [135,000 students](#) who attend LACC schools.

### ***CONTACT***

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### ***ABOUT ADF***

ADF is a legal alliance of Christian attorneys and like-minded organizations defending the right of people to freely live out their faith. Launched in 1994, ADF employs a unique combination of [strategy, training, funding, and litigation](#) to protect and preserve religious liberty, the sanctity of life, marriage, and the family.