

School district pulls ID course after suit: Philosophy course dropped by California district

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Just days after being sued, making national news as a result, a California school district agreed to stop teaching a “philosophy” course that critics said promoted creationism and intelligent design.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State announced January 17 that El Tejon Unified School District, located about 65 miles north of Los Angeles, has agreed to terminate a course called “Philosophy of Design” at its only high school, Frazier Mountain High in the town of Lebec.

As part of the agreement, according to Americans United, the school board issued a statement declaring, “No school over which the school district has authority, including the high school, shall offer, presently or in the future, the course entitled ‘Philosophy of Design’ or ‘Philosophy of Intelligent Design’ or any other course that promotes or endorses creationism, creation science, or intelligent design.”

Americans United filed suit in federal court on behalf of 11 parents, saying the course does not simply teach intelligent design but teaches it from a specifically religious viewpoint.

A course description given to district parents in December said the class would “take a close look at evolution as a theory” and “discuss the scientific, biological, and biblical aspects that suggest why Darwin’s philosophy is not rock solid.”

Americans United official Ayesha Khan congratulated the school board for settling the case. “This course was far from intelligently designed,” she said. “It was an infomercial for creationism and its offshoot, intelligent design. The class would never have survived a court challenge, and the board of trustees made the right call by pulling the plug on it.”

Talking earlier with the *Los Angeles Times*, the course designer, Sharon Lemburg, who is married to an Assembly of God minister, said she felt a calling to teach the course. “Did God guide me to do this?” she said January 3. “I would hope so.” – *American Baptist Press*