

From the desk of Tom Brejcha, Founder and President...

January 15, 2026

Dear Friend,

As we welcomed this New Year, my heart overflowed with gratitude for the many years—indeed, we’re now marking our Thomas More Society’s 28th year!—in which we’ve been able, with God’s grace and your generous support, to fight so many good fights for sacred, traditional values: for life, religious liberty, and family rights. These values remain under constant attack in our increasingly polarized, secularized, and litigious modern America.

Especially prominent among the values we defend is the natural bond between parent and child. It is a sacred bond, ordained by God, embedded in natural law, and safeguarded by our U.S. Constitution as one of the oldest and most fundamental liberties that Americans possess.

For generations, this venerable bond was honored and cherished. Parents raise their children from infancy, guide them through the storms of adolescence, and make decisions about their education, health, moral formation, and religious upbringing. Government’s mission always was to support parents’ role within their families... *not to suppress or supplant them!*

But, incredibly, a deeply troubling and false ideology has recently taken root in too many public school systems, treating parents not as guardians or protectors of their children but rather as their enemies or oppressors, to be circumvented or even negated and cast aside.

This disdain for parents has made alarming headway. Teachers nationwide have been mandated to keep secrets from, and even mislead and lie to, Moms and Dads about their own kids’ so-called “preferred pronouns” and secret gender “transitions.”

Nowhere has this anti-family revolution spread so aggressively as in our most-populous state, California, where a statewide policy apparatus was built and designed to sever the sacred bond between parent and child.

Just three days before this past Christmas, a federal judge brought that apparatus crashing down in our landmark *Mirabelli v. Olson* case. Now we’re newly battling on appeal to defend this major victory for fundamental parental rights...

CHRISTMAS VICTORY: Landmark federal court decision sides with parents against California’s secret gender “transition” regime.

On December 22, 2025, U.S. District Judge Roger T. Benitez issued a ruling that we expect to echo throughout courtrooms and schoolhouses for generations. In our case, entitled *Mirabelli v. Olson*, Judge Benitez entered a final ruling that California’s “Parental Exclusion

Policies” are patently unconstitutional, and he issued a **first-of-its-kind, class-wide permanent injunction** blocking their enforcement across the entirety of our nation’s most populous state.

Let me be clear about what “class-wide” means... This first-in-the-nation ruling wasn’t limited only to the heroic teachers—our clients Elizabeth Mirabelli and Lori West—and the brave parents who brought this case to court with our legal team.

This was a sweeping judgment that protects **every public school teacher in California and the parents of every public school student statewide** who oppose this scheme of deception. Thus, this largest state in the nation resoundingly had been brought to account...

Judge Benitez’s 52-page ruling is a masterful defense of parents’ rights to direct the upbringing of their children.

In his 52-page landmark opinion, Judge Benitez examined the constitutional claims with the precision of a surgeon and deep moral clarity and sensitivity. He held California’s policies violative of parents’ Fourteenth Amendment right to direct the upbringing of their children—a right the Supreme Court has called “perhaps the oldest of the fundamental liberty interests.”

He found that the policies violated the First Amendment rights of religious parents by secretly undermining their ability to raise their children according to their faith. And he ruled that the policies violated teachers’ First Amendment rights by barring them from telling the truth and compelling them to deceive parents or face discipline... up all the way to termination.

Judge Benitez’s words left no room for ambiguity. California’s education officials, he wrote, “*would not receive top grades as students of Constitutional Law.*”

But our federal Judge didn’t stop at holding that these policies were unconstitutional. Remarkably, he ordered California to **actively teach parents their constitutional rights!**

The statewide permanent injunction required state officials to place a parental rights statement “in a prominent place” in all teacher training materials—including within the very *same PRISM training program that California had secretly used to embed gender secrecy directives after we caught them the first time...*

Our evidence and arguments dismantled California’s defense. We predict they will prove impregnable on final appeal!

Over nearly three years of litigation, our legal team built an evidentiary record that exposed the human toll caused by California’s anti-family policies. We brought forward testimony from parents who discovered—nearly too late—what was happening to their children. We presented experts who demonstrated the medical and psychological risks of secret gender transitioning. And we forced California’s own paid-for experts to admit (under oath!) what they never wanted to say publicly.

Judge Benitez had taken careful note of this evidence. California’s entire policy framework, he wrote, rests on a presumption “*that it is the parents that will be the harassers from whom students need to be protected.*” The Judge rejected this premise with force.

He noted that even California’s own defense experts—witnesses hired and paid by the state to support these policies—could not testify that a parent who disagrees with (so-called) gender transition is unfit or abusive. **“Disagreement is not abuse,”** Judge Benitez wrote, **“and the court so finds.”**

He then delivered a truth that strikes at the heart of this entire debate:

*“The difficult and long lasting issues of gender nonconformity leave parents to suffer adverse consequences over a lifetime. The State Defendants, on the other hand, have no personal investment in a student's health and the State Defendants will not be exposed to a lifetime of a student's mental health issues. **Instead, that will be the parents’ grief to bear alone.**”*

Whereas the State and its bureaucrats bear no consequences for their secret transition regime, parents must live with the results forever. They comfort and care for their children even through bouts of depression and anxiety. They pray for their kids. They lie awake at night asking what they could have done differently—if only someone had told them the truth about their kids.

When Attorney General Rob Bonta argued that our plaintiffs were asking California to grant them some kind of special “constitutional exemption” from state policy, Judge Benitez flipped the argument on its head:

*“The Attorney General gets it upside down. Plaintiffs do not ask the State to magnanimously permit a sort of federal constitutional exemption. **What Plaintiffs seek is to force the State to respect their enduring federal constitutional rights as citizens of the United States.**”*

The parents in our case (and others statewide) weren’t asking for special treatment. They were demanding that California respect the Constitution and their God-given rights as parents.

California’s parental deception scheme has inflicted terrible harm on countless families. This lawless scheme must be ended!

This case was built on the shattered trust of real families who discovered—often in the worst possible ways—what California’s policies had done to their children. One plaintiff family’s story will haunt me forever.

Their daughter—identified as “Child Poe” in our filings to protect her privacy—began presenting as transgender in seventh grade. Under California’s secrecy directives, her school concealed this from her parents for an entire year.

Teachers used different names and pronouns at school than used at home. Administrators knew. Counselors knew. **But the girl’s parents had no hint of her gender dysphoria.**

Tragically, her parents only found out the truth after their daughter attempted suicide. An expert witness testified: *“Had they informed the parents... We could have prevented all of this.”*

“We could have prevented all of this.” Those words should be branded on the conscience of every official who ever enforced these patently unconstitutional anti-parent, anti-family directives.

It took extraordinary courage to challenge this system. Our clients and original plaintiffs in the case, Elizabeth Mirabelli and Lori West—veteran teachers and faithful Christians—refused to lie to parents and be a part of this deceptive scheme. They were put on administrative leave, suffered retaliation and then harassment. They risked their careers and good names to call to account errant California bosses.

Because they did, we won this watershed victory for parents in federal district court.

But now California has appealed to undo our landmark victory... We’re pulling out all the stops to defend the ruling!

I wish I could tell you this fight is over. It isn’t. Within hours of Judge Benitez’s ruling, California Attorney General Rob Bonta filed an appeal to the 9th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals and rushed back to Judge Benitez with an emergency motion to “stay” the injunction.

Judge Benitez first slapped Bonta down again. In a five-page order, he promptly denied the request for stay of his ruling, finding a failure to show any likelihood of success on appeal.

But we’re up against an anti-parental rights juggernaut in California, which is perhaps America’s most deeply blue state. Undeterred, Bonta turned to the 9th Circuit to request the same “stay” (suspension of our victory) that he couldn’t get from Judge Benitez.

The composition of federal appellate panels, just as assignments to district court Judges, is randomized. Yet, Attorney General Bonta managed to draw a 3-Judge appellate panel comprised of two Obama-appointed Judges and a third Judge appointed by President Biden. Their latest ruling was unanimous.

As of the time of my writing, by an unsigned “per curiam” order from the 9th Circuit, Judge Benitez’s injunction has been paused, pending the ultimate outcome of Bonta’s appeal.

Yes, it was a setback. But a mere “stay” doesn’t overturn Judge Benitez’s ruling or his 52 pages of constitutional legal analysis and fact findings. It doesn’t change the fact that he’d ruled that California’s policies were unconstitutional. *It just buys California more time as we fight on.*

Either way, we are now preparing our “merits briefs” in defense of Bonta’s full-scale appeal, in which California’s ideological bureaucrats still face a very steep uphill battle. Yes, we still expect to win this appeal—***emphatically!***—on culmination of the entire process of briefing and oral argument. And, if need be, on further appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court!

Consider whom we’re up against: For nearly two years, from June 2023 through December 2024, California officials insisted that their challenged gender secrecy policies didn’t really exist—that they were merely “non-binding guidance” schools could ignore.

When that argument failed, they pivoted. From January through November 2025, they claimed our case was “moot” because the challenged directives were ostensibly “withdrawn.”

Then we caught them red-handed. Our team revealed that California officials had secretly coordinated with 19 LGBTQ+ activist organizations to embed the exact same directives into mandatory, password-protected teacher training online sessions called PRISM.

They didn’t abandon their policies... they just hid them better. Judge Benitez was so disturbed he threatened sanctions for misleading his court. Now these same officials claim his ruling has caused an “emergency.” They argue parental notification causes “grave harm.”

What we’re doing to negate the 9th Circuit’s “stay” of our win and secure final victory on appeal!

We are not conceding an inch of ground. This 3-judge panel’s stay order, we believe, is transparently flawed. We’re now fighting it from multiple directions simultaneously.

First, as I write this, we are preparing to file for rehearing *en banc*—meaning we’re asking the full 9th Circuit (not just this 3-judge panel) to review and vacate the stay order. Our appellate panel’s reasoning ignores basic facts about our case that prove class-wide relief was not only appropriate... *it was the only adequate remedy to stop the harm inflicted!*

Second, we are filing simultaneously an emergency request directly to the United States Supreme Court, asking the Justices to stop the 9th Circuit’s wrongheaded “stay” and restore Judge Benitez’s class-wide injunction while Bonta’s spurious appeal proceeds.

This case involves fundamental constitutional rights that the Supreme Court has protected and recognized for over a century. We are very hopeful the Justices will recognize the gravity of what California is doing to families...

As our Special Counsel and lead attorney in the case, Paul Jonna, said: **“This is an issue of national importance and will likely need to be settled by the U.S. Supreme Court. We are prepared to take this case as far as necessary.”**

This is a fast-moving legal battle that will undoubtedly develop further in the coming days, even as my letter makes its way to your mailbox—*so please stay tuned!*

Your New Year’s gift is needed to help us fight for families

Critical funds are needed for us to defend this landmark ruling through the 9th Circuit appeal, and if necessary, all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Attorney General Rob Bonta has the full resources of the State of California behind him, and he will spend whatever it takes to overturn this victory.

We're facing a state that has already demonstrated it will **mislead federal courts**, **secretly inject unconstitutional policies** into teacher trainings, and fight to the last appeal to **keep parents in the dark** about their own children.

We're also short of necessary financial breathing space to defend life-saving pregnancy centers and pro-life clients against pro-abortion state prosecutors, in California, New York, and elsewhere...

Could you please prayerfully consider rushing a generous tax-deductible gift today to help us defend this historic victory and shore up our defenses on behalf of our innocent clients?

We cannot afford to lose ground now. Our landmark *Mirabelli* ruling could end gender secrecy policies once and for all, and the precedent we set will shape parental rights law for a generation. Meanwhile, pro-abortion forces are continuing to mobilize against our movement's life-saving ministries.

Will you consider making a sacrificial gift of \$1,000 or \$2,500? Possibly even \$5,000 or \$10,000? A gift in that range would be a tremendous blessing, and I'd be deeply grateful. Please make a gift commensurate with the financial blessings the Lord has given you.

If a gift at that level isn't possible, could you consider sending \$100, \$250, or even \$500? I also need many urgent gifts of \$75, \$50, and \$35, or whatever you can sacrifice. Would any of those amounts be possible for you today?

We will gratefully accept your generous contribution—no matter how small, no matter how large. Most importantly, please pray for our work. Please pray that justice prevails.

Through your prayers and generosity, you sustain our mission at Thomas More Society and join with us in these ongoing battles for life, family, and freedom.

Yours faithfully,



Tom Brejcha
Founder and President
Thomas More Society

P.S. The cases we win today protect families for generations. If you'd like your legacy to do the same, please consider including Thomas More Society (Tax ID Number: 36-4270023) in your will or estate plan. Learn more about our Legacy Circle at www.thomasmoresociety.org/legacy.