

AAID AND ABOI/ID CREDENTIALS

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Dear Academy Members and Subscribers:

Great news! Our hard work and perseverance has paid off!

A federal judge has struck down California's prohibition against our members' use of the credentials awarded by the Academy and the ABOI/ID. On May 15, 2000, the United States District Court in Sacramento, California, concluded, "(t)he AAID is a bona fide organization that issues credentials according to . . . published standards." The advertisement of AAID credentials "constitutes commercial speech protected under the First Amendment," said US District Judge David F. Levi. "The only evidence that the dental board offers that the advertising of AAID credentials would be misleading is conclusory, anecdotal, and speculative," the judge found. His 19-page opinion, which will soon be available on the Academy's web site, is the culmination of a struggle that began in 1997 between the California Dental Board and the AAID on behalf of the dentists who practice in California and throughout the country.

This is the second case in the country that has challenged a state's restrictions on the advertising of AAID and ABOI/ID credentials in federal court. In July 1998, the US District Court in Tallahassee, Florida, handed down a ruling that set a critical precedent to protect the rights of AAID and ABOI/ID credentialed members to advertise

their credentials. No other implant organization can claim this success!

What do these federal court decisions mean to you? While not expressly binding on every state at this time, the Academy is in the process of notifying all dental boards about this latest court action. Clearly, the court's decision sends a message to all regulatory agencies that the AAID and ABOI/ID credentials are bona fide and deserve First Amendment protection. And, it means that all credentialed members can and should use their credentials with pride.

The next time someone asks you what an AAID membership offers, don't forget to mention that the Academy also fights for the legal rights of its members to advertise their hard-earned credentials. The Academy has spent more than \$200,000 to ensure that members have this right.

If you are a credentialed member, I am sure you are happy with this ruling. If you are not a credentialed member, now is the time to move forward and obtain the status of Associate Fellow, Fellow, or Diplomate. Call the Headquarters Office at 312-335-1550 or toll free at 877-335-AAID (2243). For ABOI/ID Diplomate credentialing information, call the ABOI/ID office at 312-335-8793 or toll free at 888-604-ABOI (2264).

Be proud of your credentials! Keep in mind that the AAID is the only implant organization that offers credentials protected by two federal court decisions. ■

Arthur K. Molzan is president of the American Academy of Implant Dentistry (AAID).