

Judge Authorizes ‘Personal Ruin’ For Christian Florist

Says state, same-sex couple can demand home, savings as damages

February 18, 2015
by Bob Unruh



A judge in Washington State on Wednesday authorized the “personal ruin” of a florist whose Christian faith prevented her from promoting a same-sex wedding and who was sued by both the state and the homosexual couple.

The [Alliance Defending Freedom](#) confirmed that Benton County Superior Court Judge Alex Ekstrom granted a summary judgment in the case against Barronelle Stutzman, meaning the case will not proceed to trial. A trial had been scheduled for March 23.

It was Ekstrom who said last month that Stutzman personally was liable for the claims against her, placing her business assets, her home and personal savings at risk.

The judge ordered that the state and the homosexual plaintiffs, each of whom filed lawsuits, could collect damages and attorneys’ fees from Stutzman.

“The message of these rulings is unmistakable: The government will bring about your personal and professional ruin if you don’t help celebrate same-sex marriage,” said ADF Senior Counsel Kristen Waggoner. “The two men had no problem getting the flowers they wanted,” she said. “They received several offers for free flowers, and the marketplace gives them plenty of options. Laws that are supposed to prohibit discrimination might sound good, but the government has begun to use these laws to hurt people – to force them to conform and to silence and punish them if they don’t violate their religious beliefs on marriage.”

Stutzman said, “America would be a better place if citizens respected each others’ differences and the government still protected the freedom to have those differences. Instead, the government is coming after me and everything I have just because I won’t live my life the way the state says I should. I just want the freedom to live and work faithfully and according to what God says about marriage without fear of punishment. Others have the freedom to say or not say what they want to about marriage, and that’s all I’m asking for as well.”

Robert Ingersoll sued Stutzman for “acting consistently with her faith,” ADF said. State Attorney General Bob Ferguson then also sued, based on details he learned in news reports.

When Stutzman declined to provide Ingersoll flowers, he was referred to several other willing florists and was offered free flowers.

“A government that tells you what you can’t say is bad enough, but a government that tells you what you must say is terrifying,” said Waggoner. “The lesson from the court’s decisions is that...

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