

'Gay Weddings' Mandate Gets New Judgment Day

'We look forward to vindicating our client's freedom'

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By Bob Unruh

A case between Christians who run a wedding chapel in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, and the city over its demand that they perform same-sex "weddings" in violation of their faith is headed back to a judge after negotiations between the parties failed.

[WND previously reported](#) the negotiations between the city and the [Alliance Defending Freedom](#), which filed a complaint against the city on behalf of Hitching Post wedding chapel owners Donald and Evelyn Knapp.

An ADF spokesman told WND the discussions did not yield a resolution. "The government can't tell ministers they must perform same-sex marriages under threat of jail time and crippling fines," said ADF Senior Legal Counsel Jeremy Tedesco. "That's exactly what the city did to Pastor Knapp and what the ordinance allows the city to do to others. In the absence of a settlement agreement, we look forward to vindicating our client's freedom in court." [City officials declined to respond to WND requests for comment.](#)

The case stems from an ordinance adopted in 2013 prohibiting "discrimination" based on sexual orientation. It applies to housing, employment and "public accommodation." While religious entities are exempt, city officials have said operations such as the wedding chapel would be forced under threat of penalty to submit.

[WND reported in October](#) the city had tried several "litigation tactics" to get out of the case. At the time, the city was backing away from its threats of fines and jail for the two Christian ministers who refuse to conduct same-sex wedding ceremonies at the Hitching Post, a commercial business. But ADF said the core problem remained that the Knapps were subject to criminal fines and jail sentences if they failed to comply with the city's social agenda.

[The Spokane Spokesman-Review reported](#) the federal lawsuit alleges the city is trying to unconstitutionally force the ministers to violate their religious beliefs by performing same-sex marriages. The Knapps believe marriage is a sacred covenant between a man and a woman. The lawsuit alleges, "Performing same-sex wedding ceremonies would thus force the Knapps to condone, promote and even consecrate something forbidden by their religious beliefs and ordination vows." The case alleges the city is violating the couple's First and Fourteenth Amendment rights.

ADF said the solution is a clarification of the ordinance. "They need to clarify who the law applies to and who it doesn't," Tedesco said at the time. "You've got a criminal law that allows for jail time and fines. It cannot be vague. People can't be left guessing whether they will be subject to the ordinance."

In an [interview, Idaho state Sen. Steve Vick said](#) the case was so egregious that he would eliminate the state government from marriage entirely.

Note from Pastor Kevin: I encourage the reader to go to the article link and listen to this seven minute interview with Senator Vick.

"It's very disappointing to me that they would require a Christian business owner to do something that violates their religious convictions, which I believe are protected by the First Amendment to the United States Constitution," Vick said. "Most of the reaction that I incurred has been from disappointment to shock that [the city] would do that." Vick warned that the next step "will be to say that churches themselves cannot discriminate," and they will be forced "to marry same-sex couples and not be allowed to say anything."

The same problem already is...

To read this article in its entirety, go to:

<http://www.wnd.com/2015/03/gay-weddings-mandate-gets-new-judgment-day/>