

Judge Roy Moore Suspended for Taking Bold Gay Marriage Stance

Alabama Supreme Court Chief Justice Roy Moore won't be removed from office for his actions related to federal court orders recognizing the legality of same-sex "marriages," but the Court of the Judiciary might as well have.

The COJ's order Friday morning said Moore will remain suspended from his office, without pay, for the remainder of his current six-year term, which does not end until January of 2019. This suggests a majority of the court wanted him removed from office, but not all of them.

Removal from office would have required a unanimous decision from the nine-member panel selected to determine his fate as a judge. But any other sanction would have required just six members' support.

The problem is that Alabama has an age restriction for judges. Once Moore's current term expires, he will be too old to run for re-election. Effectively, his judicial career was ended anyway—barring a reversal by the Alabama Supreme Court.

Liberty Counsel Founder and Chairman Mat Staver, who had represented Moore in oral arguments Wednesday before the COJ, called the decision "an unbelievable violation of the law." He did not indicate if an appeal will be made to the Alabama Supreme Court.

"To suspend Chief Justice Moore for the rest of his term is the same as removal," he said. "The COJ lacked the unanimous votes to remove the Chief, so the majority instead chose to ignore the law and the rules."