

Oregon Bakers Finally Getting Their Day in Court

Oregon bakers Aaron and Melissa Klein have already lost their business. They've already been fined more than \$135,000. They've already been told they cannot talk about their faith to others.

And on Thursday, they will finally get their first opportunity for due process in a courtroom.

The Kleins owned and operated a family bakery, Sweet Cakes by Melissa, in Gresham, Oregon. In 2013, a woman asked the Kleins to make a cake for her same-sex wedding. They had served her before, but as devout Christians, they believed that participating in the wedding would violate their faith, so they declined to design and create a custom cake for the wedding.

The woman complained to the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries, which took administrative action to punish the Kleins as noted above. With legal representation from First Liberty Institute, they appealed the BOLI ruling in April 2016. A hearing on the Kleins case will be held before the Oregon Court of Appeals Thursday, March 2, beginning at 4:30 p.m. EST.

"In America, you're innocent until proven guilty," First Liberty Institute President and CEO Kelly Shackelford said. "This is an egregious violation of the Kleins' rights to due process. We hope the Oregon Court of Appeals will remedy this by reversing or dismissing the government's case against the Kleins.

"This case centers on one vitally important question: can the government force citizens to violate their conscience or their faith? The Constitution is clear—the government cannot force

people to violate their religious beliefs. The First Amendment was written to prevent exactly that.

“One of the great things about America is that we are a tolerant society that protects diversity of thought. We should all be willing to peacefully coexist with different opinions. That’s the only way freedom can truly exist. We hope the Oregon Court of Appeals will dispense justice for the Kleins and honor their constitutional right to religious freedom.”

[Click here to learn more about the Kleins’ case.](#) {eoa}