

Oregon Bakers Finally Speak About Their Case

Following a hearing before a three-judge panel of the Oregon State Court of Appeals—their first chance at due process since losing their business and being fined more than \$135,000 for refusing to bake a same-sex “marriage” cake, Aaron and Melissa Klein were able to make a statement.

Melissa said:

“When we opened our bakery, we loved serving all customers who came into the shop, regardless of their identity or beliefs. My cakes were my canvas. I sketched and custom-designed each one to fit each couple perfectly.

“My bakery wasn’t just called Sweet Cakes Bakery, it was Sweet Cakes by Melissa because I pour my passion and heart into each cake I make. My faith is a part of that. I was happy to serve this couple in the past for another event, and I would be happy to serve them again, but I couldn’t participate in a ceremony that goes against what I believe.

“I have a strong faith in God, whom I love with all my heart. My whole life is dedicated to living for Him, in the best way that I know how. America is a place where the government can’t force you to violate your religious beliefs or tell you what to believe, but we feel like that is exactly what happened to us.

“We lost everything we loved and worked so hard to build. I loved my shop—it meant everything to me. And losing it has been so hard for me and my family. Nobody in this country should ever have to go through what we’ve experienced.

“We just want the government to tolerate and accept differences of opinion, so we can continue to follow our

faith. We hope that, even if people have different beliefs from us, that they will show each other tolerance and that we can peacefully live together and still follow our faith. That's all we want. Thank you."

During the oral arguments, the Kleins' attorneys—First Liberty Institute Deputy Chief Counsel Hiram Sasser and former President George H. W. Bush White House Counsel Boyden Gray—argued that the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries violated the couple's constitutional rights to religious freedom, free speech and due process. [Click here to learn more about their case.](#)

"The government should never force someone to violate their conscience or their beliefs," First Liberty President and CEO Kelly Shackelford said. "In a diverse and pluralistic society, people of good will should be able to peacefully coexist with different beliefs. We hope the court will uphold the Kleins' rights to free speech and religious liberty."

The Oregon Court of Appeals may take several weeks before issuing its opinion. No timeline was offered for an expected date to receive the panel's decision. {eo}