

People Like Barronelle Stutzman Need President Trump to Sign a Religious Liberties Executive Order Now

Florist Barronelle Stutzman's legal battle isn't over.

The Washington florist learned Thursday that the state's high court ruled that the government can force her—and, by extension, others in Washington—to create artistic expression and participate in events with which they disagree, reported Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), which represented Stutzman in court.

Now, says the American Family Association (AFA), there is no more important time for President Donald Trump to keep his word by moving forward with a proposed executive order to protect religious freedom—and Christians like Barronelle Stutzman.

“Florists, bakers, photographers, shop owners and other faithful Americans around the country may experience just what Barronelle Stutzman is experiencing—potential financial ruin because they chose to politely decline to use their creative talents and be a part of a same-sex wedding ceremony that goes against their closely held religious beliefs,” said AFA President Tim Wildmon. “The American Family Association continues to call on President Trump and his administration to draft and sign an executive order that will protect people like Barronelle. Time is of the essence, as we certainly can see in her case.”

To that end, AFA has started a petition urging President Trump to keep his campaign promise to protect religious liberties. Thus far, more than 115,000 have signed the petition,

helping AFA to counter-balance the efforts from homosexual activists to squash the executive order.

According to ADF, Stutzman will ask the U.S. Supreme Court to reverse Thursday's decision. The state attorney general and the American Civil Liberties Union sued Stutzman for acting consistently with her faith when she turned down a request to design floral arrangements for a same-sex wedding, instead politely referring the customer—who had been making purchases from her shop for nearly 10 years—to another florist who could help him.

"This case is about crushing dissent. In a free America, people with differing beliefs must have room to coexist," said ADF Senior Counsel Kristen Waggoner, who argued Stutzman's case in court with co-counsel George Ahrend last year. "It's wrong for the state to force any citizen to support a particular view about marriage or anything else against their will. Freedom of speech and religion aren't subject to the whim of a majority; they are constitutional guarantees.

"Our nation has a long history of protecting the right to dissent, but simply because Barronelle disagrees with the state about marriage, the government and ACLU have put at risk everything she owns," Waggoner continued. "This includes not only her business, but also her family's savings, retirement funds and home. It's no wonder that so many people are rightly calling on President Trump to sign an executive order to protect our religious freedom. Because that freedom is clearly at risk for Barronelle and so many other Americans, and because no executive order can fix all of the threats to that freedom, we will ask the U.S. Supreme Court to hear this case and reverse this grave injustice."

A lower court ruled that Stutzman must pay penalties and attorneys' fees for declining to be a part of the wedding ceremony.

In an Action Alert to its more than one million friends and supporters, AFA invites those who want the president to protect religious liberties to sign onto a letter to the White House. The Alert also reminds potential petition signers of how the government has bullied people like Barronelle Stutzman for exercising their Judeo-Christian values, and others such as Aaron and Melissa Klein, Blaine Adamson, Robert and Cynthia Gifford and Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran.

“Religious freedom continues to be of paramount importance to many Americans,” Wildmon added. “With evangelical Christians being so instrumental in the election of Donald Trump, many have been buoyed by the great strides he has made so far, just weeks after the inauguration. AFA wants to ensure that the president and his administration will keep this crucial issue front and center, especially as many Americans have paid a hefty price for fighting for their religious liberties, such as losing their businesses, savings and more. Now, we urge President Trump to keep his momentum—and his promise—to protect people of faith from religious discrimination.” {eo}