

Photographers Can Now Be Forced to Work Gay Weddings, Supreme Court Decides by Silence

The First Amendment guarantees more than the freedom to speak. It also protects the freedom *not* to speak—a right the U.S. Supreme Court just denied Elaine Huguenin.

For the photographer and her husband, this latest development was a crushing one, especially as Christian business owners continue to find themselves on the losing side of the clash between political correctness and the marketplace.

Unfortunately, the Huguenins, who turned down a job to take pictures of a lesbian commitment ceremony, aren't the only victims of this suit. So are hundreds of other wedding vendors who had hoped the court would finally provide some clarity in the chaos their own June marriage ruling helped create. Instead, the justices ignored an opportunity to reaffirm the basic principle that the government can't trample on fundamental rights of free speech and religion.

As a result, the New Mexico Supreme Court, the very one that punished the Huguenins for trying to living out their faith in the workplace, will have the final say. And what a say it was. In a ruling that stunned even liberals, the judges suggested that American family businesses like Elane Photography are "now compelled by law to compromise the very religious beliefs that inspire their lives." It is, the court writes, "the price of citizenship."

Alliance Defending Freedom attorney Jordan Lorence, who represented the husband-wife team, couldn't believe his ears.

“Should the government force a videographer who is an animal rights activist to create a video promoting hunting and taxidermy?” Jordan asked. “Of course not, and neither should the government force this photographer to promote a message that violates her conscience.”

Obviously, the courts are viewing the case of Elane Photography through the lens of political correctness—not the Constitution, which protects the expression of personal views, even in the marketplace. (That’s why they call it the free market!) Of course, the irony is that the couple at the center of this firestorm, the Willocks, found another photographer to shoot the ceremony—for less money! Still, they still insisted on making a public example of the Huguenins, including dragging them through an eight-year legal ordeal.

Unfortunately, this is just a close-up of what’s happening around the country in business, sports, Hollywood and schools. Homosexual activists are absolutely determined to punish people who refuse to embrace and celebrate their lifestyle choices. Isn’t that what the Obama administration has done with its HHS mandate? If the left can’t crowd conservatives out of the marketplace, then it will enlist the courts or the White House to force them out—whether it’s constitutional or not.

No wonder the country is increasingly skeptical about strong-arming couples like the Huguenins. A whopping 85 percent of Americans believe what the U.S. Supreme Court apparently doesn’t: that a Christian photographer has the right to say no if her religious beliefs clash with a same-sex marriage client. No one should face punishment for declining to use their talent to communicate a message at odds with their convictions. Americans are being forced by the government to buy products like Obamacare and are now being forced to engage in speech with which they morally disagree.

Is the judicial branch now writing the epilogue to the

American experiment in ordered liberty? Real equality—the kind the left insists it wants—demands that everyone, not just a vocal few, have the ability to live and work according to their conscience. And if the courts won't uphold it, state and federal legislatures must.

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