

Christian Counselor's First Amendment Battle Reaches Supreme Court

The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) has agreed to hear the case of a Christian therapist who is challenging Colorado's ban on "conversion therapy" that targets conversations meant to help minor clients accept their God-given gender and sexuality.

As CBN News previously reported, the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), a non-profit legal group, is representing Kaley Chiles, a licensed counselor in Colorado.

ADF petitioned the high court in November to hear Chiles' case after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit upheld Colorado's Minor Conversion Therapy Law which "prohibits mental health professionals from providing 'conversion therapy' to minor clients."

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A counselor who violates Colorado's Minor Conversion Therapy Law faces fines of up to \$5,000 per violation, suspension from practice, and, in some cases, revocation of the counselor's license.

According to ADF, many of Chiles' clients seek her counsel because they share her Christian worldview and faith-based values.

"These clients believe their lives will be more fulfilling if they are aligned with the teachings of their faith," reads a press statement. "Yet Colorado law censors Chiles from speaking words her clients want to hear because the government

does not like the view she expresses.”

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Their lawsuit alleges that while Colorado’s law prohibits counselors from encouraging clients to accept their bodies, it “allows counseling conversations that aim to steer young people toward a gender identity different than the client’s sex.”

“Such restrictions have ‘left some clinical staff fearful’ of ‘providing professional support’ to young people at all,” reads the petition. “That result leaves detransitioners – those who adopted a transgender identity but now identify with their biological sex – with no counseling support whatsoever in much of the United States.”

Colorado is among roughly half the states that ban people from finding freedom from gender dysphoria or unwanted same-sex attraction.

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Colorado Attorney General Philip J. Weiser has criticized so-called “conversion therapy.”

“States have long regulated medical practices to protect patients from harmful professional conduct,” he said in a statement. “Colorado’s law protecting young people from unscientific and cruel gay conversion therapy practices is humane, smart, and appropriate.”

Chiles originally filed a lawsuit challenging the law, arguing that it violates the First Amendment’s Free Speech and Free Exercise clauses.

ADF CEO Kristen Waggoner said state officials have “no business censoring private conversations between clients and counselors.”

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