

Christian Pharmacy Forced to Sell Abortion Drugs

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit decided Thursday in *Stormans v. Wiesman* to uphold Washington Board of Pharmacy rules that force pharmacists to dispense drugs contrary to their conscience, instead of allowing them to refer customers to other pharmacists as they are allowed to do in all 49 other states.

Alliance Defending Freedom Senior Vice President of Legal Services Kristen Waggoner argues that one should not be forced to choose between their religious convictions and their family businesses and livelihoods, particularly when the state allows referrals for just about any other reason.

“The premier medical and pharmaceutical associations all support the right of a provider to refer patients, and all other states allow such referrals. This decision will affect many facilities within the state, including Catholic hospitals and pharmacies, which have made clear they will not dispense these drugs,” he says.

“As the district court noted, drugs like Plan B and ella are widely accessible within the state. In fact, no woman anywhere in Washington has been denied timely access to these drugs for religious reasons. We will appeal this ruling.”

Kevin Stormans, president of Stormans, the plaintiff in the case who owns several grocery stores, says the state allows pharmacies to refer for all kinds of reasons. In practice, he argues, it only bans religiously motivated referrals.

“With 33 pharmacies stocking the drug within five miles of our store, it is extremely disappointing that the court and the state demand that we violate our conscience or lose our family business,” he says. “All we are asking is to be able to live out the beliefs that we hold, as Americans have always been

able to do, and to be able to refer patients for religious reasons, as the medical and pharmaceutical associations overwhelmingly recommend.”