

# Christian Therapist Beats Oregon, Avoiding Eye-Watering Fine Over Biblical Beliefs

A Roman Catholic therapist who refused to bow to the LGBT altar is no longer being threatened with a \$90,000 fine for being true to his beliefs.

Frank Canepa ran afoul of Oregon's rules when he refused to get all gushy over a client's same-sex relationship, according to Just the News.

Oregon's Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists decided that standing up instead of bowing down required a hefty dose of discipline, and whacked Canepa with a \$90,000 fine. The penalty and the disciplinary notice that went with it have both been rescinded.

Then came a March ruling from the Supreme Court that cut the legs out from under Oregon by ruling in favor of a Colorado therapist, Kaley Chiles, who did not fall into line with state thinking by saying minor clients suffered from gender confusion.

During a counseling session with a client Canepa had seen for more than two years, he refused to support her same-sex relationship, as noted by a news release from the Alliance Defending Freedom.

Canepa explained that his faith would not allow him to do what his client wanted.

"The government can't target counselors for their views and force people to say things that go against their core convictions," ADF Senior Counsel and Vice President of Litigation Strategy Jonathan Scruggs said.

“The Supreme Court recently took Colorado to task for censoring counselors and mandating orthodoxy in the counselor’s office, and Oregon should take notice. ADF will continue to ensure that free speech is protected in Oregon – and every state where it’s threatened – and halt states’ attempts to weaponize their licensure systems,” he said.



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Although Canepa tried to avoid passing judgment on his client’s relationship, the client persisted until he finally told her what he believed was not compatible with what she was doing.

For that, the Oregon board said Canepa violated Oregon law and the American Counseling Association’s Code of Ethics. In addition to the fine, he was ordered to undergo six hours of education.

“The Supreme Court has ruled that the First Amendment protects counselors and that the government cannot then attempt to punish counselors for answering a client’s question about a counselor’s view on a subject,” Logan Spina, legal counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom’s Center for Free Speech, said, according to the Statesman-Journal.

The ADF had argued that Oregon violated Canepa’s First Amendment rights to free speech and free exercise of religion.

In a post from the Standing for Freedom Center, author Dillon Burroughs noted that there was more at stake in the case than one person.

“It’s important to point out that Oregon didn’t overtly fine Canepa because of his Christian faith. Its reasoning is simpler but still indefensible: The state has an official position on what licensed counselors can and cannot say about sexuality and relationships,” he wrote.

“In other words, it openly admits it punished Canepa because his answer departed from its official state-sanctioned orthodoxy – and officials insist that stance is perfectly justified,” he wrote.

“Even Americans who disagree with Canepa’s beliefs should recognize the danger of a state insisting it has the authority to decide the ‘right’ beliefs,” he continued.

“A government that can punish a counselor for declining to affirm one contested viewpoint today can punish a different professional for dissenting from another official viewpoint tomorrow.”

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