

Christians Sue Kentucky Governor for Religious Discrimination

Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis has sued Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear for targeting Davis and other religious county clerks for unconstitutional discrimination. Liberty Counsel filed the lawsuit on behalf of Davis in the current federal court case brought against her by the ACLU, seeking to force her to issue marriage licenses in violation of her conscience and religious freedom rights.

“Governor Beshear is unlawfully picking and choosing the conscience-based exemptions to marriage that he deems acceptable,” said Mat Staver, Founder and Chairman of Liberty Counsel.

When Kentucky Attorney General Jack Conway refused to defend Kentucky’s natural marriage laws after “pray[ing] over this decision,” Governor Beshear did not command that he perform his duties, but hired private attorneys to pursue the appeal.

Conversely, when the Supreme Court decision in Obergefell was handed down, Governor Beshear commanded religious clerks to comply with new Kentucky marriage policy regardless of their personal beliefs. In a letter to Kim Davis and other county clerks, the Governor said, “Neither your oath nor the Supreme Court dictates what you must believe. But as elected officials, they do prescribe how we must act.”

“In no uncertain terms, Governor Beshear’s policies and directives are intended to suppress religion—even worse, a particular religious belief,” Liberty Counsel’s complaint points out. “Thus, although Attorney General Conway was given a pass for his conscience about marriage without any threats of repercussion, clerks like Davis are being repeatedly told

by their governor to abandon their religiously informed beliefs or resign.”

“Simply put, Governor Beshear is making secularism a litmus test for holding office in Kentucky,” said Mat Staver. “The governor is forcing clerks like Davis to choose between following the precepts of her religion and forfeiting her position, on the one hand, and abandoning one of the precepts of her religion in order to keep her position, on the other,” Staver concluded.