

Donors Rally Behind Christian Florist Who Refuses to Deny God's Word

More than \$160,000 has been raised for a Christian florist who was sued for declining to arrange flowers for a same-sex wedding.

A judgment last month affirmed an earlier ruling made in February, and 70-year-old Barronelle Stutzman has been ordered to pay a \$1,000 fine, alongside penalties and fees.

After the February ruling, a crowd-funding web page was set up for Stutzman, who owns and runs Arlene's Flowers in Washington State.

'Freedom Not Money'

To date 4,568 donations amounting to \$168,653 have poured in, most of which have been given in the last couple of weeks.

She has already declined a settlement offer, which would have required her to pay a fine and agree to make flower arrangements for same-sex ceremonies in the future.

Although a settlement could have saved her home and business, she said it's about "freedom not money."

'Freedom of Conscience'

In a letter to Washington State's Attorney General, she said: "I certainly don't relish the idea of losing my business, my home and everything else that your lawsuit threatens to take from my family, but my freedom to honor God in doing what I do best is more important.

“Washington’s constitution guarantees us ‘freedom of conscience in all matters of religious sentiment.’ I cannot sell that precious freedom,” she said.

In Indiana, a similar crowd-funding page was set up in support of a pizzeria, which was forced to temporarily close because one of its owners said they would be unwilling to cater for a same-sex wedding.

Death Threats

In twelve days, more than \$840,000 was raised for Memories Pizza.

Co-owner of Memories Pizza, Crystal O’Connor, told a local TV station that she supports Indiana’s religious freedom law and would happily serve a gay couple but would decline to provide food for a same-sex wedding.

The family-owned business was then forced to close after they received arson threats, death threats, and highly critical online reviews—despite never actually being asked to cater for a gay wedding.

A lesbian business owner gave a donation to Memories Pizza, saying she fully supports the owners’ right to run their business according to their beliefs.