

God's Justice Be Done: Why Religious Discrimination Does Not Pay

Throughout last fall, NorthShore University Health System in Illinois had been approving medical exemptions for its staff members, but not religious exemptions. Pregnant nurses and staff were allowed to continue working without taking the COVID shots.

NorthShore accommodated these employees with no problems.

Yet those with religious exemptions were repeatedly told that no accommodation would be made for them. The different treatment between the two classes of people was obvious and blatant discrimination. If NorthShore could accommodate people with a medical exemption, then they could, and should, accommodate religious exemptions.

Yet NorthShore made the conscious choice to target and discriminate against every one of its religiously observant workers who requested exemption.

Many of our clients waited patiently for their exemption requests to be reviewed and appealed, only to see their jobs listed as "vacant" on the NorthShore job seekers board.

Elysia* (a nurse in our class action lawsuit) was informed by her manager that her job was going to be filled by someone else.

Elysia will not allow herself to be injected with a drug developed or tested with human fetal cells derived from abortion. She submitted her religious exemption. But Elysia's manager began to harass her about her religious beliefs and not taking the shot.

On October 1, Liberty Counsel sent NorthShore a demand letter informing the health system that its treatment of religious adherents was illegal under both state and federal law. But NorthShore continued the discrimination anyway—and according to NorthShore's own job seeker board, even more positions were advertised as vacant.

When Elysia told her manager she was still waiting on the results of her religious exemption appeal, Elysia's manager told her, "It doesn't matter, we aren't approving anyone."

Jeanie* (also a nurse in our case) had a similar experience. Her manager flatly told her that her religious exemption appeal would be denied.

Meanwhile, NorthShore was more than happy to allow others who had submitted medical exemptions to continue working. If the unvaccinated were truly such a threat, why would the hospital system allow some unvaccinated people to work, but not the religious unvaccinated? The answer is simple—religious discrimination.

Our lawsuit brought NorthShore's obvious discrimination and preferential treatment of medical exemptions over religious exemptions to the judge's attention. If NorthShore was going to accept medical exemptions, which it must do, then it must also accept religious exemptions.

Just one day before our court hearing, and without prior notice to staff members, NorthShore attempted to cover its tracks by summarily laying off all the people for whom it had already granted medical exemptions.

It did not work out well for NorthShore.

Liberty Counsel negotiated the more than \$10.3 million payout for more than 500 employees who faced religious discrimination because of their objections to the COVID shots. In addition to monetary payment, these former NorthShore health care workers

will be eligible to be rehired at their former seniority levels.

Just as important as the recompense for fired staff members, NorthShore will also change its unlawful “no religious accommodations” policy to make it consistent with the law and to provide religious accommodations in every position across its numerous facilities. No position in any NorthShore facility will be considered off limits to unvaccinated employees with approved religious exemptions. Praise the Lord!

This forced shot settlement is the first in the nation and will serve as a major wake-up call to every other company that unlawfully denied its employees’ religious freedom right to reject the COVID jabs.

This case will break the dam of religious discrimination that so much of America has been forced to endure under abusive COVID mandates.

But our precious religious liberty is not yet safe. Last week, Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito warned that religious freedom is under attack. He is absolutely right. And just last week, we returned to Boston to celebrate our 9-0 win at the Supreme Court involving Camp Constitution and the Christian flag. For nearly two decades, religious viewpoints were banned in Boston. But not anymore!

Liberty Counsel has multiple cases and lawsuits pending in courts across the country. {eo}

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