

Government Officials Force Woman to Violate Strong Convictions of 1 Corinthians 6:11

The American Civil Liberties Union on Tuesday filed a lawsuit accusing Alabama county officials of violating a Christian woman's religious rights by forcing her to remove her headscarf before taking her driver's license photo.

Yvonne Allen, of Tuskegee, said a court clerk told her when she sought a license renewal last December that "only Muslim women have the right to cover their hair," according to the complaint filed with the federal court in Opelika, Alabama.

Allen described herself as a devout Christian woman whose faith compels her to cover her hair in public.

She said she agreed to remove her headscarf for the photo, believing she had no other choice, but felt ashamed and that she had been disobedient to God.

According to the complaint, Alabama considers head coverings in driver's license photos "only acceptable due to religious beliefs or medical conditions."

The complaint names as defendants Becky Frayer, the chief clerk of the Lee County Probate Judge's office, and Probate Judge Bill English, her supervisor.

Allen said Frayer has defended her office's policy, telling her that she was also a Christian but did not cover her hair.

Frayer and English did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The lawsuit accused the defendants of violating Allen's religious freedom under the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and also Alabama's state constitution.

It seeks a court order letting Allen have her photo retaken while she wears her headscarf, plus unspecified damages.

The case is Allen v English et al, U.S. District Court, Middle District of Alabama, No. 16-00712. {eo}

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