

Hobby Lobby Co-Founder: 'We Prayerfully Await the Justices' Decision'

The Supreme Court heard oral arguments Tuesday in the landmark case *Sebelius v. Hobby Lobby*, determining whether individuals lose their religious freedom when they open a family business.

At issue is the Health and Human Service (HHS) mandate, which requires David and Barbara Green and their family business, Hobby Lobby, to provide and facilitate four potential life-terminating drugs and devices in their health insurance plan, against their religious convictions, or pay severe fines to the IRS (see video).

"Our family started Hobby Lobby built on our faith and together as a family," says Barbara Green. "We've kept that tradition for more than 40 years and we want to continue to live out our faith in the way we do business."

"The choice that the government has forced on us is out of step with the history of our great nation founded on religious freedom," she added. "We believe that no American should lose their religious freedom just because they open a family business. We are thankful that the Supreme Court has heard our case, and we prayerfully await the justices' decision."

Founded in an Oklahoma City, Okla., garage in 1972, the Green family has grown Hobby Lobby from one 300-square-foot retail space into more than 500 stores in over 40 states. Devout Christians, the Green family believes that "it is by God's grace and provision that Hobby Lobby has endured," and they seek to run their company "in a manner consistent with biblical principles." This includes closing on Sundays and generous treatment of their employees, with full-time hourly

workers starting at 90 percent above the federal minimum wage.

The Greens have no moral objection to providing 16 of the 20 FDA-approved contraceptives under the HHS mandate and will continue to provide a broad range of contraceptives at no additional cost to their employees.

“No one should be forced to give up their constitutionally protected civil rights just to open a family business,” says Lori Windham, senior counsel for the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and counsel for Hobby Lobby. “This case demonstrates in no uncertain terms that the government’s efforts to strip this family business of its religious rights represent a gross violation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and the First Amendment.”

In court Tuesday, former United States Solicitor General Paul Clement argued on behalf of Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Wood, two family businesses whose cases were consolidated before the court. Clement argued that Hobby Lobby and Conestoga are protected under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act and that nothing in the law excludes these family businesses and their owners from religious freedom protections.

The court is expected to rule on the case before the end of its current term in June.