

# Kentucky Christian Faces Judgment Day in Same-Sex Marriage License Conflict

A county clerk in Kentucky who has refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples based on her religious beliefs heads to court on Thursday where a federal judge could hold her in contempt for defying his order to do so.

Lawyers for Kim Davis, the elected Rowan County clerk who is an Apostolic Christian, on Wednesday asked U.S. District Judge David Bunning to temporarily block his order requiring her to issue marriage licenses while she appeals the issue.

Davis has refused to issue licenses to any couples, gay or straight, since the U.S. Supreme Court in June ruled that same-sex couples have the right to marry under the U.S. Constitution.

Four couples filed a federal lawsuit in July challenging her office policy not to issue licenses and Bunning in August ruled for the couples, finding that Davis had to live up to her official duties as a county clerk despite her religious beliefs.

Davis has appealed his order to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit, which turned down her request for a stay pending appeal last week. The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday also turned down her request for an emergency stay.

Davis has refused since the Supreme Court order this week to issue marriage licenses and same-sex couples on Tuesday filed a motion asking Bunning to hold her in contempt of court, seeking fines but no jail time.

"To me this has never been a gay or lesbian issue," Davis said

in a statement this week. “It is about marriage and God’s word. It is a matter of religious liberty.”

The American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky, which represents the couples seeking the contempt order, said on Tuesday the law is clear. “The duty of public officials is to enforce the law, not place themselves above it,” it said.

Davis is represented by Liberty Counsel, a Florida-based Christian religious advocacy organization, which said in court papers on Wednesday an injunction would halt the “irreversible implications on Davis’ conscience” while she appeals the case.

Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear, a Democrat, ordered all county clerks to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, but has no authority over Davis’ office.

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