

Midwife Denied Job for Refusing to Perform Abortions in Sweden

In November 2013, Sweden's Höglandssjukhuset women's clinic rescinded a job offer as a midwife from Ellinor Grimmark after she explained that she could not perform abortions because of her Christian faith.

The head of the maternity ward left her a telephone message saying that "she was no longer welcome to work with them" and questioned "whether a person with such views actually can become a midwife." A few months later, Grimmark tried to obtain employment with Ryhovs women's clinic, which told her that a person who refuses to perform abortions does not belong at a women's clinic.

In January, Värnamo Hospital's women's clinic offered Grimmark a job but then withdrew employment because of the complaint she filed against Höglandssjukhuset in April. The group Scandinavian Human Rights Lawyers represents Grimmark in court.

In the States, Alliance Defending Freedom responded with a friend-of-the-court brief to the district court of Jönköping County Council in Sweden on behalf of a midwife whom three different medical clinics denied employment because she will not assist with abortions.

"No one deserves to be denied a job simply because she is pro-life," said ADF Senior Legal Counsel Roger Kiska. "International laws to which Sweden is obligated recognize freedom of conscience and make clear that being pro-abortion cannot be a requirement for employment, nor can medical facilities force nurses and midwives with a conscience objection to assist with practices that can lead to an

abortion.”

The ADF brief in *Grimmark v. Landstinget i Jönköpings Län* explains that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe has affirmed that “no person, hospital or institution shall be coerced, held liable or discriminated against in any manner because of a refusal to perform, accommodate, assist or submit to an abortion, the performance of a human miscarriage, or euthanasia or any act which could cause the death of a human foetus or embryo, for any reason.”

As the brief also explains, “The Grand Chamber of the European Court of Human Rights has itself explicitly affirmed rights of conscience for sincerely held religious and moral beliefs as falling within the gambit of Article 9 of the Convention.”

“Willingness to commit an abortion cannot be a litmus test for employment,” added ADF Legal Counsel Paul Coleman. “Medical centers need to respect the desire and conviction of a midwife or nurse to protect life—a desire that very likely led her to pursue the profession in the first place.”