

Office Depot Refuses to Print Prayer Handouts at Chicago Store

Thomas More Society attorneys have sent a demand letter to Office Depot, challenging the company's refusal to print religious fliers. The office supply chain would not print prayer handouts for customer Maria Goldstein at its Schaumburg, Illinois location. The nonprofit public interest law firm labeled that refusal of service as discrimination and a violation of the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance.

"Anyone can order printing at Office Depot," said Thomas Olp, Thomas More Society special counsel attorney. "But because Ms. Goldstein's fliers had religious content—namely calling for prayer for Planned Parenthood—Office Depot refused to complete her order. This is a blatant violation of the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance, which forbids public businesses from discriminating based on religion."

On August 20, Goldstein placed her order for printing at the Office Depot store in Schaumburg, located about 30 miles northwest of downtown Chicago. The item to be printed was a flier that recounted statistics copied from Planned Parenthood's 2013-2014 annual report, mentioned the abortion provider's harvesting of fetal body parts, and included a prayer for the conversion of Planned Parenthood.

Goldstein was told by an Office Depot employee that the printing of her flier was "restricted by corporate policy" and that her order would not be filled. Subsequently, Goldstein contacted the company's Office of the Chairman multiple times to discuss the company's refusal to fill her order. Office Depot's Diane Demma, from the Office of the Chairman, defended the company store employee in their refusal to print

Goldstein's flier and offered her no alternatives.

"Office Depot is discriminating against me based on my religion," stated Goldstein. "If the store can pick and choose what orders it fills based on religious content, it is refusing to treat people of faith equally. In America where we value freedom of religion, this is simply unacceptable."

The demand letter states that Office Depot must cease its unlawful refusal to service Goldstein's order for photocopying or the law firm will act to secure Goldstein's rights before the Cook County Human Rights Commission, the Illinois Department of Human Rights or other appropriate venue.