

Printer Who Refused Gay Pride Shirts Draws LGBT Support

The owner of a Christian printing company who refused to print T-shirts for a gay pride event is getting some big support including from some members of the LGBT community.

In 2012, Blaine Adamson of Hands On Originals in Lexington, Kentucky came under fire when he declined to print custom T-shirts for a gay pride festival. Since he did not agree with the message conveyed on the shirts, he offered to connect the customer with a different printer who would produce the shirts at the same price he would have charged.

Unsatisfied with that solution, the Gay and Lesbian Services Organization filed a complaint against Hands on Originals with the Human Rights Commission charging the company with illegal discrimination.

Today, law firms and scholars came to the defense of Adamson, including The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty and Professor Douglas Laycock, Professor of Law at the University of Virginia.

"Americans disagree about sex and religion. That's nothing new. But this case is about whether the government will allow people who disagree to live side-by-side in peace, or whether the government will instead pick one 'correct' moral view and force everyone to conform," said Luke Goodrich, Deputy General Counsel of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty.

"Fortunately, the Supreme Court has already resolved this question and held that the government can't force people to promote views they disagree with."

Several LGBT-owned businesses, such as BMP T-shirts, have been publically supportive of Mr. Adamson's free speech rights.

"No one should be forced to do something against what they believe in. If we were approached by an organization such as the Westboro Baptist Church, I highly doubt we would be doing business with them, and we would be very angry if we were forced to print anti-gay t-shirts," said Diane DiGeloromo, one owner of BMP T-shirts which is a lesbian-owned business. "This isn't a gay or straight issue. This is a human issue."

Her business partner, Kathy Trautvertter, added, "You put your blood and your sweat and your tears into your business" and "it's very personal. . . . When I put myself in Mr. Adamson's shoes, I could see it from his side."