

Religious Freedom Resolution Could Protect Christian Business Owners

The Kennewick City Council is holding a hearing regarding the Freedom of Conscience Resolution.

In June, a Kennewick city council member introduced the Freedom of Conscience Resolution to protect business owners like Barronelle Stutzman from being sued because of their deeply held religious convictions about marriage. Stutzman is being sued by the Washington attorney general and a same-sex couple because she acted consistent with her faith and referred a long-time customer to nearby florists. Although Stutzman has provided custom designs for the customer dozens of times and would continue to do so, she could not use her creative skills to provide wedding support for the customer's same-sex ceremony. The lawsuits put both her business and personal assets at risk.

"The state and federal constitutions protect Washingtonians from the government forcing them to create expression against their will," said Fiedorek. "Barronelle has been more than willing to serve any and all customers, but she cannot promote any and all messages. The government should not force Barronelle to choose between her freedom of speech and conscience and personal and professional ruin. "

"It is deeply encouraging to know city officials and community members acknowledge the injustice of these lawsuits against me," said Stutzman. "I appreciate the people in this community who are willing to stand on the side of freedom and true tolerance. Rob has the freedom to act in accordance with his beliefs and the Constitution gives me the same right. While it may be the rights of artists and designers at stake now, it

could easily be the freedom of others tomorrow.”