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FIRST LIBERTY ANNOUNCES NEW CLIENTS, AARON AND MELISSA KLEIN, WHO WERE FORCED TO SHUT DOWN THEIR BAKERY DUE TO RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

First Liberty Institute and Boyden Gray to serve as appellate team for Kleins in high profile case involving religious liberty

Nashville, TN, February 23, 2016 – Today, First Liberty Institute and Boyden Gray, former White House Counsel for President George H. W. Bush, announced their representation of Aaron and Melissa Klein, an Oregon couple who lost their bakery for running their business according to their religious beliefs.

“America is a great nation because we celebrate diversity of thought,” Boyden Gray, former ambassador to the European Union and founding partner of Boyden Gray and Associates, says. “Our rights to free expression and religious liberty are some of our most cherished American freedoms. We must safeguard these rights for everyone American – including Aaron and Melissa Klein.” *Read more about Ambassador Gray:* <http://boydengrayassociates.com/c-boyden-gray/>

“The past three years have been devastating,” said Melissa Klein, former owner of Sweet Cakes by Melissa. “Just because we couldn’t participate in an event that violated our religious beliefs, we lost our business. We were committed to serving everyone regardless of their circumstances at all other times.”

“The government should never force people to violate their conscience or celebrate causes they don’t believe in,” said Kelly Shackelford, President and CEO of First Liberty Institute. “As the Kleins’ new appellate team, we are committed to fighting for their First Amendment freedoms of religious liberty and free expression.”

First Liberty and Boyden Gray are representing Aaron and Melissa Klein, former owners of “Sweet Cakes by Melissa,” in a battle for the Oregon couple’s religious freedom. In 2013, two women asked the Kleins to make a cake for their same-sex wedding. As devout Christians, the Kleins felt that participating in the wedding celebration by making a cake would violate their faith, so they declined to make the cake. Oregon’s government responded by punishing them with a \$135,000 penalty, and ordering them never again to say certain things about their religious faith. As a result, the Kleins were forced to shut down their business. The Kleins are appealing the ruling to the Oregon Court of Appeals. Oral arguments are expected later this year.

Read more about the Kleins’ case at FirstLiberty.org/Kleins

About First Liberty Institute

First Liberty Institute is the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans. Read more at FirstLiberty.org

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