

BAKERS WHO LOST THEIR BAKERY FOR NOT MAKING SAME-SEX WEDDING CAKE HAVE DAY IN COURT

Aaron and Melissa Klein, former owners of Sweet Cakes by Melissa, appear at hearing before Oregon Court of Appeals

Salem, Ore. – Today, the Oregon Court of Appeals heard the case of Aaron and Melissa Klein, a couple who lost their bakery for running their business according to their religious beliefs.

During the oral arguments, the Kleins' attorneys argued that the Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) violated the Kleins' constitutional rights to religious freedom, free speech, and due process.

“The government should never force someone to violate their conscience or their beliefs,” Kelly Shackelford, President and CEO of First Liberty Institute, says. “In a diverse and pluralistic society, people of good will should be able to peacefully coexist with different beliefs. We hope the court will uphold the Kleins' rights to free speech and religious liberty.”

The case, *Klein v. Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries*, was heard before a three-judge panel of the Oregon Court of Appeals. First Liberty Institute, a national religious freedom law firm, represents the Kleins in their appeal along with former President George H. W. Bush White House Counsel Boyden Gray.

In a press conference following the lawsuit, Melissa Klein made the following statement:

“When we opened our bakery, we loved serving all customers who came into the shop, regardless of their identity or beliefs. My cakes were my canvas. I sketched and custom designed each one to fit each couple perfectly. My bakery wasn't just called ‘Sweet Cakes Bakery,’ it was ‘Sweet Cakes by Melissa’ because I pour my passion and heart into each cake I make. My faith is a part of that. I was happy to serve this couple in the past for another event and I would be happy to serve them again, but I couldn't participate in a ceremony that goes against what I believe.

I have a strong faith in God, whom I love with all my heart. My whole life is dedicated to living for Him, in the best way that I know how. America is a place where the government can't force you to violate your religious beliefs or tell you what to believe, but we feel like that is exactly what happened to us. We lost everything we loved and worked so hard to build. I loved my shop - it meant everything to me. And losing it has been so hard for me and my family. Nobody in this country should ever have to go through what we've experienced.

We just want the government to tolerate and accept differences of opinion, so we can continue to follow our faith. We hope that, even if people have different beliefs from us,

that they will show each other tolerance and that we can peacefully live together and still follow our faith. That's all we want. Thank you.”

The Oregon Court of Appeals will issue an opinion on the case in the coming months. There is no specific timeline for them to issue a decision.

Read more about the Kleins' case at KleinFacts.com.

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About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](http://FirstLibertyInstitute.org) is the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

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