

## **Supreme Court to Hear Case of Former Postal Carrier Who Lost Job After USPS Refused Religious Accommodation**

*Attorneys asking Justices to enforce federal law that protects the right of American workers  
to honor Sabbath in accordance with faith.*

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**Washington, D.C.**—Today, the Supreme Court of the United States agreed to review a Third Circuit Court of Appeals decision finding that the United States Postal Service (“USPS”) is not required to provide religious accommodation allowing an employee, Gerald Groff, to observe the Sunday Sabbath. Groff is represented by First Liberty Institute, Baker Botts LLP, the Church State Council, and the Independence Law Center.

“It is unlawful for employers to discriminate against employees on the basis of religion,” said Kelly Shackelford, President, CEO, and Chief Counsel for First Liberty. “It’s time for the Supreme Court to reconsider a decades old case that favors corporations and the government over the religious rights of employees.”

“Observing the Sabbath day is critical to many faiths—a day ordained by God. No one should be forced to violate the Sabbath to hold a job,” added Randall Wenger of the Independence Law Center.

Aaron Streett of Baker Botts said, “We are simply asking the Supreme Court to apply the law as written and require employers to grant meaningful religious accommodations to people of faith.”

Lead trial counsel Alan Reinach of the Church State Council observed: “Workers have suffered too long with the Supreme Court’s interpretation that disrespects the rights of those with sincere faith commitments to a workplace accommodation. It’s long past time for the Supreme Court to protect workers from religious discrimination.”

Gerald Groff began his career with the USPS in 2012 in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, as a mail carrier. When the post office started delivering packages on Sundays for Amazon, Groff chose to be reassigned to another post office branch that did not participate in Sunday deliveries, even though it came at the cost of his seniority, because it allowed him to follow his religious conscience. When Sunday deliveries began at that post office branch, he then asked for a religious accommodation to observe Sunday Sabbath. The postmaster initially granted his request, allowing him to work additional shifts on other days of the week instead, but later the USPS offered only proposals that would still require Groff to work on Sundays and thereby violate his conscience. Forced to choose between his faith and his career, Groff resigned and sued the USPS. The district court sided with the USPS, concluding that accommodating Groff would pose an undue hardship on USPS. The Third Circuit upheld that decision.

Attorneys for Groff, argue that, as a federal employee with USPS, Groff was protected by Title VII from discrimination based on his religious beliefs and practices. They suggest the Supreme Court re-examine *TWA v. Hardison*, the key case that determined the lower courts' decisions.

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### **About First Liberty Institute**

First Liberty Institute is a non-profit public interest law firm and the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

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