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## SCOTUS Victory for Religious Freedom

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**Education:** “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting **the free exercise thereof.**” The First Amendment has been under attack for some time as practices seen as immoral by many are accepted under the law. Those who serve weddings with flowers or cakes are accused of illegal discrimination if they decline to serve a same-sex “wedding”. A 2020 law in Virginia was an alarming expansion of this threat.

The Virginia Values Act added “sexual orientation” and “gender identity” language to an existing state law.(1) The law “compelled churches, religious schools, and Christian ministries to hire employees who do not share their beliefs about marriage, sexuality, and gender identity —and even banned them from publishing their biblical beliefs on these topics. It also prohibited the ministries from offering sex-specific Bible studies and youth activities.”(2) Exceptions are granted in only limited circumstances, such as “when religion, sex or age is a bona fide occupational qualification”, or when “hiring employees to perform work associated with its activities.” (1)

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) quickly filed a complaint on behalf of two churches, three schools, and a pro-life pregnancy center network (Care Net), but the case was dismissed. (2) However, in 2023, a Supreme Court decision in a different ADF case affirmed that Americans cannot be compelled to say things they don’t believe. (3) In light of this decision and others, the case was settled in March of 2024, with Virginia conceding that religious organizations have the right to operate according to their faith. (2)

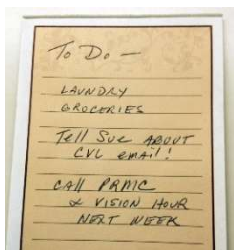
1. <https://legiscan.com/VA/text/SB868/2020>

2. [Religious Freedom Prevails After Christian Orgs Challenge Virginia ‘Values’ Act | Alliance Defending Freedom \(adflegal.org\)](#)

3. [Supreme Court rules website designer can decline to create same-sex wedding websites - SCOTUSblog](#)



**Prayer:** Please, Lord, help our nation to be firm in protecting freedom of religion as a top priority in our society. Help our government units to recognize that while every individual should be protected from abuse, the freedom to practice one’s religion must be preserved, even if it means refusing to celebrate a same-sex “marriage” or declining to hire an individual who openly practices behavior which is recognized as immoral. Help individuals with gender confusion recognize that you have made them male or female in every cell of their body, and no amount of hormone treatment or surgery can change that.



**Action:** If you hear someone say that LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, and questioning) people must be given their rights, express your belief that such individuals should certainly be protected from abuse, and some kinds of discrimination, but religious freedom must take precedence over ensuring their rights. No florist or baker should be required to celebrate a same sex marriage that he believes is immoral. Churches and schools should not be required to hire homosexuals or transsexual individuals, which might be construed as an endorsement of their choice.