



## Ruling: Arlene's Flowers Owner Can Be Sued

By Ellis E. Conklin Thu., Jan 8 2015 at 10:17AM

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Two years ago, you may recall, the owner of a Richland flower shop [refused to sell flowers for the wedding of a couple of longtime gay customers](#). Barronelle Stutzman, a Christian, said her religious opposition to same-sex-marriage precluded her from providing floral arrangements for a gay wedding.

Stutzman's decision was met with a lawsuit filed in Benton County Superior Court, just days days after the state Attorney General's Office wrote to ask that Stutzman reconsider her position and agree to comply with the state's anti-discrimination laws. She did not budge.

Yesterday, a Benton County Superior Court ruled that Stutzman, who has owned Arlene's Flowers for 18 years, can be held personally liable in the case.

In his decision, Judge Alex Ekstrom sided with the state and couple, writing that "the clear language" of the Consumer Protection Act and state anti-discrimination law "supports both individual and corporate liability."

"I'm not surprised. It was what we expected," Stutzman, reached by phone at her flower shop this morning, told *Seattle Weekly*. "That's all I have to say about it."

In his 35-page decision, Judge Ekstrom upheld the Attorney General's authority to bring its



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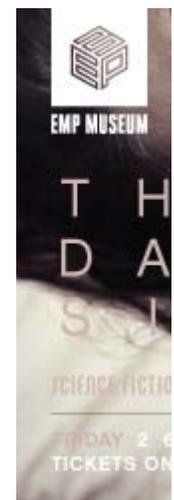
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**Seattle Weekly**

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