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Barronelle Stutzman, Washington Florist Who Rejected Gay Couple, Faces Lawsuit From State Attorney General

Posted: 04/10/2013 10:30 am EDT | Updated: 06/25/2013 2:14 pm EDT

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The Washington state-based florist who refused to provide flowers for a gay wedding (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/03/07/arlene-flower-shop-gay-wedding-washington_n_2829185.html) is now facing a lawsuit from the state.

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"As attorney general, it is my job to enforce the laws of the state of Washington," Ferguson is quoted by KIRO News as saying. (<http://www.kiro.com/news/news/ag-files-lawsuit-against-florist-refused-service-s/nXHTM/>) "Under the Consumer Protection Act, it is unlawful to discriminate against customers on the basis of sexual orientation. If a business provides a product or service to opposite-sex couples for their weddings, then it must provide same-sex couples the same product or service."

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The Attorney General's Office is reportedly seeking (<http://q13fox.com/2013/04/09/state-files-suit-against-florist-for-refusing-to-sell-flowers-for-gay-wedding/#axzz2Q4Ms8Ew6>) a permanent injunction that would require Stutzman's business to comply with the state's consumer protection laws, as well as \$2,000 in fines for every violation of the law.

As the Times points out, however, Stutzman's attorney JD Bristol has argued claims that his client is

anti-gay are "nonsense," noting, "This is about gay marriage, it's not about a person being gay. She has a conscientious objection to homosexual marriage, not homosexuality."

In March, the Tri-City Herald (<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2013/03/06/2300728/richland-flower-shop-turns-away.html>) reported that Robert Ingersoll and his partner Curt Freed had sought out Stutzman's arrangements for their forthcoming September wedding. The loyal Arlene's Flowers and Gifts customers were shocked when Stutzman turned them down.

"He said he decided to get married, and before he got through I grabbed his hand and said, 'I am sorry, I can't do your wedding because of my relationship with Jesus Christ,'" Stutzman told KPR (<http://www.kpr.com/news/local/Florist-refuses-to-serve-same-sex-marriage-195500961.html?tab=video&y>). This is the only wedding Stutzman has turned down in 37 years.

As the Herald reports, Ingersoll said Stutzman's reaction "really hurt," noting, "There was never a question she'd be the one to do our flowers. She does amazing work."

The case mirrors that of an Oregon-based lesbian couple, who were turned away from a local bakery (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/04/aaron-klein-oregon-bakery-owner-lesbian-wedding-cake_n_2615563.html) when they sought a wedding cake.

"I believe that marriage is a religious institution ordained by God," Aaron Klein, who owns Sweet Cakes Bakery with his wife Melissa, is quoted as saying (<http://www.katu.com/news/business/Did-a-baker-break-the-law-when-denying-service-to-same-sex-couple-189450071.html?tab=video&y>). Specifying that he does not consider himself to be anti-gay - "I'll sell [gay people] stuff, I'll talk to them, it's fine" - Klein also noted, "I'd rather have my kids see their dad stand up for what he believes in than to see him bow down because one person complained."

Similarly, in November 2011, a lesbian couple was denied a wedding cake (http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/11/14/lova-wedding-cake-lesbian-couple_n_1092789.html) by the Christian owner of an Iowa-based bakery. "I didn't do the cake because of my convictions for their lifestyle," Victoria Christ, who runs her bakery from home, told KCCL-TV at the time (http://www.kcci.com/Wedding-Cake-Battle-Breys-Between-Couple-Baker-/235770/7310176/_./index.html). "It is my right, and it's not to discriminate against them. It's not so much to do with them, it's to do with me and my walk with God and what I will answer [to] Him for."

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Around the Web

- [Florist sued for refusing service to gay couple](#) (<http://www.komnews.com/news/local/florist-sued-for-refusing-service-to-gay-couple-20241261.html>)
- [State sues florist over refusing service for gay wedding](#) (http://seattletimes.com/html/localnews/201312691_blnfloristlawsuit.html)
- [Attorney General Files Complaint Against Richland Florist](#) (<http://www.kvtrv.com/article/2013/04/09/attorney-general-files-complaint-against-richland-0>)
- [Attorney General sues Arlene's Flowers for discrimination](#) (<http://www.tri-cityherald.com/2013/04/09/249489/attorney-general-sues-arlenes.html>)
- [A Flower Shop Is Refusing to Do Business with a Gay Couple Getting Married...](#) (<http://www.thestranger.com/seattle/bigotry-in-bloom/Content?oid=16232163>)

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social "This is about gay marriage, it's not about a person being gay. She has a ~~objection~~ objection to h.o.m.o.s.e.x.u.a.l. marriage, not h.o.m.o.s.e.x.u.a.l.i.t.y..."

What? That's one awesome pretzel there. I love to hear the attorney explain that to the judge
 10 APR 2013 1:22 PM ([HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/WTF2009/BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_3052901_248309617.HTML](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/social/wtf2009/barronelle-stutzman-washington-florist-lawsuit_n_3052901_248309617.html))

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RoscoeWrites ([social#RoscoeWrites?action=comments](#)) 3
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social It's getting to the point where these Christian businesses are going to have to ~~stop~~ stop denying services to GAY'S NOT ALLOWED.

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Emma Darian (EmmaDarian) ([social#EmmaDarian?action=comments](#)) 10
2199 Fans

social All in all, I'm loving every rise and fall (RHCP)

social This florist could have had one and it wouldn't help her. The law does not allow her ~~to~~ to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation.

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16 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION [Read Conversation](#)

Rune Burnz (Rune321) ([social#Rune321?action=comments](#)) 11
233 Fans

social when the rich wage war its the poor that die

social I hope this flower shop looses and looses big, and the other states which have had ~~other~~ other states denying services to LGBTs begin to prosecute. If the states npt this early other businesses won't try it if they delay it will be a real problem with a lot of pseudo-christians trying the same trick.

10 APR 2013 7:49 AM ([HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/RUNE321/BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_3052901_248309617.HTML](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/social/rune321/barronelle-stutzman-washington-florist-lawsuit_n_3052901_248309617.html))

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Mary Devlin (montemike721) ([social#montemike721?action=comments](#)) 177 Fans
hung vers top

social I hate to nit pick, but you do realize it's spelled loses

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9 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION [Read Conversation](#)

Bansaw ([social#Bansaw?action=comments](#)) 5 Fans

social I think we all have to agree that there are a significant number of people in the US ~~who~~ who think that a man marrying a man is morally wrong in the eyes of God and

they will not be forced into disobeying God. She has served this guy in the past and worked with gay people. It just needs understanding that people like her will never be forced into dishonoring God.
11 APR 2013 10:50 AM (HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_305201_24415456.HTM)

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TheAntiOxie (social/TheAntiOxie?action=comments) 10
2,365 Fans · No more huffing people... Martin Richard

social Then she needs to stop being in business in a state with non-discrimination laws because she's going to be paying a lot of fines for her bigotry and hate.
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Dan Abernathy (baltimore) (social/baltimore?action=comments) 1
SUPER USER · 491 Fans · Liberals = feel good solutions that don't work

social I believe in freedom of association.
11 APR 2013 10:50 AM (HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/BALTIMORE-BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_305201_243827071.HTM)

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Fang11 (social/Fang11?action=comments) 8
11 Fans

social In private life, sure. But this is regarding providing a service to the public.
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Dawn D. (Dawn1257) (social/Dawn1257?action=comments) 18
41 Fans · The Constitution lives and breaths for us all.

social If these people have such strong "religious" convictions, how many weddings have they officiated or the other of the intendeds were previously divorced?
11 APR 2013 10:50 AM (HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/DAWN1257-BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_305201_243811790.HTM)

This is where they will lose in their defense in court.
11 APR 2013 10:50 AM (HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/DAWN1257-BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_305201_243811790.HTM)

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Jeff A. (mercury613) (social/mercury613?action=comments) 4
SUPER USER · 517 Fans · In the blue TV screen light

social EXACTLY.
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4 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION [Read Conversation](#)

Diana Scrimger (social/Diana_Scrlmger?action=comments) 2
45 Fans

social This also means that heterosexual couples could also sue if they are refused by a florist because the law seems to work for only some of the people!
10 APR 2013 11:19 AM (HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/DIANA_SCRIMGER-BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_305201_243806959.HTM)

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ChristianLady H. (ChristianLady1) (social/ChristianLady1?action=comments) 830 Fans · Love wins :-)

social If they are refused on the basis of their sexual orientation, yes.
11 APR 2013 10:50 AM (HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/CHRISTIANLADY1-BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_305201_243806957.HTM)

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owenme09 (social/owenme09?action=comments) 17
SUPER USER · 163 Fans · Het van a meekle? A meekle dibotban van!

social "She has a conscientious objection to homosexual marriage, not homosexuality."
How come it's ok to feel that way, but it's not ok to say "I object to black people voting, but not to black people in general?"
10 APR 2013 10:50 AM (HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/OWENME09-BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_305201_243806836.HTM)

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chato617 (social/chato617?action=comments) 2
24 Fans

social Exactly!
11 APR 2013 10:50 AM (HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/CHATO617-BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_305201_243807432.HTM)

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Keith H. (esotericus01) (social/esotericus01?action=comments) 18
SUPER USER · 910 Fans · Former Republican now a proud MBA-holding Democrat

social A marriage is a religious institution ordained by God. Aaron Klein is quoted as saying:
Not ONE church has ever performed a "marriage". Churches perform "weddings".
A marriage is a "permit" you pay for at your county or city clerk's office that says your marriage is legal.
I'm so sick of this argument.
10 APR 2013 10:38 AM (HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/ESOTERICUS01-BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_305201_243854971.HTM)

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Contact1972 (social/Contact1972?action=comments) 1
2,114 Fans · DOMA is DEAD

social They keep pushing this faux argument because they have nothing else.
11 APR 2013 10:50 AM (HTTP://WWW.HUFFINGTONPOST.COM/SOCIAL/CONTACT1972-BARRONELLE-STUTZMAN-WASHINGTON-FLORIST-LAWSUIT_N_305201_243856004.HTM)

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6 PEOPLE IN THE CONVERSATION [Read Conversation](#)

SonnovaB (social/SonnovaB?action=comments) 1
SUPER USER · 80 Fans · Unreconstructed gay LIBERAL

social I'm really not disagreeing with everyone's disgust and anger at how this wonderful couple was treated.
But, let me pose this hypothetical.
Fred Phelps pastor/founder of the WBC (westboro baptist church) is getting married, and goes to the best wedding planner in Kansas, who happens to be a gay man.
Should the wedding planner be required to perform such an intimate service for someone who lives to destroy his existence?
As an independent lighting consultant in the 90's I stopped doing work for most churches, because I had qualms about enabling them to continue spewing the hatred they were spewing at the time. It made me literally sick to the stomach, to even go into a church that hated me, and my brothers and sisters. Was I wrong to turn down that business? (I really want to know what people think on this).
I have absolutely no doubt whatsoever that any business selling cakes or flowers or

