



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on June 6, 2014

Baker Who Refused Same-sex Couple Must Take Sensitivity Training

A Colorado baker found guilty of discrimination for refusing to bake a wedding cake for a same-sex couple must go through sensitivity training as part of his penance and rehabilitation. In December of last year, Administrative Law Judge Robert Spencer found Jack Phillips, owner of Masterpiece Cake Shop in the Denver suburb of Lakewood, guilty of discriminating against same-sex couple Dave Mullin and Charlie Craig when he told them in July 2012 that he couldn't bake them a wedding cake because homosexual behavior conflicted with his Christian beliefs.



Phillips appealed the verdict to the Colorado Civil Rights Commission, which stood by Spencer's decision and ordered May 30 that Phillips be required to bake wedding cakes for same-sex couples in conflict with his moral Christian convictions. Additionally, Phillips and his staff will have to submit to a regimen of state-sanctioned sensitivity training to make sure they are in line with Colorado's non-discrimination statute.

Over the next two years Phillips will also be required to submit quarterly reports to Colorado's Civil Rights Commission concerning his business practices, informing the commission whether he has turned any business away, most importantly homosexual customers. "So if his shop is closed or he's out of flour, he needs to report to the commission," explained Nicolle Martin of Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), the conservative Christian legal advocacy group that represented Phillips in the case, to [Fox News](#) on June 5.

As far as the sensitivity schooling, Phillips will have to "prove that he has sufficiently trained his employees and staff to comply with the Colorado anti-discrimination act," added Martin.

Among those employees is Phillips' 87-year-old Christian mother, who helps out on occasion at the shop. As for her compliance, Phillips told Fox that it is unlikely. The training "is not going to have any effect on her," Phillips predicted confidently. "She's not going to be reformed."

Attorney Amanda Goad of the ACLU's Colorado franchise, which filed the discrimination complaint against Phillips on behalf of the same-sex couple, said that while "religious freedom is undoubtedly an important American value ... so is the right to be treated equally under the law free from discrimination."

Martin responded that religious freedom is not an important American value, "it's a [constitutionally guaranteed] right, and the fact is, the state of Colorado has no business forcing Jack to abandon deeply held convictions ... which are protected by the First Amendment, so the state can impose a new, government-approved belief system upon him."



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In his ruling against Phillips, Spencer wrote that the baker had “no free speech right to refuse because [he was] only asked to bake a cake, not make a speech. It is not the same as forcing a person to pledge allegiance to the government or to display a motto with which they disagree.” He added that “at first blush, it may seem reasonable that a private business should be able to refuse service to anyone it chooses. This view, however, fails to take into account the cost to society and the hurt caused to persons who are denied service simply because of who they are.”

Phillips, who responded to the judge’s guilty verdict and order to begin baking cakes for same-sex couples by dropping future wedding cake orders, said he has no intention of violating his moral convictions. “I’m not going to make cakes for same-sex weddings,” he told [TheBlaze.com](#). “That violates my First Amendment speech ... and my duty as a Christian abiding by my Savior.”

He said that he would be happy to provide birthday cakes and other baked goods to gay customers, but holds the line on serving same-sex weddings. He added that he is willing to do jail time for his convictions. “If that’s what it took,” he said. “I’m not giving up my faith for anything. It’s too high a price to pay.”

ADF Senior Vice President of Legal Services Kristen Waggoner noted that “forcing Americans to promote ideas against their will undermines our constitutionally protected freedom of expression and our right to live free. If the government can take away our First Amendment freedoms, there is no other thing it can’t take away.”

Photo of Jack Phillips: AP Images





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