



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on March 6, 2019

Colorado Drops Latest Attack Against Christian Baker

Colorado has finally thrown in the towel on its years-long campaign against Christian cake baker Jack Phillips. The state's attorney general announced March 4 that the Colorado Civil Rights Commission's was dismissing its most recent charges against Phillips "in the wake of newly discovered evidence of the state's ongoing hostility toward religious freedom," reported Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), the legal advocacy group that has been defending Phillips throughout his more than six-year battle with the state over his First Amendment-guaranteed religious freedoms.



In 2013, a judge ruled on behalf of the Civil Rights Commission that Phillips had violated the civil rights of a homosexual couple after he refused to provide them with a "wedding" cake, citing his Christian convictions that opposed such partnerships. The judge ordered Phillips to serve same-sex couples or stop baking wedding cakes — which accounted for 40 percent of his business.

The ADF appealed Phillips' case to the U.S. Supreme Court, which in June 2018 ruled 7-2 in favor of Phillips, reversing the state's penalties against him.

While that should have been the end of the case, [Colorado continued to harass Phillips](#). The rationale came in the form of a local attorney who asked Phillips to create a cake to celebrate a gender transition from male to female. As he had previously, Phillips declined the request, citing his Christian convictions. Then, "less than a month after the Supreme Court ruled for Phillips in his first case," explained the ADF, "the state surprised him by finding probable cause to believe that Colorado law requires him to create the requested gender-transition cake." The ADF responded by filing a federal lawsuit against the state, demanding that it drop its harassment of Phillips.

On March 4, after evidence emerged demonstrating ongoing hostility on the part of the state toward religious freedom, Colorado dropped its latest case against Phillips, after Phillips and the ADF agreed to drop his latest lawsuit against the state. In a prepared statement, Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser said that "under the terms of the agreement, the Colorado Civil Rights Commission will voluntarily dismiss the state administrative action against Masterpiece Cakeshop and its owner, Jack Phillips, and Mr. Phillips will voluntarily dismiss his federal court case against the State."

Kristen Waggoner, ADF's senior vice president of U.S. Legal Division, called the decision great news for all involved. "Tolerance and respect for good-faith differences of opinion are essential in a diverse society like ours," Waggoner said. "They enable us to peacefully coexist with each another. But the state's demonstrated and ongoing hostility toward Jack because of his beliefs is undeniable."

Reporting on the latest evidence against the state, ADF noted: "The fact that one commissioner called Phillips a 'hater' on Twitter was already publicly known. But a Colorado state legislator recently disclosed that he spoke in November 2018 to a current commissioner who expressed the belief that



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‘there is anti-religious bias on the Commission.’”

Additionally, ADF attorneys had recently uncovered statements from a 2018 public meeting during which two of the state’s civil rights commissioners had voiced support for [comments that a previous commissioner, Diann Rice, had made in 2015](#). ADF noted that the comments, “which the U.S. Supreme Court sternly condemned in its ruling in favor of Phillips last year, called religious freedom ‘a despicable piece of rhetoric.’”

Waggoner emphasized that the ADF is pleased with the state’s decision to halt its harassment of Phillips. “This is the second time the state has launched a failed effort to prosecute him,” said Waggoner. “While it finally appears to be getting the message that its anti-religious hostility has no place in our country, the state’s decision to target Jack has cost him more than six-and-a-half years of his life, forcing him to spend that time tied up in legal proceedings.”

Added ADF Senior Counsel Jim Campbell: “We hope that the state is done going along with obvious efforts to harass Jack. He shouldn’t be driven out of business just because some people disagree with his religious beliefs and his desire to live consistently with them. We look forward to the day when Jack doesn’t have to fear government punishment for his faith or harassment from people who oppose his beliefs.”

Image: Screenshot of website of Masterpiece Cake Shop



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