



“Gay Marriage” v. Religious Freedom in N.Y. State

Christian Canary in the Secular Coal Mine

The groundwork for this battle was laid when the so-called “Marriage Equality Act” was signed into law by New York State Gov. Andrew Cuomo this past August. As the town Clerk of Ledyard, Belforti, who is a Christian deeply committed to her faith, found herself in a conundrum, as one of the many responsibilities of the town clerk is to issue marriage licenses.



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Governor Cuomo, who claims to be Catholic yet seems to reject nearly every part of Catholic doctrine, didn't pull punches when [he warned Christians](#), “The law is the law. When you enforce the laws of the state, you don't get to pick and choose which laws.”

In response, some town clerks who take their Christian faith seriously resigned their positions. Belforti, on the other hand, did not think that she should just quit because of her biblical beliefs, so she sought another option that would allow her to retain her part-time position and meet the demands of the job without having to compromise her conscience.

She offered a plan whereby she could delegate the signing of marriage licenses to a deputy. Ledyard, with a population of just under 2,000, issues only a handful of licenses a year. This seemed like a fair arrangement for both Belforti and the town of Ledyard, where homosexual couples could still receive their marriage licenses under the new law, but she would not have to compromise her Christian beliefs.

Unfortunately for Belforti, the players on the other side of the “Marriage Equality” debate did not see things the same way. Almost immediately after publicly announcing her intentions, Belforti found herself the target of an aggressive attack campaign from combative secularists and homosexual activists.

The promoters of same-sex marriage aligned against her even though, as her defenders point out, Belforti bent over backward to accommodate the new law and her proposal would not have had any adverse impact on homosexual couples. The only difference from before the law was passed was that it wouldn't be her signature on the issued license. A lesbian couple from Florida, who own some property in Ledyard, are contemplating a possible lawsuit with the powerful, liberal D.C.-based law firm, [People for the American Way](#) (PFAW).

If the World Hate You, Know Ye, That It Hath Hated Me Before You

The mild-mannered Belforti, a grandmother and artisan cheese farmer, has been the subject of almost daily offensive e-mails, phone calls, and other attacks for standing up for her Christian beliefs. The following is a sampling of the remarks from opponents found in the comment section of news articles



Written by [Patrick Krey](#) on November 11, 2011

about her case. A review of them gives the reader an insight into the mindset of those who are vehemently opposed to her:

“[Sue](#) the pants off her, fire her, and throw her in jail.”

“[Look](#), Ms. Belforti: You are a PUBLIC SERVANT! No one cares that you follow the false religion Christianity. LOL Ok? If you allow your filthy religion to impede you in your duties, then maybe you should resign.”

“[She](#) can go be a religious bigot at her church or to her cows.”

“[She](#) should be fired. Religious beliefs have no business in state mandated laws.”

“[Ancient](#) mythology and superstition should absolutely determine whether someone should do the job they were hired to do. If the performance of the job conflicts with the mythology and superstition ... then plainly ... one should not have to do the job. Really? This is what the supporters of Rose Marie Belforti are saying.”

“Lets [sic] bring back the Roman lions for these misguided folks.”

“[Find](#) a write-in candidate and vote her out. It's the easiest way to deal with this. THEN go after her business interests. After all SHE is the one who CHOSE to make a political statement here!”

“[We](#) can't put her six feet under, but we can put her business six feet under. Stop buying her products whatever they are today. Then she will lose her job and her livelihood.”

As mentioned in the comments above, even with all the venomous attacks already directed at her, there is another effort underway to boycott her meager artisan cheese dairy farm. Removal from office and attempted humiliation are not enough for some; they want to bankrupt her as well. [Any who feel sympathy for Mrs. Belforti's plight may feel free to purchase some of her [artisan cheese](#) for their upcoming Thanksgiving feast.]

Christians Need Not Apply

There is more to this story than just the overwhelming forces teaming up against a town clerk and small-town dairy farmer. Belforti is being made an example of for the purpose of sending a message. That message is clear to anyone who reviews the details of this episode in New York State politics: If you are a Christian and you take your religious beliefs seriously, then you must give up any aspirations to public office.

The American people were told by supporters of "marriage equality" that this meant that they were recognizing the rights of individuals. But observers have pointed out that the "rights of individuals" being discussed are certainly not the natural rights inherent in the Natural Law so eloquently espoused by St. Thomas Aquinas and famously enshrined in the Declaration of Independence by Thomas Jefferson. The "rights of individuals" are nowhere to be found, and many have noted that it appears that this town clerk's right to freedom of religious expression has been banished down the memory hole.

However, not all is lost just yet for Rose Marie Belforti. Supporters are rallying to her side. The organization [New Yorkers for Constitutional Freedoms](#) has begun [zealously defending her](#) and promoting her cause nationally. They even created [a YouTube video](#) that has gone viral and garnered even more support. The national Christian legal defense organization [Alliance Defense Fund](#) is also standing by to handle her case when necessary. Meanwhile, other supporters have put together [an informative website](#) to tell her side of the story.



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This case will only draw more national attention over the coming months because of its immense significance for both Christians and militant secularists and homosexual activists seeking to crush any opposition to same-sex marriage. Will Christians be allowed the accommodation of their religious beliefs and freedom of conscience in the public workplace? Or will the hostile secularists be allowed to stamp out any expression of one's faith if it conflicts with their moral relativism? Belforti's decision to stand up for what she believes might answer these questions. Christians from across the nation will be watching her case closely because of its dire implications for all of them.

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Photo of Governor Andrew Cuomo: AP Images



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