



*(Melissa Klein, former co-owner of Sweet Cakes by Melissa.
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Access full resolution photos at KleinFacts.com under “Photos and Videos.”)*

U.S. Supreme Court Reverses Oregon’s Decision to Penalize Bakers for Exercising Free Speech

*First Liberty attorneys filed appeal seeking review of Oregon’s decision to compel the speech
of Aaron and Melissa Klein, forcing them out of business*

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Today, the Supreme Court of the United States announced that it reversed a decision the state of Oregon that forced bakers Aaron and Melissa Klein out of business by penalizing them \$135,000 for refusing to create a government-approved message. The case was sent back to the Oregon courts for further review in light of its *Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd. v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*. The Kleins are represented by First Liberty Institute and Boyden Gray & Associates.

“This is a victory for Aaron and Melissa Klein and for religious liberty for all Americans,” said Kelly Shackelford, President, CEO, and Chief Counsel to First Liberty. “The Constitution protects speech, popular or not, from condemnation by the government. The message from the Court is clear, government hostility toward religious Americans will not be tolerated.”

Former Ambassador to the European Union, C. Boyden Gray and Adam Gustafson, of Boyden Gray & Associates, First Liberty network attorneys, are the lead appellate counsel for the case.

In *Masterpiece Cakeshop, Ltd. v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*, the Justices reminded government officials that they cannot be hostile to the free exercise of the religious beliefs of its citizens.

The State of Oregon's Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) found that the Kleins had had violated Oregon's public accommodations statute after Aaron and Melissa declined to design and create wedding cake celebrating a same-sex marriage. In addition to the \$135,000 penalty for "emotional damages," BOLI issued a gag order, preventing them from even talking about their actual beliefs. As a result, the Kleins were forced to shut down their bakery. Aaron and Melissa appealed the BOLI ruling to the Oregon Court of Appeals in April 2016. The Oregon Court of Appeals reversed the gag order but otherwise upheld the decision of BOLI in December 2017.

To learn more about the case, visit KleinFacts.com.

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About First Liberty Institute

[First Liberty Institute](http://FirstLibertyInstitute) is a non-profit public interest law firm and the largest legal organization in the nation dedicated exclusively to defending religious freedom for all Americans.

To arrange an interview, contact Lacey McNeil at media@firstliberty.org or by calling 972-941-4453.