



Focus on Religious Freedom

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"The Religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man: and it is the right of every man to exercise it as these may dictate." - James Madison, 1785.

Victories For Religious Freedom at the Supreme Court

In June, 2020 and June, 2021, the Supreme Court issued several decisions supporting religious individuals and organizations who face continuing court challenges by opposing individuals or groups:

* The Court ruled on the "ministerial exception" in which religious schools were sued by former teachers claiming wrongful termination. The Court recognized that religious organizations have autonomy to make employment decisions about their ministers and clarified the religious functions of a "minister" is up to the religious group who know their faith best. Therefore, religious groups are free to select priests, rabbis, ministers, and other religious leaders free from government interference. ⁽¹⁾

* A two case combined ruling "made it clear that the government has no business forcing pro-life and religious organizations to provide drugs and devices that can destroy life." Therefore, "Little Sisters of the Poor and other pro-life ministries can continue to provide health insurance coverage for their employees without compromising their religious beliefs about the sanctity of life."⁽²⁾

* The Court ruled against the Montana Dept. of Revenue for excluding religious schools from a tax credit program that should have been equally available to religious and nonreligious schools alike, ending discrimination against schools that are religious. This ruling is considered a victory for both religious freedom and school choice. ⁽³⁾

* The justices ruled 8-1 that lawsuits can continue even after the government has abandoned the policy or behavior that prompted the lawsuit. The case involved violations against a Christian college student's religious freedom and free speech rights. ⁽⁴⁾

* Justices unanimously ruled in favor of Catholic Social Services, enabling faith-based foster care agencies to continue partnering with the city despite the agency's refusal to complete assessments of same-sex couples.

"In a divisive time with a lot of conflict, we saw the (Supreme) Court over and over again come to super-majority and often unanimous decisions" in its religion-related cases, said Mark Rienzi, president of the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty.⁽⁵⁾

(adfflegal.org, 8/31/20(1)(2)(3); deseret.com, 6/6/21(4)(5); christianpost.com, 6/18/21;
nbcnews.com, 6/17/21; powerlineblog.com, 7/8/20

[T]he free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference, shall forever hereafter be allowed, within this State.

New York State Constitution of 1777

Prayer For Religious Freedom:

Father, we praise and thank you for the gift of human life and human freedom.

Protect all people from being forced to violate their moral and religious convictions

In your goodness. guard our freedom to live out our faith and to follow you. Amen

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Catholics For Freedom of Religion

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Victories For Religious Freedom at the Supreme Court

In June, 2020 and June, 2021, the Supreme Court issued several decisions supporting religious individuals and organizations who face continuing court challenges by opposing individuals or groups:

- * Religious organizations have autonomy to make employment decisions about their ministers. Therefore, religious groups are free to select priests, rabbis, ministers, and other religious leaders free from government interference. ⁽¹⁾
- * The government cannot force pro-life and religious organizations to provide drugs and devices that can destroy life. ⁽²⁾
- * Religious schools cannot be excluded from a state tax credit program. This ruling is considered a victory for both religious freedom and school choice. ⁽³⁾
- * A lawsuit involving a student's religious freedom and free speech rights can continue after the government has abandoned the policy or behavior that prompted the lawsuit. ⁽⁴⁾
- * Faith-based foster care agencies may continue partnering with the city despite the agency's refusal to complete assessments of same-sex couples.

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