



MINNESOTA FAMILY COUNCIL
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Should Minnesota Families Have to Abandon Their Beliefs in Order to Earn a Living?

Minneapolis - Today, the Minnesota Department of Human Rights [announced](#) a settlement agreement in the first Minnesota case against a wedding venue, LeBlanc's Rice Creek Hunting and Recreation, Inc., that declined to host a same-sex "wedding."

Minnesota Family Council has been sounding the warning bell for over a year now that the same-sex "marriage" law passed in 2013 fails to protect the freedom of conscience and religion rights guaranteed by both the federal and Minnesota constitutions. The fact that the Human Rights Department is now enforcing this law in an unconstitutional manner against its own citizens is deeply troubling. Indeed, the Department began [targeting](#) Minnesota business owners shortly after the same-sex "marriage" law passed, likely becoming the first Human Rights Department in a state with same-sex "marriage" to explicitly announce their intent to punish business owners of faith.

Business owners who want to practice their faith and maintain their values in their business, rather than be forced to conform to the government's view of sexuality and marriage, could lose their business, face steep fines, or even [criminal penalties](#).

The question standing is whether the Minnesota Department of Human Rights enforcement of the same-sex "marriage" law by punishing business owners of faith is constitutional or just. **Should the government be able to force family businesses to betray their consciences and participate in ceremonies that violate their beliefs?** Should the government be in the business of forcing its citizens to change their moral beliefs about the definition of marriage?

"The Minnesota Human Rights Department's treatment of Minnesota families is deplorable. They are choosing to enforce the same-sex 'marriage' law in an unconstitutional manner, targeting Minnesota business owners, and--to top it all off--claiming victory for settling with a hunting preserve owner who should have never had to face a 'human rights' case against him. This is a shameful example of government forcing citizens to accept the government's view of sexuality and marriage. People no longer believe the lie that same-sex 'marriage' is a 'live and let live' law here in Minnesota. Minnesota business owners should not be forced to violate their faith in order to do business in this state,"

said John Helmberger, CEO of Minnesota Family Council.

Not every business can afford to stand against the "sexual fascism" of government as Hobby Lobby or the family who owns Liberty Ridge Farm in New York were recently able to do, **but the point is--they shouldn't have to**. Government should not create special legal privileges based on sexual orientation and gender identity. Instead, **government should protect the rights of Americans to operate a business in accordance with their beliefs.**

(Hobby Lobby [recently won](#) their case against Obama Administration's "HHS Mandate," that would have required Hobby Lobby's Christian family owners to pay for coverage of abortion drugs against their religious

beliefs or else pay crushing fines of up to \$100 per day per employee. The Supreme Court validated the religious freedom rights of Hobby Lobby's owners, ruling the Mandate an unconstitutional violation against religious freedom. The family owners of Liberty Ridge Farm, however, were [recently forced](#) by the New York Human Rights Commission to pay a \$13,000 fine for declining to host a same-sex wedding on their family farm--where they live.)

*Minnesota Family Council, along with other allied ministries, hosted last year the first-ever [Minnesota Religious Freedom Forum](#) to provide legal information to business owners, churches, educators, and other individuals on how to best protect their religious freedom rights in the current legal environment.

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