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Editor

Karen Kurtz

Senior Writer

Chris Potts

Art Director

Jonathan Marshall

Photography

Bruce Ellefson

Contributors

Marshéle Carter Daniel Davis Liana Imparato Nick Schober Charles Snow Kristen Waggoner



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Questions or comments on this issue? Email Editor@ADFLegal.org

15100 N. 90th Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85260

ADFLegal.org | 800-835-5233

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Minutes With Kristen

The Long Game

By Kristen Waggoner, CEO, President & Chief Counsel

F or 31 years, one of ADF's defining traits has been that we seek to break hard ground through persistence. In a world of fleeting trends and political loyalties, we ask God for the courage to play to win the long game, deploying strategies over years and even decades. This long-game perspective has borne fruit time and again.

Now, we're seeing this play out in key mission areas. **Life:** As a young nurse, Becky Currie delivered a 14-week-old premature baby. She watched his tiny heartbeat for 20 minutes before he passed away in his mother's arms. That moment transformed her.

Decades later, as a Mississippi lawmaker, Becky sponsored the pro-life law that sparked *Dobbs* — the case ADF helped litigate and that toppled *Roe v. Wade*. What God began decades ago in that hospital room came to fruition in a history-shaping decision.

That work continues. Since *Dobbs*, ADF has helped 15 states defend their pro-life laws, securing wins that protect the unborn in Florida, North Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia. We're cultivating new soil to build a culture that cherishes life.

This long-game perspective has borne fruit time and again.



Kristen Waggoner

Gender Ideology: Ten years ago, a school district in Illinois secretly opened restrooms to the opposite sex. ADF attorney Jeremy Tedesco sued over that policy, taking on the school district, the Obama administration, and the ACLU. It was a lonely start.

But in the years that followed, we filed multiple cases against the Obama administration and schools for violating girls' privacy. And God delivered victories.

Last year, we won five injunctions against the Biden administration's Title IX rule, which would have forced schools nationwide to let boys into girls' spaces. More recently, we defended Idaho's law protecting girls' privacy, and the liberal Ninth Circuit upheld it unanimously.

Religious Freedom: The secular left made a "long march through the institutions," but God calls us to reclaim those places for Christ. Our recent *Drummond* case was part of a longgame strategy to protect Christian schools from discrimination — in this case, a K-12 Catholic school in Oklahoma City (read more on p. 21).

While the Supreme Court didn't rule in our favor, instead deadlocking 4-4, we've been here before — and it's never the end of the road. The path to victory is often paved by short-term setbacks. The *Drummond* case built on our landmark victory in *Trinity Lutheran* (2017), which said states can't exclude religious groups from generally available programs just because they're religious. We will continue building on that precedent until the secular monopoly on charter schools is broken, giving more children the option of a Christ-centered education.



Kristen Waggoner speaks to a crowd gathered outside the Supreme Court during oral arguments in the *Dobbs* case.

DF had Supreme Court work in each of these key mission areas last year. And we are involved in four additional cases, on gender identity and life, before the court in the upcoming term.

History is long, and God uses long-term vision — and perseverance — to bear fruit. With His help, ADF will continue playing the long game to reclaim lost ground for His glory. ▲

News & Quick Takes

Case Updates From Around The World



Washington, D.C.

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear four cases ADF is involved in, two of them related to state laws that protect women's sports. In both of those, lower courts have undermined existing laws and forced schools to allow male athletes who identify as female to compete in women's sports.

In State of West Virginia v. B.P.J., West Virginia Attorney General JB McCuskey and ADF attorneys are defending the state's Save Women's Sport Act. ADF also represents former NCAA athlete Lainey Armistead, who intervened in the lawsuit after a middle-school male competing on a girls' track team displaced hundreds of girls in track-and-field events.

In *Little v. Hecox*, ADF attorneys are joining Idaho Attorney General Raúl Labrador in asking the high court to uphold that state's Fairness in Women's Sports Act. Enacted in 2020 to protect female student-athletes, the act was the first law of its kind in the nation.

The Supreme Court has also agreed to hear ADF cases involving a faith-based pregnancy center and a licensed counselor.

Oregon

ADF attorneys filed a lawsuit on behalf of an education specialist after his government employer, the InterMountain Education Service District, threatened to fire him for displaying children's books in his office.

Rod Theis, a licensed clinical social worker, was inspired by the message of hope for children conveyed in



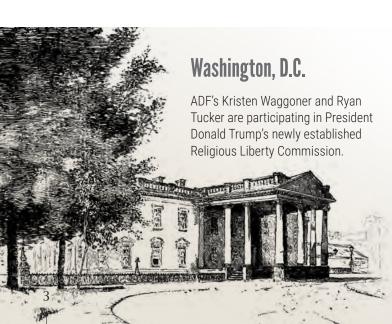
the books, *He is He, She is She*, and *Johnny the Walrus*, which encourage children to embrace and love themselves as God made them to be. He decided to place the books behind his office desk, displaying only their covers as decoration.

After another employee complained that the books were "transphobic," the district labeled the display as "a hostile expression of animus toward another person relating to their actual or perceived gender identity" and ordered Theis to remove them. The district then warned Theis that "further conduct of this nature" may result in discipline, including termination of his employment.

This case isn't about books; it's about public officials telling an employee that he isn't allowed to express a view that differs from their own.

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Tyson Langhofer, ADF Senior Counsel



Waggoner, CEO, president & chief counsel, serves on the advisory board of legal experts. Tucker, senior counsel and director of the Center for Christian Ministries, serves on the advisory board of lay leaders.

The commission was established to safeguard and promote America's founding principle of religious freedom. Key focus

areas include parental rights in religious education, school choice, conscience protections, attacks on houses of worship, free speech for religious entities, and institutional autonomy.

President Trump signed an executive order to create the new commission at a White House event on the National Day of Prayer, May 1.

Scotland

The UK's National Health Service (NHS) suspended a midwifery student from her training placement because of pro-life comments she made on social media.

Sara Spencer, a mother of three, responded to a question posted on a private midwifery Facebook group asking whether midwives might refuse to take part in abortions because of their beliefs. Contributing to the discussion, Spencer explained her conscientious Sara objection to performing abortions, stating that she would always personally object to participating in "killing" an unborn child.

Afterward, she was subjected to a fitness-to-practice investigation and placed on leave from her hospital placement. The university claimed that she had misused social media and that her comments were "detrimental to the safety, dignity, and wellbeing ... of others."

With legal support from ADF UK, Spencer was cleared of all allegations. But her university professors have continued to issue warnings to her about her social media use, referring to her pro-life comments as "inappropriate."

Shahida Bibi

Pakisian

following the court's ruling. ADF

A Pakistani court has
Sara Spencer annulled the forced conversion
and marriage of a Christian
g in woman to her stepfather's brother.

Shahida Bibi was 11 when her mother eloped with a Muslim man, who then "gave" Bibi to his brother. The brother sexually exploited her and then forced her into an Islamic marriage when she turned 18. She gave birth to two children during her captivity.

Now 25, Bibi is free to return home to her father and her Christian faith

following the court's ruling. ADF International and allied lawyers supported her legal defense.

In Pakistan, more than 1,000 women and girls from religious minorities are forced into conversion and marriage every year.

"While these forced conversion and marriage abuses happen across the globe, they are especially prevalent in Pakistan," said Tehmina Arora, director of advocacy, Asia for ADF International. "In coordination with our allied lawyers in the country, we are taking every step possible to prevent these situations from occurring."

It is concerning
that an NHS health
board would be
reluctant to
welcome a student
who holds certain
beliefs regarding
the significance of
unborn human life.

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Sara Spencer



Paul Coleman (far left), participates in the "Digital Services Act and Threats to Freedom of Expression" conference in Brussels, Belgium.

Belgium

ADF International co-hosted a first-of-its-kind conference to examine threats to free speech posed by the EU's Digital Services Act (DSA).

Held at the European Parliament, the event brought together politicians, journalists, and

others across the political spectrum to challenge the online censorship law, which forces tech companies to remove so-called "illegal content." Under the threat of massive fines, the DSA forces online platforms to censor posted content that is deemed to violate any of the many "hate speech" laws across the EU.

"Free speech is again under threat on this continent in a way it hasn't been since the nightmare of Europe's authoritarian regimes just a few decades ago," Paul Coleman, executive director of ADF International, told the conference.

Coleman mentioned the case of Finnish parliamentarian Päivi Räsänen as a "harrowing example of what censorship under the DSA could look like in practice." Six years ago, Räsänen was criminally prosecuted for alleged "hate speech" after expressing her Christian views on sexuality on X. Her case is now pending before Finland's Supreme Court. Her legal defense is coordinated by ADF International.



Parents have a fundamental right to direct the upbringing and education of their children. But, across America, that right is increasingly under attack.

VERMONT

A couple's foster care license was revoked because of their religious beliefs about marriage and gender.

MICHIGAN

Parents withdrew their middleschool daughter from public school after discovering that district employees had been secretly treating their daughter as a boy and had taken steps to conceal those actions from them.

COLORADO

A couple learned that their 11-year-old daughter was assigned to share a hotel room – and was supposed to share a bed – with a male student on an overnight school trip.

Although the law has long recognized parents' constitutional rights, the government often undermines parental rights and responsibilities and seeks to replace the important role that moms and dads play in their children's lives.

"Children do not 'belong to all of us' in the way that some politicians are fond of saying," says Kate Anderson, Alliance Defending Freedom senior counsel and director of its Center for Parental Rights. "Parents, not schools or governments, have the primary responsibility for the well-being of their children."

The U.S. Supreme Court has repeatedly affirmed that parental rights are fundamental and are protected by the U.S. Constitution. But, like all fundamental rights, the rights of parents must be vigilantly defended.

In response to growing threats, the Center for Parental Rights litigates precedent-setting cases to protect parents' rights. ADF's Center for Public Policy is also actively working with state lawmakers and Congress on legislation that recognizes and respects parental rights as fundamental rights entitled to the highest constitutional and legal protection.

"The connection between parent and child is one of the most basic human relationships," Anderson says. "Parents love their children like no government official ever will."

The stories that follow provide a glimpse of how ADF is advocating for parental rights in three key areas.

Joe and Serena Wailes



Bryan and Rebecca Gantt FOSTER CARE

A t this very moment, children in Vermont are waiting for a loving home. Bryan and Rebecca Gantt are ready and willing to open theirs.

The Gantts are parents of seven children — four biological and three adopted through the state of Vermont. Foster parents since 2016, the Gantts are eager to continue fostering the state's most vulnerable children — particularly those impacted by maternal alcohol and drug use.

Even before the couple was officially licensed, Vermont's Department for Children and Families (DCF) offered to place a 4-month-old boy with them due to an emergency. (The child had been born with a drug dependency.) Bryan and Rebecca agreed to take in the boy immediately, and he is now a permanent member of their family.

The Gantts' Christian faith inspires their heart for foster care and adoption. But, according to Vermont, that faith now disqualifies them.

After the DCF announced new regulations that required families to adopt the state's gender ideology, a department employee asked Bryan a series of questions, including whether the couple would take a child to a pride parade and whether they would use a child's chosen pronouns, even if inaccurate. Bryan answered that

Bryan and Rebecca's Christian faith inspires their heart for foster care and adoption.

But, according to Vermont, that faith now disqualifies them.

they would love and accept any child, but they could not compromise their biblical beliefs.

With that, the couple's license was revoked — despite Vermont's current shortage of foster homes, made evident in recent emails from the state to foster families. "We need you!" one email read. "Family Services is in a crisis beyond what we have seen before." ADF has filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of the Gantts.

Every year in the United States, hundreds of thousands of children are waiting to be welcomed into loving homes and families. As long as the government

excludes people of faith from adoption and foster care, some of those children will, unfortunately, have to wait.



Dan and Jennifer Mead SECRET 'SOCIAL TRANSITION'

Parental rights do not end at the school steps. Michigan parents Dan and Jennifer Mead knew it. But school officials had other ideas.

Middle school turned out to be a tough time for the Meads' daughter, who was falling behind in her assignments and withdrawing socially. The couple worked closely with East Rockford Middle School staff to develop an education plan for their daughter based on her struggles.

Over the next two years, the Meads' daughter met regularly with a school counselor. The couple put

significant trust in the counselor, as well as other district employees. But that trust was shattered when the Meads discovered the school was hiding critical information.

The couple would later learn that staff were treating their daughter as a boy by referring to her by a masculine name and male pronouns, without notifying them or

Parents – not schools or governments – have the primary responsibility for the well-being of their children.

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Kate Anderson, ADF Senior Counsel

seeking their consent. School officials covered their tracks by using the girl's given name and female pronouns when communicating with her parents. Staff even went so far as to alter official school documents before sharing them with the Meads.

Dan and Jennifer learned about the deception when one of the documents mistakenly came home only partially altered, and they saw comments from a teacher using a masculine name and male pronouns to refer to their daughter. Rather than apologize and offer to work with the couple, school officials doubled down. They stood by their actions and insisted they would continue to treat the Meads' daughter as a boy over their objections, giving the couple no choice but to remove their daughter from the school.

The Meads reached out to ADF, hoping that legal action would, in time, protect other parents from going through what they had experienced. ADF attorneys filed a lawsuit on the family's behalf, challenging the school district for its blatant disregard of their fundamental parental rights in a case that could reverberate well beyond Michigan's borders.

Joe and Serena Wailes STUDENT PRIVACY

I magine sending your 11-year-old daughter on an overnight school trip, only to find out she is assigned to share a hotel room with a male student who identifies as female. Joe and Serena Wailes don't have to imagine.

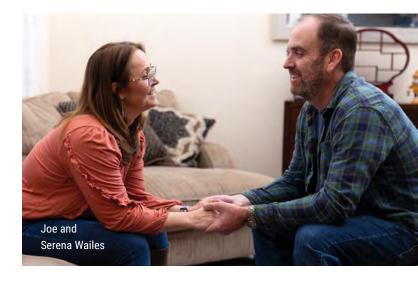
Their daughter was getting ready for bed on the first night of the trip when she learned that one of her roommates was a boy— and that she was supposed to share a bed with him. She snuck into the bathroom to call her mom, telling her in a quivering voice what she had just discovered.

The family had anticipated the trip for a year and a half. Sponsored by Jefferson County Public Schools (JeffCo), the six-day trip would take students from their home state of Colorado to Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. Serena had attended two parents' meetings beforehand, and the Waileses had received over 30 pages

of trip-related documents to view and sign. But they were never notified that, per school policy, hotel rooms would be assigned based on "gender identity" rather than sex.

In fact, the school principal had told Joe and Serena that girls and boys would be roomed on separate floors. The principal had failed to disclose that JeffCo's Transgender Students Policy redefined the words "girl" and "boy" based on whether a student identifies as male or female and not on their biological sex.

The couple later learned that it was also school district policy not to notify parents or students that students might be sharing overnight rooms with the opposite sex.



On behalf of the Wailes family, ADF sent multiple letters to JeffCo to inform the district that its policy of hiding information from parents and students

VISIT JoinADF.com/FJ-Parents to learn more about how ADF is defending parental rights and how you can get involved.

is unconstitutional. The letters also asked the district to allow parents to opt out of any policy that would force their children to share rooms, beds, or other private spaces with children of the opposite sex. JeffCo refused.

ADF attorneys filed a lawsuit on behalf of the Waileses, who are not alone in their frustration. Three other couples have since joined the lawsuit to oppose the policy that is violating their parental rights and ignoring the safety and privacy of their children.



Alliance Profile

The Law And The Lathe

By Marshéle Carter

Fine wood shavings fall to the floor from a piece of maple that spins on the woodturner's whirring lathe, filling the shop with an earthy, sweet perfume. He has made many serving bowls like this over the years, but each is unique in its grain, color, and bark-edged rim.

"God gave us the gift of creativity. It's part of our humanity," says Charles Shreffler, who has practiced law in Minnesota for 38 years and followed Jesus Christ for 50. Whether it's a wood bowl turned on his lathe or a brief submitted to the court, Shreffler, an ADF Allied Attorney, credits God's gift of creativity and knowing which tools to use as the keys to true success in any craft or case.

The oldest of four children, Shreffler grew up in the Twin Cities area. After completing a bachelor's degree in political science at the University of Minnesota in 1979,

In every case, I think the question I have to be satisfied with is 'Did I do my best?'



Charles Shreffler

he considered going on to seminary. After five years in campus ministry, the lure of becoming a lawyer — a deep desire he'd had since his teen years — resurfaced. He earned his Juris Doctor with honors from the University of Notre Dame Law School, then returned to his roots in Dakota County.

"That's where my family and clients are," Shreffler says. "It's where I know people. It's where I'm known."

Shreffler primarily represents clients in a wide variety of business disputes. He also finds it rewarding to represent individuals and organizations in cases involving freedom of conscience and free speech. An Allied Attorney since 2007, he has defended the constitutional rights of pro-life advocates to display graphic signage on a busy overpass, and of street and campus evangelists to preach the Gospel on city sidewalks.

More recently, Shreffler, in a five-year battle, represented George Badeaux, a licensed pharmacist who declined to dispense abortion-inducing "emergency contraceptives" based on his belief that every life is precious to God and begins at conception. A customer sued Badeaux in an attempt to punish his conscientious objection.

"The jury respected and affirmed the stand that George had taken," he says. "But the Minnesota Court of Appeals reversed that, and that was a disappointment."

Shreffler often recalls Theodore Roosevelt's "Man in the Arena" speech, which praises those whose valiant efforts may bring triumph or failure.

"That's been my life, especially as a litigator and trial attorney," he says. "In every case, I think the question I have to be satisfied with is 'Did I do my best?' If I did my best and things

besatisfied with is Did I do my best?' If I did my best and things didn't work out the way I wanted them to, or they didn't work out in the way the client wanted them to, hopefully I did my best."

Wood, like cases, can be imperfect and unpredictable. They both have knots, divots, and rough edges. But, like maple and birch in the hands of the woodturner, Shreffler has found that each new legal challenge relies on lessons learned, draws on God-given creativity, and delivers a beauty all its own in His time.





Raley Chiles remembers the day she first knew she wasn't cut out for sales.

"I sold Cutco for about a minute in high school," she says. A friend learned she'd taken the job, pitching high-quality cutlery, and persuaded Kaley to make her presentation to his aunt, a former chef. Cutco offered knives in a variety of "packages," from everyday cutting to some rather fancy stuff. To Kaley's astonishment, the aunt zeroed in on the most expensive package.

"She was an easy sell," Kaley recalls, but at the last minute, the woman's enthusiasm stalled and slid into reverse. "I'm not a chef anymore," she said. "I'm a stay-at-home mom. This is a lot of money. I don't know if it's wise to spend that much ..."

Something in Kaley rose to the challenge.

"I could totally convince her to buy this set, right now," she thought.

Instead, she heard herself say, "Yeah, you should just think about it." The woman agreed, and showed Kaley to the door.

"And I remember," Kaley says, "walking away from her house, going, 'I should quit."

She was more invested in the customer, she realized, than in closing a sale. And, in a funny kind of way, the experience solidified something she'd been thinking a lot about: what to do with her life, after high school.

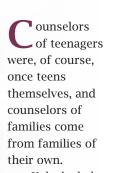
"Counseling," she thought. "Now, *that's* something that lets you invest yourself. The things counselors hear and talk about with people can't be stolen ... and they don't depreciate."

In time, she'd learn that some people even want to use counseling as a selling point. Unlike Kaley, they have no problem with applying the hard sell — and considerably less scruples about pressing their product on a vulnerable customer.



Left: A young Kaley displays her fun-loving nature.

Below: Kaley with her seizure alert dog, Brody.



Kaley's dad was in the military, so her hopscotch childhood took her from Florida to Alabama to Texas and back again, before the family finally settled in Colorado Springs, just before she started high school. She remembers a growing-up with "'free-range' children in safe neighborhoods," riding her bike with her siblings to a mile-away school and praying, on really cold days, for the temp to dip low enough for her father to give them a ride.

Adolescence brought two major changes to her life. One was epilepsy. She experienced her first seizure at 17- a grand mal that came out of nowhere and left her feeling helpless in a way she never had before. Doctors told her she'd be living with this for the rest of her life.

After a lot of painful trial and error, her doctors found a medication that effectively controlled the seizures, and Kaley found a dog that could sense them coming on. Between the two, she learned to deal with her affliction and live a normal life.

But some ongoing frictions between Kaley's parents were exacerbated, in part, by disagreements on how best to deal with her new condition.





Above: James and Kaley enjoy a hiking trail at Garden of the Gods. **Right:** The couple, not yet married, visit a Da Vinci exhibit.

"It was really confusing," Kaley says.

"Sometimes, in relationships, it's hard to know what's your part and what's their part." But dealing with epilepsy brought a new perspective. "This is not my fault — I didn't cause it," she realized. So, "accept it," she told herself, "and do what you can to be a responsible person in light of it."

"That really just formed me, spiritually," Kaley says. "Understanding 'I am not in control.' It helps me see the limits of my humanity."

It also teed her up for God to drive home what He wanted to do with her life.

"Every counselor becomes a counselor to try to help people get along. Not a lot of getting along in my house, when I was a teenager. ... I could see the wreckage of the inability to resolve conflict. I wanted to learn how to have my life not turn out that way."

As [my clients] grow — and it's my job to help them grow — then I have to grow. We grow together.

66

Kaley Chiles

A fter college, Kaley took a job back home in Colorado Springs, at the cafe of the famed Garden of the Gods, where slow afternoons offered plenty of time to study for summer classes. Trouble was, she and her handsome manager kept finding so many more interesting things to talk about.

"I didn't get any studying done," she says. Apparently, "I was the only one in the building who didn't know James liked me." She smiles. "Well ... I kind of knew." It didn't

> take James long to ask her out, once her summer job ended; their first date was to a local corn maze.

"I'm 6-foot-4, she's 5-foot-3," her now-husband, James, says. "So, when we got there ... well, it was fun for her, but I could see everything coming." It was a small preview of things to come.

They were married just 10 months later. "In hindsight, the

timing might have been a little quick," she says, "but, thankfully, the Lord helped us navigate all that." Now, they cheerfully share the quiet pleasures of Colorado's great outdoors: hikes, bikes, gardening, chickens, and a "ragdoll" cat named Ralph, who sticks close to home because the big horseshoe on the end of his leash requires it.

A situation not unlike that of Kaley's first clients, once she became a licensed counselor: medium-security prison inmates whose substance abuse weighed down their fond hopes for parole. The sessions were mandatory, so she found herself counseling some people who really didn't want to see her, and "didn't want to get better so much as get out."

She encountered that same attitude at her next job, as the family counselor at a residential clinic. There, she worked with some juveniles who, Kaley says, were too fixed on escaping their emotional pain to find a path to genuine healing.

"It's this very challenging situation," Kaley says, "to figure out, as a counselor, 'How can I help you in ways you *want* to be helped? How can we cultivate the

willingness, the drives, the desires that you do have? And maybe explore and understand the areas where you're stuck — or unwilling?'"

As a family counselor, she learned a good deal about how teenagers think — and how their behavior impacts, and is impacted by, broader family dynamics. What a teen's choices can mean for his parents, as they grapple to communicate with their hurting child.

She also learned, as she moved into private practice, how to incorporate her faith into her counseling.

"Whether I'm talking to a Christian or not, that's me. I'm incapable of dropping that at the door — and it'll influence any client I sit with.

"As a counselor, it is important to be 'bilingual.' I can give someone the Christian spiel on why not to have premarital sex ... or I can give the science spiel on 'why premarital sex and living together before marriage, will be statistically, is just not going to work out for you.' But I'm always going to bring my Christian perspective into counseling."

few years ago, though, the Colorado legislature passed a law calculated to censor that perspective in counseling rooms. The law — like others enacted in over 20 states nationwide — effectively bans counselors from helping minors who are struggling with their gender, unless that "help" encourages them to adopt a "transgender" identity, and nudges them toward the corresponding surgeries and treatments designed to make that identity a physical reality.

On the other hand, a counselor like Kaley — who supports a young person in sifting through their conflicted feelings and voluntarily embracing their natural biology — risks a fine of up to \$5,000, suspension from their practice, and loss of their license.

"When I saw the legislation, I thought, 'One-size-fits-all is not going to work,'" Kaley says. Not only is every teen different, but allowing state officials to dictate to counselors that there's only one way to help youngsters they've never met or engaged with is absurd.

Especially, she says, when a growing number of medical studies, in both Europe and the U.S., indicate that

the kinds of solutions Colorado officials are encouraging for these youth do much more harm than good. (*See*

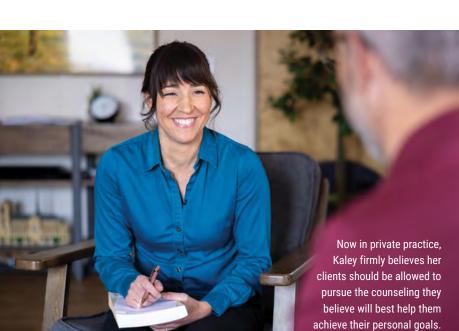
"What The Science Says," p. 15.)

"The scientific evidence is bearing out that this is not helping," Kaley says. "The experiment failed." But "when the 'experiment' has become an ideology, it's hard to accept the results." So, in states like Colorado, ideology continues to push young people one step closer to these dangerous, drastic measures.

"I can't know their intentions," she says of the legislators, "so I assume they're just misguided. But as a counselor, I have a right to say, 'I do not believe forcing this ideology on kids is best. It's not evidence-based, and it doesn't work."

And young people, Kaley says, should be allowed to pursue the counseling they believe will best help them achieve their personal goals. "I get to make my choices," she says, "and my clients should be allowed to seek theirs."

It's this very
challenging situation,
to figure out, as a
counselor, 'How can I
help you in ways you
want to be helped?'



What is driving so much of the confusion among young people today?

"During the teenage years, your brain is under construction," Kaley says, "destabilizing, in order to reorganize" from a child's way of looking at the world to an adult's. "It's a chaos of feelings; you have something going on, and you need to make sense of it.

"We all struggle to comprehend our own stories," she says, "and teens, naturally, struggle with that, too. Especially when they have an available cultural narrative, on something like gender, that says, 'The reason you're feeling all these feelings is *this*. Just fix *this* problem, and everything will be better."

Unfortunately, "life is usually a little more complex than that," Kaley says. "So, while, as a counselor, you can make a hypothesis and take some guesses, to help someone make such a consequential decision ... you have to be really cautious and humble with your conclusions.

"If we jump to *one* solution too fast, then we might miss the *genuine* solution. And the mental health industry has been guilty of this for a long time. We medicate depression instead of seeking to understand why someone is depressed."

That's why talking through a teen's symptoms — what's really bothering them, and why — is what good counseling is all about, Kaley says. But: it's difficult, it takes time, and grown-ups can be impatient.



ADF Legal Counsel Suzanne Beecher (right) talks with Kaley about her legal case, which is now before the U.S. Supreme Court.

"It's hard for adults to see children in pain, and it's really easy to conflate love with being nice." If both therapist and client — and the government — think love is "being nice," she says, the easiest thing is just to go along with whatever the client (and the government) want.

"But that's what counseling is for," she says. "Not to validate or invalidate somebody's identity, but to say,

This is not about a counselor imposing her own values on confused and hurting clients. It's about clients not being able to receive the help they themselves want.



Suzanne Beecher, ADF Legal Counsel

'OK, I hear what you're saying. Let me help you explore that. Help me understand *why* you believe that you're a girl. What does that mean to you?'" Sometimes, these questions involve confronting the client about what she thinks, or even encouraging some kind of change: "If

you're already a girl, 'why would you need to modify your body to prove that?'

"Those are the questions we have to think about."

I t's exactly those kinds of conversations that Colorado officials are shutting down with their edict, which is what prompted Kaley to instigate legal action against them. Soon after the law passed, she enlisted Barry Arrington, an ADF Allied Attorney, to file a lawsuit on her behalf, challenging the constitutionality of the ordinance.

"Kaley's case is what's called a 'preenforcement' challenge," says Suzanne Beecher, legal counsel with the ADF Center for Conscience Initiatives. Like a lot of other Colorado counselors, she says, "Kaley's been trying not to take clients who want conversations that may violate the law. Instead, she's bringing this challenge to make sure the new law is correct *before* she jumps into those conversations."

When a U.S. district court ruled against Kaley, ADF attorneys joined her case for an appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the

10th District, where a divided panel of judges seconded that ruling. ADF then appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which agreed to hear her case later this year.

The high court's interest was likely heightened by what's called "a circuit split": two U.S. circuit courts have struck down similar laws in other parts of the country, while two have produced decisions supporting them.



Why I'm Suing The Doctor Who Urged My Gender Transition

By Clementine Breen

was 12 when I first talked to a school guidance counselor. I didn't know what I was feeling. I just knew I was really scared to go through puberty. I'd had a rough childhood: sexually abused by someone outside our family, and an autistic brother who sometimes hurt me.

A caring counselor could've helped me process my abuse and navigate my fears of becoming a woman. Someone like Kaley Chiles, who wants to have conversations with young people like me who are looking for wholeness.

Instead, the counselor who saw me decided, after one short visit, that I was "transgender." She never asked about prior abuse or other psychological struggles. But I quickly found myself at a trans youth medical clinic.

The doctor who treated me didn't give me a psych exam, either; she just decided what I needed was to become a boy. I'd "always wanted" to be a boy, she told a surgeon later — which wasn't true, as even her own notes said I'd barely expressed any confusion about my biological sex.

She told my parents I was suicidal and needed puberty blockers. I'd never mentioned suicidal thoughts — nor felt suicidal. In fact, the doctor herself had noted that I was "alert ... no acute distress ... cooperative, smiling."

Nevertheless, after one visit, she inserted a puberty blocker patch into my arm. I still wasn't old enough to drive a car, get a tattoo, or buy a ticket to an R-rated movie. Within a year, she put me on testosterone. A year after that, doctors removed my healthy breasts.

None of it helped. In fact, the more these drastic measures were performed, the more my mental health deteriorated. One doctor even worried, a few years into the harmful drugs and procedures, that I was starting to compulsively cut myself.

But they never asked me about that. Or why the testosterone was making me suicidal. Real doctors would immediately have pulled me off a drug affecting me that way. But how I felt didn't matter — this was about my doctor's agenda and fitting me into her research project.

When my providers tried to convince me that I needed a hysterectomy, I was able, somehow, to say no. I told them I might want to have kids someday. They didn't like that ... guess I was upsetting their experiment.

Thankfully, in time, I found a counselor who helped me pursue my goals for wholeness — not someone else's radical ideology. She helped me process my childhood



abuse and trauma. I realized I didn't need to be afraid of becoming a woman.

But I'm still dealing with the consequences of the medical malpractice inflicted on me. My voice is lower than it should be. I have an Adam's apple. And I may be infertile for the rest of my life.

That's a steep price to pay for a lie.

It's a price too many young people are

paying. I can't do anything to change what happened to me, but maybe I can stop it from happening to others.

That's why I'm suing my former doctors and counselors. And why I'm hoping the U.S. Supreme Court will rule in favor of free speech for counselors like Kaley. Because if I'd had a counselor like her in the first place, my tragedy could have been prevented.

Clementine Breen is represented by the law firm Campbell Miller Payne, LLC.

I'm still dealing with the consequences of the medical malpractice inflicted on me.

A growing number of studies — like the recent one from HHS — showing the serious physical and emotional damage being done by gender-related treatments was also likely a contributing factor in the Supreme Court's decision.

"There is a growing consensus around the world that adolescents experiencing gender dysphoria need love and an opportunity to talk through their struggles and feelings," says ADF Chief Legal Counsel Jim Campbell, who will argue Kaley's case at the high court. "Colorado's law harms these young people by depriving them of caring and compassionate conversations with a counselor who helps them pursue the goals they desire.

"The government," he says, "has no business censoring these private conversations between clients and counselors."

Yes, there are costs. But it's worth it. Because there's also a cost to silence, and to not exercising your rights ... and then losing them.

Kaley Chiles

What The Science Says

In May 2025, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a report about various interventions for children with gender dysphoria and the effectiveness of these approaches.

One of those interventions – so-called "gender-affirming care" — can include everything from "social affirmation of a child's self-reported identity," to harmful drugs (puberty blockers and cross-sex hormones), to life-altering surgeries that change or remove healthy body parts.

Despite activists' claims, use of these dangerous drugs and surgeries for children is not backed by high-quality evidence. In fact, the HHS report found that guidelines recommending these practices in the U.S. are "especially problematic" and they "carry risk of significant harms."

Among the harms: "infertility/sterility, sexual dysfunction, impaired bone density accrual, adverse cognitive impacts, cardiovascular disease and metabolic disorders, psychiatric disorders, surgical complications, and regret."

Meanwhile, the report notes that systematic reviews have found "deep uncertainty" about the purported benefits, while separate research has shown that 88% or more of pre-pubertal children struggling with gender dysphoria will naturally come to peace with their bodies — as long as no one interferes with the course of puberty.

Counselors, like Kaley Chiles, who talk through these issues in a healthy way (rather than pushing children toward social transition and harmful drugs and surgeries) can help. But a Colorado law bars them from saying anything to

> clients under 18 that would encourage them to accept their biological sex instead of pursuing "gender transition." Chiles v. Salazar challenges this law.



"This is not about a counselor imposing her own values on confused and hurting clients," Beecher says. "It's about clients not being able to receive the help they themselves want, because the counselors might be penalized for helping them achieve goals the clients have determined are in their own best interest.

"All Kaley wants is to help her clients reach those goals," Beecher says, "and the government is restricting her from doing that."

"I'm proud of Kaley," James says. "It's rare to see somebody so passionate and driven about their job. And encouraging to see someone willing to take on the burden of being the face of a cause like this."

In truth, he anticipated some of the hostility the case has provoked in ways his wife did not — that ability, again, to see above the maze — but Kaley, he says, smiling, is one "who embraces the hard things in life."

Still, Kaley tries to keep some perspective on the pushback.

"Our 'persecution' is *not* losing limbs and

fearing for your life and all that

It's encouraging to see someone willing to take on the burden of being the face of a cause like this.

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James Chiles

kind of stuff. Ours is someone thinking badly of me. But you're allowed to think what you think, and I'm allowed to believe what I believe — I'm not going to hide it. So, if I suffer for it, it's fine. I'll deal with it.

"Everything is a trade," she says. "I'm sure the lawsuit has estranged me from professionals in my community — but it's endeared me to others. I've lost clients. I've lost jobs. But, then, I've also had a client seek me out *because* they heard about the lawsuit and thought, 'I want a counselor like *that*.'

"Yes, there are costs. But it's worth it. Because there's also a cost to silence, and to not exercising your rights ... and then losing them.

"This is just ... another situation that I can't control," she says. "And it reminds me, as so many other things remind me, that the Lord is always preparing a way."

Which is why, while a lot of people might not choose to risk their careers, challenging

their state government at the nation's highest court \dots Kaley Chiles is pretty sold on the idea. \bigstar

My View

I Was Convicted For Quietly Offering Conversation

By Livia Tossici-Bolt

I 've spent half a decade as a pro-life volunteer, standing on a cul-de-sac near an abortion facility in Bournemouth, England.

In the days before the government established a so-called "buffer zone" around that facility, my fellow volunteers and I often prayed and handed out leaflets near the building. The leaflets offered information about alternatives to abortion — options women aren't likely to hear about in the wider culture, where the prevailing narrative is that women make the choice to abort confidently, never second-guess themselves, and harbor no regrets.

The testimonies of the women I've encountered through the years tell a different story.

I remember the first leaflet I handed out. A mother and her daughter had pulled up in a car and were parked near the facility for quite a while. I approached, making eye contact with them through the car window. They rolled down the window and accepted the flyer.

They sat there for some time, wearing pensive expressions as they talked and read the flyer. Eventually, they pulled away, waving at me as they left.

I couldn't imagine that a soft-spoken woman, simply inviting people to have a conversation, had intimidated anyone.

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Livia Tossici-Bolt



All it took for them to change their minds was a short interaction with a stranger who cared enough to share the truth with them. But — despite what I'm now known for — nothing in my background had prepared me for those kinds of conversations with strangers.

I studied physics in school. After I married and gave birth to my three children, I spent 20 years as a clinical scientist. Conversation with strangers on the street wasn't part of all that, and it certainly wasn't my gifting. Or so I thought. God had other ideas.

Motivated by my firm belief that every life matters, I started volunteering in pro-life ministry in 2019. At first, I just quietly handed out leaflets outside the Bournemouth facility. Over time, though, my confidence grew, along with my willingness to engage with these women in need.

As volunteers, we didn't approach every person who passed by; we relied on the Holy Spirit to lead. And He did. When we sensed it was better not to engage, we persisted in prayer for that individual.



I became well acquainted with the community, a heavily trafficked area with people from all walks of life coming and going — students, parents, older couples. People would approach us for many different reasons,

some unrelated to abortion. I got to know a number of residents, even sharing a cup of tea with some of them.

But the Public Spaces
Protection Order changed things.
Bournemouth authorities passed the ordinance creating a buffer zone around the abortion facility, criminalizing any act suggesting "approval or disapproval of abortion," including speech.

The group I volunteered with moved its work outside the buffer zone. Yet hostility toward our message — toward us — grew. People tried to suppress our prayerful activity. They confronted us, criticized

us, and insisted we leave women alone.

This baffled me. Leave women facing one of the most vulnerable experiences of their lives *alone*?

During the pandemic — a time of intense isolation and loneliness — the desire to reach out to people in need especially weighed on me. People were craving human interaction. I saw pictures of people on the street, holding signs offering "free hugs" and other types of engagement, and the idea for my own sign was born.

I ventured back to that familiar cul-de-sac in Bournemouth within the buffer zone — this time, as a private citizen, apart from any ministry or organization — to offer people the opportunity to talk about whatever was on their mind. My sign read, *Here to talk if you want.*

And people did.

The conversations were wide-ranging and overwhelmingly positive. Students approached to talk about their studies, parents about their children.

I knew the law prohibited us from talking about

abortion. When one man pressed me for my opinions on the matter, I told him I wasn't there to talk about my views. We parted ways. By and large, it was a peaceful day.

So, when authorities approached me and said a person in the area had been harassing and intimidating the community, my first thought was, *Well, it can't be me*.

The officers who had confronted me admitted that they had never witnessed me harassing anyone.

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Livia Tossici-Bolt

I couldn't imagine that a soft-spoken woman, simply inviting people to have a conversation, had intimidated anyone.

But authorities issued me a fixed penalty notice, accusing me of breaching the

buffer zone. Knowing I hadn't done anything wrong, I declined to pay the fine — and was thrust into a legal whirlwind.

t my trial, the officers who had confronted me admitted that they had never witnessed me harassing anyone. And they agreed that being open to a conversation isn't a crime. Yet the court determined that those six words on my sign were, in fact, criminal. I was found guilty and ordered to pay £20,000 in prosecution costs.

In the months since my conviction, I've received a remarkable outpouring of support. Many people have asked how I'm doing, wondering if this experience has been hard for me. Certainly, parts of this experience have been trying. But, above all, I feel deeply blessed.

I've felt the prayers of thousands of people I'll never meet. The legal support I've received from ADF International has given great peace of mind. And I've been overwhelmed by the people who have contributed generously to my defense.

Even some who vehemently oppose my position on abortion have reached out in support. They agree that there are grave consequences when a society is marked by censorship.

I'm thankful that God has used my case to bring the issue of free speech to the public conscience. In April, the U.S. State Department publicly denounced the ruling in my case, and even Vice President JD Vance has spoken out about the dire state of free speech in the U.K.

This I know: there's nothing wrong with offering to speak with someone in need. Free speech is a fundamental right that belongs to everyone.

And, sometimes, that speech can save a life. 🛧

0 & A

Dr. Allan Josephson

A Child Psychiatrist's Commonsense Remarks About Gender Treatments Ended His Career

By Charles Snow

r. Allan Josephson led the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Psychology at the University of Louisville for nearly 15 years. When he arrived at the school in 2003, he took over a struggling program. After many years of careful research, dedicated leadership, and hard work, he helped the program become nationally recognized — benefiting the university greatly in the process. Thirteen times, the university asked him to teach other division chiefs how to improve their own divisions.

In 2017, Dr. Josephson participated in a Heritage Foundation panel titled "Gender Dysphoria in Children: Understanding the Science and Medicine." During the panel, he discussed the importance of addressing underlying psychological issues in children experiencing gender dysphoria before considering medical interventions. "Of course, you affirm the child and love the child, but you don't affirm a bad idea," he said, based upon his decades of experience in child and adolescent psychiatric practice. His remarks sparked backlash from colleagues and activists at the university. He was stripped of his leadership position and, eventually, the university declined to renew his contract, effectively firing him.

With the support of Alliance Defending Freedom, Dr. Josephson filed a lawsuit against university officials in 2019. In 2023, a federal district court ruled that a jury should hear his claims that university officials had retaliated against him. After the university appealed the ruling, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit affirmed the lower court's ruling in 2024. Finally, in April 2025, he won a nearly \$1.6 million settlement in a major victory for free speech and common sense.

F&J: What drew you to the field of child and adolescent psychiatry?

AJ: My interest in human behavior stems from my upbringing and seeing my father, who was a minister, counsel families through all the problems that life brings. I thought it would be interesting to wed my spiritual knowledge of family health and problems with a scientific approach to human behavior. All human behavior problems are caused by a combination of what you are born with and what happens to you. Psychiatry effectively integrated these two perspectives. Eventually, I frequently came to see the family as the client. When children did well, it was because of the strengths that their family had given them.

When they had difficulties, it was often related to the emotional roadblocks they experienced in their families.

F&J: When did you become concerned about the dangerous procedures that activists were pushing on children struggling with their sex?

AJ: I saw that the "experts" were often telling parents to affirm the confusion they saw in their children. Parents were told that, in order to save their children's lives, they must agree with them and treat them however they wished. This isn't common sense — especially since most young people who socially "transition" are then hurried



down the path of puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and radical surgeries. And all of this is done without asking two simple questions: *Why? What's driving this?* As I said on the Heritage panel, we should endeavor to understand the psychological issues at the root of the child's confusion first. To give you an analogy: If someone is rushed to the emergency room with chest pain, doctors don't immediately start performing heart surgery. There's a battery of tests and questions before they reach that point. That's basic medical judgment.

F&J: Did you anticipate that taking part in the Heritage Foundation panel might affect your job?

AJ: I knew this was a sensitive topic, but I never expected retaliation from the university that I had served for nearly 15 years. They knew me. They, I thought, respected me. And what I said on the panel seemed clear and straightforward enough to me. But, as it turned out, neither facts, nor research, nor my experience and relationship with the university mattered. My university had embraced social and medicalized transition as the way to treat gender dysphoria. Almost immediately, I began to see red flags. The LGBT Center on campus launched a campaign to have me disciplined. Some colleagues demanded that I apologize for my views. Others remained silent. I was stunned to realize I was being punished for what the university paid me to do: think and speak. I was ostracized, stripped of my teaching duties, and subjected to other forms of hostility. There were colleagues who

even kept an "Allan tracking document" to track things to discredit me, so the university wouldn't renew my contract — which is exactly what eventually happened.

[8]: What was life like after you were effectively fired?

AJ: Honestly, it was devastating. The personal cost was enormous. It was hard to believe that my hard-earned professional career was over for sharing, on my own time, my personal and professional opinion. I felt betrayed. But I also knew that what the university did sent a chilling message to others who shared the same beliefs and professional opinions that I do. That's why I knew that I could not sit back and accept the university's treatment. I had to fight it. Of all the places, the medical profession cannot be a field in which people are silenced. It isn't just anti-science — it hurts the patients we serve every day.

F&J: Why is the settlement significant to you?

AJ: I'm glad to finally receive vindication for voicing what I know is true. But this wasn't just about me. This case helped lead the way for other medical practitioners to see the universal truth that altering biological sex is impossibly dangerous, while accepting one's sex leads to flourishing. Children deserve better than life-altering procedures that mutilate their bodies and destroy their ability to lead fulfilling lives. I'm so glad to see that recent reports — including one from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services — are affirming this

reality and exposing the dangers of ideological interventions. Plus, public universities have no business punishing professors simply because they hold different views. The university meant to send a warning to others by dismissing me — by trying to silence me. But it helped mark a turning point in the process.

F&J: What do you hope this victory tells government and university officials who would punish others for speaking the truth?

AJ: First, I hope it shows them that they will pay a price — literally — for violating constitutional rights. But, more importantly, I hope it will raise new awareness of our enduring responsibility as physicians to do right by those who come to us for help. Without respect for that, it really doesn't matter how much we've studied, learned, practiced, or experienced; we'll have forfeited offering compassionate truth to our patients. The medical profession can't be allowed to become nothing more than a mouthpiece for government — or university — approved narratives.



About The Drummond Case

When St. Isidore of Seville Catholic Virtual School applied to participate in Oklahoma's charter school program, the school projected an initial enrollment of 500 students, half of whom would be economically disadvantaged.

The Statewide Charter School Board approved the application, but Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond disagreed with the decision and sued the board. Then the state supreme court ruled that St. Isidore could not participate in Oklahoma's charter school program. The court viewed charter schools under Oklahoma law as state actors, excluding St. Isidore from the program by concluding that no state actor could run a religious school.

Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys representing the board appealed the Oklahoma Supreme Court decision to the U.S. Supreme Court and argued the case before the high court in April. In May, the Supreme Court issued a split decision effectively upholding the lower court ruling that blocked St. Isidore's establishment as a charter school.

Opinion

Supreme Court Punts In Religious Charter School Case

By Phil Sechler

In May, the Supreme Court punted in *Oklahoma Statewide Charter School Board v. Drummond*, the case challenging Oklahoma's exclusion of religious groups from a charter school program open to other groups. Alliance Defending Freedom argued the case before the high court in April.

Rather than write an opinion addressing the merits, the court issued a one-page order stating only that the lower court's ruling, which barred an applicant from operating a Catholic charter school, was "affirmed by an equally divided court." (Justice Amy Coney Barrett's recusal left the court with an even number of justices to consider the case.)

The order did not identify which four justices voted to uphold the religious-based exclusion of the applicant; nor did any of those four try to explain how such treatment could be squared with the U.S. Constitution. This disposition warrants three immediate observations.

F irst, the court's 4-4 tie means that the case has zero effect on federal law. It has long been understood Oklahoma parents and children are better off with more educational choices, not fewer.

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Jim Campbell
ADF Chief Legal Counsel

that a ruling "affirmed by an equally divided court" is not entitled to precedential weight. In 1868, the Supreme Court remarked that a tie "prevents the decision from becoming an authority for other cases of like character." But that didn't stop Oklahoma's attorney general

from tweeting that "the Supreme
Court has ruled in favor of
my position that we should
not allow taxpayer funding of
radical Islamic schools here in
Oklahoma." Of course, the Supreme
Court did no such thing, and the

Opening the door to religious charter schools would promote educational freedom and expand the choices available to parents and families.



Phil Sechler, ADF Senior Counsel

attorney general should know better. In truth, the court simply failed to reach an opinion on any of the issues in the case.

Second, the exclusion of religious applicants from charter school programs open to other groups raises profound constitutional questions. The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that the exclusion of religious observers from otherwise available government programs violates the free exercise clause. The only possible basis offered by the Oklahoma Supreme Court for disregarding that unbroken line of authority was the claim that a charter school somehow is a state actor.

But that claim is easily defeated when a charter school operated under contract with the state is privately created and controlled, as the school at issue in *Drummond* clearly was. It is therefore disappointing, though not surprising, that none of the four justices who voted to uphold Oklahoma's categorical exclusion of religious groups provided any rationale for what Justice Brett Kavanaugh at argument described as "rank discrimination."

Third, these constitutional issues remain to be decided another day. Because the Supreme Court did not approve, much less require, discrimination based on religion in charter school programs, the states remain free to structure their programs to treat religious applicants the same way they treat everyone else. Programs in some of the 12 states that supported our challenge to Oklahoma's religious discrimination would seem a good place to start. Other states might also be interested.

O pening the door to religious charter schools would promote educational freedom and expand the choices available to parents and families. That's a good thing for everyone. It would also ensure that religious groups aren't treated as second class in the operation of governmental programs.

These issues undoubtedly will be presented again to the Supreme Court — next time, hopefully, in a case where all nine justices participate. And next time, hopefully, in a case where the justices write an opinion telling us their views on these important constitutional questions.

Phil Sechler is senior counsel and director of ADF's Center for Free Speech. This is adapted from a post that appeared at National Review's Bench Memos blog on May 27.

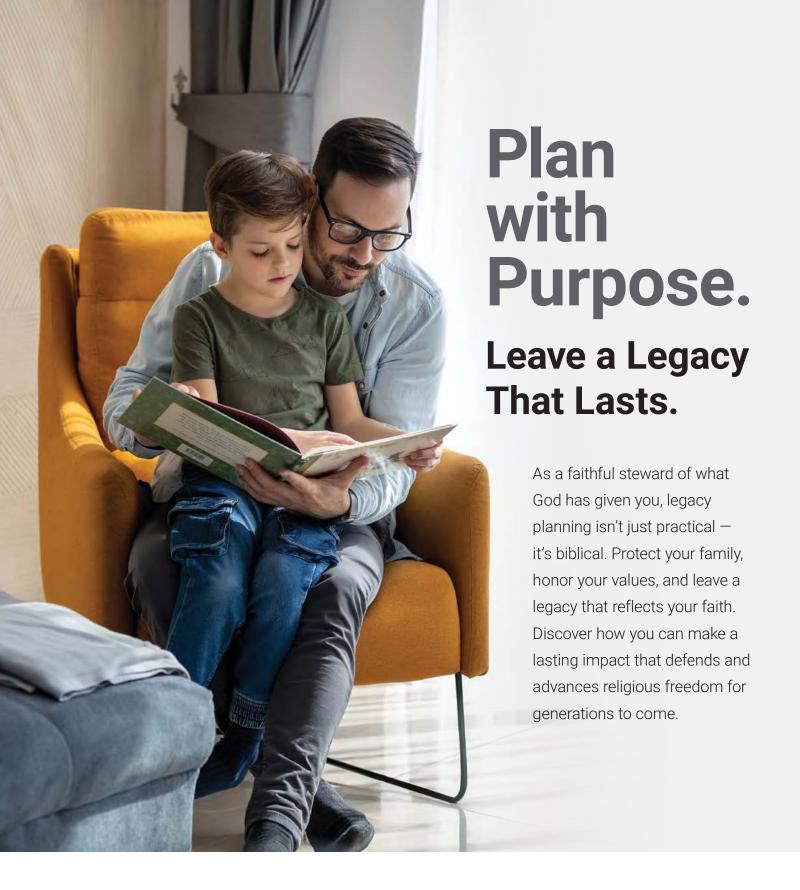


What's Next For Educational Freedom?

ADF will continue its work to protect this vital freedom for parents and students.

"While the Supreme Court's order is disappointing for educational freedom, the 4-4 decision does not set precedent, allowing the court to revisit this issue in the future," says ADF Chief Legal Counsel Jim Campbell. "Oklahoma parents and children are better off with more educational choices, not fewer."

The Supreme Court has repeatedly held that a state violates the First Amendment if it excludes religious groups from public programs solely because of their religious character. In the landmark Supreme Court decision *Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia v. Comer* — won by ADF in 2017 — the court ruled that such discrimination is "odious to our Constitution."







Visit **ADFPlannedGiving.org**, call our Legacy & Planned Giving Team at 480-444-0020, or email GiftPlanning@adflegal.org.

