

The *Cedar Park* Case

Case Name: *Cedar Park Assembly of God of Kirkland v. Kreidler*

Status: ADF lawsuit filed a federal lawsuit March 8, 2019 in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington.

Significance: Whether the government can compel an organization—in this case, a church—to pay for abortion coverage in order to provide a quality insurance plan to its employees.



Background: Adopted in early 2018, Washington State Senate Bill 6219 (the so-called “Reproductive Parity Act”) mandates that all healthcare plans in the state that offer maternity care coverage must also pay for elective abortions. The Act applies to Cedar Park Assembly of God, which would be forced to pay for abortions in order to provide quality healthcare for its staff of over 180. Led by Pastor Jay Smith (pictured above with his wife, Sandy), Cedar Park believes and teaches that every human life—whether born or not—is valuable, precious, and worthy of full protection. But, rather than respecting Cedar Park’s freedom to exercise its religious convictions, the state of Washington has gone out of its way to force pro-life churches to pay for abortions. The legislation requires Cedar Park to provide coverage for abortion if the church also offers maternity care coverage to its employees, or face fines and criminal penalties, including imprisonment. This bullying is a new low, and violates the Free Exercise Clause by targeting the religious exercise of churches.

Key Points

- The state of Washington should not force Cedar Park to violate its faith in order to provide quality healthcare to its staff members.
- No church should be forced to fund abortions. This law requires Cedar Park members to fund abortion in order for the church to provide its staff members access to quality health care.
- Abortion is not healthcare. Maternity health insurance is meant to support a mother welcoming a new life into the world—not end that life through abortion.

Key Facts

- Cedar Park lives out its views on life in a variety of tangible ways:
 - Partnering with a local pregnancy center and foster care providers;
 - Hosting an annual camp for children in foster care;
 - Operating a school (pre-K through high school) with over 1,000 students;
 - Hosting an annual service to pray for couples struggling with infertility;
 - Co-founding an adoption agency for frozen embryos remaining from *in vitro* fertilization;
 - Operating “Chapel of the Resurrection,” a state-licensed funeral home.
- The state has gone out of its way to force pro-life churches to pay for abortions through their employee insurance plans.
- Churches have the freedom to set internal policies about prioritizing the protection of human life, from conception to natural death. The Constitution protects that freedom.

The Bottom Line: Churches should be free to operate according to their faith without being threatened by the government.