

The *Calvary Road* Case

Case Name: Calvary Road Baptist Church v. Herring

Case Action: Case filed in state court on September 28, 2020.

Significance: Whether the government can force a religious organization to hire staff and provide its services in a way that undermines its mission.

Background: Governor Ralph Northam recently signed SB 868, the so-called Virginia Values Act, into law. This law strips faith-based organizations, such as Calvary Road Baptist Church, of their right to minister and hire employees according to their mission and core beliefs. Calvary Road believes that marriage is between one man and one woman, and that God created humanity as immutably male and female. Virginia's new laws are intended to force churches and other organizations with biblical beliefs to choose between risking bankruptcy while being punished for their religious convictions, or abandoning their ministries all together. The government should protect freedom, not take it away, and that's why ADF filed suit on behalf of Calvary Road Baptist Church, Community Fellowship Church, Community Christian Academy, and Care Net.



Key Points

- Government officials are trying to control religious organizations by forcing them to violate their convictions.
- Tolerance and respect for good-faith differences of opinion are essential in a diverse society like ours. They enable us to peacefully coexist with one another
- If we want to have freedom for ourselves, we must extend it to others.
- The Supreme Court just ruled that the government cannot meddle with a religious group's employment decisions about who does or does not teach and transmit religious faith (*Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Morrissey-Berru*).
- It is important for churches, schools, pregnancy centers, and all other faith-based groups to have the freedom to choose how they further their mission to provide religious services and who they hire to help them do so.

Key Facts

- Religious groups are free to organize, minister, and hire based on their shared beliefs. This includes churches, religious schools, and pro-life pregnancy centers.
- Religious organizations have the freedom to set their own internal policies and codes of conduct about life, marriage, and sexuality. The Constitution protects that freedom.

This is Like...

- ...forcing a Democratic candidate to hire a Republican speechwriter
- ...forcing PETA to hire an employee who hunts on the weekends
- ...forcing Planned Parenthood to hire a pro-life advocate
- ...forcing a kosher deli to serve ham products

The Bottom Line: Everyone should be free to live and work according to their beliefs without fear of unjust government punishment.