

# Judge issues final ruling for bakers who refused to serve gay couple: \$135,000 in emotional damages

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The Sweet Cakes case has come to an end for two bakers who declined to serve gay couple who sought a cake and inscription for their wedding.



Small business owners Melissa and Aaron Klein ignited a national firestorm by refusing to serve the lesbian couple, citing their conscience forbade them from serving them. The ensuing court case filed against the Kleins became a litmus test for freedom of religion.

Now, an Oregon court has issued a ruling adverse to the Kleins: They must pay the \$135,000 fine to the offended party for “emotional damages,” upholding a prior court ruling.

Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian issued the \$135,000 in damages to a lesbian couple in July 2015. Their payment was held in government escrow pending the final ruling in the case.



The Kleins were forced to shutter their business after the raging controversy; recently, they shut down their online business as well.

“We lost everything we loved and worked so hard to build,” Melissa Klein said. “I loved my shop. It meant everything to me and losing it has been so hard for me and my family.”

First Liberty Institute condemned the Oregon court’s decision.

"We believe that freedom of expression for ourselves means freedom of expression for others," Mike Berry said (<http://katu.com/news/local/court-upholds-135000-fine-for-bakery-owners-who-refused-to-make-cake-for-gay-couple>) to KATU. "And what's unfortunate here is that a family and their business has been punished because of their religious beliefs. And that's not America. That's just flat out wrong."



Such court cases test the bounds of free speech and reinforce the public perception of creeping political correctness. One can only wonder the court ruling if gay bakers were forced to inscribe a Nazi symbol on a cake for white supremacists, or if bigots insisted upon inflammatory rhetoric against homosexuals, if the court's verdict would have been the same.

Now, Americans can only wonder.