



Do Houses of Worship Have a Right to Enforce Their Own Rules of Modesty?

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While attending Sunday services at a Virginia church, Annie Peguero began nursing her daughter and, in keeping with the church's policy, was promptly asked to do so in a private room. She now plans to take the church to court. **Walter Olson** explains:

In 2015, following the lead of many other states, Virginia passed a “law that says women have a right to breastfeed anywhere they have a legal right to be,” as the *Washington Post* reports. The law provides . . . no quarter, it would seem, for owners’ ordinary rights to set terms and conditions when they invite visits from the general public. . . .

Should [the mother] press a claim in court, she might have to contend with Virginia’s version of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). . . . But since not all states have a version of the RFRA—and particularly since . . . a large sector of polite opinion is taking Ms. Peguero’s side and appears to see nothing wrong with applying such laws to churches—it seems likely that this will not be the last such claim.

Personally, I’m fine with public breastfeeding no longer being classed as an automatically shocking thing. But why is government dictation of how a church may arrange its worship services no longer classed as an automatically shocking thing?

Walter Olson is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute’s Center for Constitutional Studies and is known for his writing on the American legal system.