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Federal court rescues another faith-based adoption agency from Democratic attacks

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An appeals court in New York recently handed down an emergency ruling that will keep the doors of a faith-based adoption agency open a little longer.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd Circuit issued an emergency order that stopped state officials from trying to shut down New Hope Family Services because it has a religious worldview and carries that worldview over into its policies regarding adoption placements and same-sex parents. This is just one in a series of similar cases nationwide, where local Democratic officials are using the government to purposely target faith-based adoption agencies for perceived “discrimination.”

Even though there are dozens of adoption agencies in New York, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services specifically targeted New Hope because it requires adopting families to consist of a married man and woman. The 2nd Circuit’s decision ensures that the agency can continue to work with families to place children in their homes, at least for now.

The Alliance Defending Freedom is representing New Hope. ADF Senior Counsel Roger Brooks said in a statement:

Every child deserves a permanent home with loving parents. New Hope’s faith-based services do nothing to interfere with other adoption providers, but banishing it means fewer kids will find permanent homes, fewer adoptive parents will ever welcome their new child, and fewer birth parents will enjoy the exceptional support that New Hope has offered for decades. We hope the court will permanently uphold New Hope’s ability to serve children and families according to the very beliefs that motivate its valuable services.

The interesting thing that differentiates this case from the well-known one in Michigan, regarding the attorney general’s attacks on St. Vincent’s Catholic Charities, is that St. Vincent’s got federal grants to operate; thus the state believed it had some right to intervene. New Hope receives no state subsidies, no state contracts, and the agency has agreed not to take on any new clients, yet the state *still* attempted to close down the agency’s relationship with already-existing placements.

This is government animus against religion, and it’s despicable.

Cato Institute Senior Fellow Walter Olson explained his philosophy about how adoption agencies best work to me via email:

Children waiting for families benefit when faith-based adoption agencies bring them together with parents. Even more, kicking an agency out of existing placements can hurt kids by destabilizing existing relationships that work. To give the state of New York the power to close down independent private agencies, whether or not they benefit from state subsidies or contracts, is to risk creating a public orthodoxy. Adoption works best when it remains decentralized and pluralistic, with many agencies available to serve many kinds of families.

Let's hope the court's injunction becomes permanent so that adoption agencies can continue their good work without the fear of a liberal government targeting them for their religious beliefs.