



**Comments from press conference following Arizona Supreme Court's
decision in *Brush & Nib Studio v. City of Phoenix*
September 16, 2019**

Brush & Nib Studio Co-Owner Joanna Duka

Today's victory is not just a win for Breanna Koski and me. It's a victory for everyone.

Everyone should be free to peacefully live and work according to their beliefs without fear of unjust punishment. We brought our case to protect this freedom, not just for ourselves, but for all Americans.

At *Brush & Nib Studio*, Breanna and I create beautiful, hand-made artwork to celebrate weddings and other events. Breanna is a talented painter, and I specialize in calligraphy and hand-lettering.

Breanna and I can spend hours or even days imagining, designing, and creating these custom artistic pieces. This process is very personal for us. We pour our hearts and souls into the custom artwork we create and care deeply about what that artwork expresses. With each pen and brushstroke, we seek to craft a message that is beautiful and inspiring.

The messages we convey through our art mean so much to us. Breanna and I will gladly serve everyone, but we cannot create custom artwork celebrating certain events. And the government should not control those expressive decisions.

But Phoenix sought to do just that. It threatened us with criminal prosecution, jail time, and fines if we simply decided to politely decline requests to create custom wedding invitations expressing messages that violate our deepest convictions.

Thankfully, the Arizona Supreme Court stopped Phoenix's overreach. Breanna and I are thankful and relieved that the court has upheld not just our freedom, but the freedom of other speakers to choose what they say and what they don't say. That freedom is a fundamental American value, and we were honored to stand for that freedom for everyone.

Brush & Nib Studio Co-Owner Breanna Koski

Today's decision from the Arizona Supreme Court is about freedom—freedom for us and for others. And it's a decision that everyone should celebrate, even if they disagree with the beliefs Joanna and I share about marriage.

Our Christian beliefs inspire and guide our lives. They are why we love and serve everyone. And they are also why we cannot create custom artwork expressing certain messages—regardless of who asks.

Some may not like our personal values or the artistic decisions we make. But that's not what today's decision is about. It's about who should decide what artists say through their artwork—artists or the government. For those who favor freedom, that answer is easy. Thankfully, the Arizona Supreme Court sided with freedom. That's a win for everyone. And it means so much to Joanna and me.

Ever since we were little girls, Joanna and I have been encouraged to follow our dreams, pursue our passions, and treat every person we encounter with dignity and respect. One of our passions is creating art that reflects the beauty we see all around us, and it's this passion—along with our shared faith—that brought us together to start Brush & Nib Studio. There, we create custom artwork to celebrate some of life's most important events.

Through our artwork, we are able to create beauty in the world and reflect God's creativity in small ways. We cannot separate our faith from our art. They are deeply interwoven. What we create stems from who we are. And who we are stems from who God is and what He's done for us.

Thankfully, the court ruled that we can stay true to our beliefs and continue to pursue our artistic dreams. That's good news for everyone, because artists should never have to sacrifice their freedoms to pursue their passions.

ADF Senior Counsel Jonathan Scruggs

Today, freedom won.

Everyone should enjoy the freedom to peacefully live out their beliefs without fear that the government will silence them or force them to promote messages that violate their core convictions. That freedom should be protected, regardless of whether people share the government's point of view.

We're encouraged that the Arizona Supreme Court has ruled today to protect that key freedom—guaranteed by the Constitution and so crucial to American life. Indeed, we would all be at risk if the court reached the opposite result—that the government can compel artists to design and create artwork promoting messages they disagree with.

As Christians, Joanna and Breanna's faith inspires the artwork that they imagine, design, and create. Through their custom artwork, they seek to convey messages that are consistent with their beliefs. This means that, while they will create artwork for *all people*, they cannot create custom artwork to celebrate and promote *messages* that violate their beliefs.

Phoenix claimed the power to force Joanna and Breanna to create custom artwork celebrating and promoting same-sex marriage even though doing so would violate their core convictions. Before the court stepped in today, Phoenix even silenced these young women from so much as explaining how their Christian beliefs impact the artwork they can and cannot create.

Strikingly, Phoenix threatened Joanna and Breanna with up to six months of jail time, three years of probation, and \$2,500 in fines per day that they were in violation of this unconstitutional law.

The court was right to declare that this overreach violates Joanna and Breanna's fundamental freedoms. Phoenix's position was dangerous for everyone—whether you share Joanna and Breanna's beliefs or not.

The freedom the court upheld for Joanna and Breanna today is good for everyone. Americans disagree about many issues, but we should agree on the freedom to disagree. Americans should be free to choose which messages to promote.