

The Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Case

Case Name: *Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish, et al v. Nessel*

Case Action: Awaiting a ruling from the U.S. 6th Circuit Court.

Significance: Whether religious schools should be free to operate according to their beliefs.



Background: Under Michigan’s new interpretation of its nondiscrimination law, “sex” has been redefined to include sexual orientation and gender identity. This reinterpretation of the nondiscrimination law means that religious institutions, including Sacred Heart, are unable to operate consistent with their religious beliefs. For example, Michigan’s reinterpretation could force Sacred Heart Academy to hire faculty who do not align with the school’s religious beliefs, speak messages that violate Church doctrine, and prevent the school from building a community of believers. Some families attending Sacred Heart Academy moved states so that their children could attend a school with a strong Catholic faith. These families have loved seeing their children grow in their faith, and they do not want that to change because of Michigan’s reinterpretation of its nondiscrimination law. ADF represents Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish and Academy, including three families, in its challenge to this interpretation of the law.

Key Points

- Religious schools should not be forced to deny their core beliefs because of the state’s unjust demands.
- Michigan is putting schools in an impossible situation.
- Parents have a right to send their children to a religious school that adheres to their beliefs.

Key Facts

- The state of Michigan is also forcing Sacred Heart Academy to use pronouns that do not align with biological sex and promote beliefs that contradict their faith.
- Michigan’s law does not exempt religious institutions, like Sacred Heart, leaving it with an impossible choice: deny their core beliefs or be shut down.
- If Michigan’s reinterpreted nondiscrimination law stands, parents at Sacred Heart Academy will no longer have the religious education that they want for their kids.

The Bottom Line: Religious schools should have the freedom to operate in accordance with their own beliefs.