

The Lyceum Case

Case Name: *The Lyceum v. City of South Euclid, Ohio*

Case Status: On May 28, ADF attorneys voluntarily dismissed a lawsuit challenging an ordinance in the city of South Euclid, Ohio, after the city stated it won't apply the law to The Lyceum.

Significance: Whether the government can force a religious school to violate its religious beliefs in employment and enrollment practices.



Background: The Lyceum, a classical religious school, challenged an ordinance in the city of South Euclid, Ohio, that could have forced the school to violate its beliefs about marriage and human sexuality or risk fines and jail time. The Lyceum's faculty and students agree to live by community standards rooted in Catholic teaching. But a city ordinance threatened to tell this distinctly religious school it could no longer peacefully live out its faith. Specifically, a city ordinance was written in such a way as to force The Lyceum to hire teachers and enroll students who fundamentally disagree with or refuse to abide by the school's Catholic community standards. For several months leading up to ADF's lawsuit on The Lyceum's behalf, the city refused to say whether it would apply the ordinance to the school. While The Lyceum risked fines, jail time, and closure—or the violation of its own beliefs—parents were at risk of being blocked from passing down their faith to the next generation through a quality Catholic education through the school. Parents have a right to send their children to a school that reflects their religious values. It is wrong to banish religious schools from the marketplace of ideas simply for holding unpopular beliefs.

Key Points

- Religious schools have a right to operate consistently with their beliefs, but the city's SOGI ordinance jeopardizes this right—and threatens to crush The Lyceum.
- Parents—not the government—have the right to decide what religious beliefs to teach their children, including beliefs about marriage and human sexuality. The city should not block parents from passing down their faith to the next generation by shutting down faith-based schools.
- The city is telling a distinctly religious school it can't peacefully live out its faith. This government compulsion has no place in a tolerant society.
- Tolerance and respect for good-faith differences are essential in a pluralistic society like ours. They enable us to peacefully coexist with each other.

Key Facts

- The SOGI (sexual orientation and gender identity) ordinance doesn't even include a religious exemption. In fact, the City intentionally *deleted* a religious exemption from the ordinance to target faith-based groups.
- Challenging unjust laws is a hallmark of civil rights litigation. For decades, people across the ideological spectrum have used pre-enforcement challenges to protect their freedoms.
- The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled twice—first in *Obergefell* and then again in *Masterpiece*—that the government must respect the belief that marriage is between one man and one woman.

The Bottom Line: Religious schools like The Lyceum should be free to operate according to their faith without fear of unjust government punishment.