



FACT SHEET ***Elane Photography v. Willock***

ABOUT THE CASE

Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys represent Elane Photography and its owners, Jonathan and Elaine Huguenin. In 2006, Elaine received an e-mail from a woman about photographing a “commitment ceremony” between her and her same-sex partner and asking if Elaine would be “open to helping us celebrate our day...” Elaine politely declined to use her artistic expression to communicate a message at odds with her beliefs. The woman who approached Elaine, Vanessa Willock, easily found another photographer for her ceremony—and for less money. Nevertheless, Willock filed a complaint with the New Mexico Human Rights Commission. After a one-day administrative trial in 2008, the commission ruled against the Huguenins and ordered them to pay \$6,637.94 in attorneys’ fees to Willock. The case then made its way through the New Mexico state court system, and the New Mexico Supreme Court upheld the ruling. In a concurrence accompanying the court’s opinion, one of the justices wrote that the Huguenins “now are compelled by law to compromise the very religious beliefs that inspire their lives,” adding “it is the price of citizenship.”

CURRENT STATUS AS OF 3/24/2014

Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys have asked the U.S. Supreme Court to review the case.

WHAT IS AT STAKE?

- The freedom of Americans involved in artistic expression to decline to communicate a message with which they disagree.
- Whether it is “the price of citizenship” for Americans to be “compelled by law to compromise the very religious beliefs that inspire their lives.”

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ABOUT Alliance Defending Freedom

Alliance Defending Freedom is an alliance-building, non-profit legal organization that advocates for the right of people to freely live out their faith.

ABOUT Jordan Lorence

Jordan Lorence serves as senior counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom at its Washington, D.C., Regional Service Center. He has litigated religious liberty, free speech, and marriage cases across the nation since 1984. Lorence earned a J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School in 1980. He is admitted to the bar in three states, the U.S. Supreme Court, and multiple federal courts.