

The *New Hope Family Services* Case

Case Name: *New Hope Family Services v. Poole*

Case Status: ADF filed a federal lawsuit Dec. 6, 2018 challenging New York State’s targeting of New Hope Family Services for its religious beliefs.

Significance: Whether religious adoption providers can serve children, birth parents, and adoptive parents consistent with their faith.



Background: New Hope Family Services is a religious adoptive provider and pregnancy center that has served Syracuse women, children, and families since 1965. Founded by a group of local Christian ministers, the organization has found over 1,000 forever homes for children since opening its doors. In 1986, New Hope added a pregnancy center to provide pregnancy tests, medical referrals, and counseling to anyone in need, in addition to its comprehensive adoption services. Because of New Hope’s belief in marriage as the union of one man and one woman, New Hope places children only in homes with a married mother and father, while referring unmarried couples, same-sex couples, and others to nearby adoption providers.

New Hope clearly articulates its beliefs to clients and has faced no formal complaints from prospective clients due to its policy. Yet, the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) sent New Hope a letter in October 2018 describing its policy as “discriminatory and impermissible.” OCFS gave New Hope an ultimatum that it either revise its policy or it would be required to submit a close-out plan for its adoption program.

Key Points

- The government is threatening to shut down New Hope because of its biblical view of marriage.
- All adoption agencies should be allowed to serve according to their beliefs about what’s best for kids, including the need for both a mom and a dad.
- In the Supreme Court’s decision establishing same-sex marriage in *Obergefell*, Justice Kennedy wrote that “reasonable and sincere people” believe “in good faith” that marriage is the union of a man and a woman.
- More adoption nonprofits mean more children finding a loving home.
- Protecting faith-based adoption providers does not interfere with other adoption providers.
- Adoption providers exist to help children, not to affirm the desires of adults.

Key Facts

- New Hope has over 50 years of experience in the adoption field, having placed 1,000 children with loving families.
- New Hope is committed to helping prepare adoptive parents for their unique responsibilities and to make the adoption decision a positive one for both the child and the birth parents.
- New Hope serves all clients, but refers unmarried couples, same-sex couples, and others to nearby adoption providers.
- There are approximately 130 licensed adoption providers in New York State, the overwhelming majority of which will place children with same-sex couples.

The Bottom Line: Every child deserves a home with a loving mother and father. Adoption providers who help children find a loving home should be protected, not shut down for their faith.