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Christian Fired from State University for Expressing Her Views on Homosexuality in Op-Ed; U.S. Supreme Court Asked to Review Case

Washington, D.C. (May 28, 2013) — Today, the American Freedom Law Center (AFLC), a national nonprofit Judeo-Christian law firm, filed a petition for a writ of certiorari in the United States Supreme Court on behalf of Crystal Dixon, a former human resources administrator at the University of Toledo who was fired in 2008 for expressing her personal, Christian viewpoint on homosexuality in an op-ed published in the local newspaper. On December 17, 2012, a three-judge panel in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit dismissed Dixon’s case and sided with the lower court, which ruled that the University’s “diversity” interests trumped Dixon’s First Amendment rights.

On April 3, 2008, Dixon read an editorial published in the *Toledo Free Press* that equated the “struggles” of gay rights activists with the civil rights struggles of African-Americans. Dixon, an African-American and practicing Christian, disagreed with this comparison and subsequently submitted her own opinion piece to express her personal viewpoint on the issue. Dixon’s op-ed, which was published on April 18, 2008, in the newspaper’s online edition, stated, in relevant part, “I respectfully submit a different perspective for [the author of the original op-ed] and *Toledo Free Press* readers to consider I take great umbrage at the notion that those choosing the homosexual lifestyle are civil rights victims.” Dixon signed her opinion piece as “Crystal Dixon.”

On May 12, 2008, Dixon received a letter from University President Dr. Lloyd Jacobs, which stated that effective immediately her employment at the University was terminated because of “the public position you have taken in the *Toledo Free Press*.” As a result, Dixon filed a federal lawsuit, alleging violations of her First and Fourteenth Amendment rights.

Robert Muise, AFLC Co-Founder and Senior Counsel, authored the petition to the U.S. Supreme Court on behalf of Dixon. In the petition, Muise noted that the U.S. courts of appeals are divided in their application of the law to government employee speech cases. In arguing that the Sixth Circuit’s decision violated core principles of the First Amendment, Muise wrote the following:

“If there is any fixed star in our constitutional constellation, it is that no official, high or petty, can prescribe what shall be orthodox in politics, nationalism, religion, or other matters of opinion.” [University officials] seek to prescribe what “shall be orthodox” in matters of opinion by permitting University employees to express personal messages that promote certain *avored* viewpoints on controversial political and social issues, while censoring certain *disavored* viewpoints, such as [Dixon’s] Christian viewpoint on the issue of gay rights. As a result of [the University’s] speech restriction, that “fixed star” in our constitutional constellation has been obscured and an official orthodoxy prescribed in direct violation of the First Amendment.

The *American Freedom Law Center* is a Judeo-Christian law firm that fights for faith and freedom. It accomplishes its mission through litigation, public policy initiatives, and related activities. It does not charge for its services. The Law Center is supported by contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations, and is recognized by the IRS as a section 501(c)(3) organization. Visit us at www.americanfreedomlawcenter.org.

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