

Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission

Facts

Masterpiece Cakeshop is a specialty cakeshop owned by a baker, Jack Phillips, who is Christian. He refuses to design cakes that conflict with his religious beliefs. That means that he won't design and decorate cakes for Halloween, or those with alcohol in them. He believes that same-sex couples should not be able to marry. When a same-sex couple visited his shop and tried to order a specialized cake to celebrate their upcoming wedding, Phillips said they were free to purchase items in his store, but refused to make them a specialized cake.

The couple believed that they had been discriminated against because of their sexual orientation. Colorado has a law that prohibits discrimination in places of public accommodation. That means that business that sell to the public cannot discriminate based on race, religion, disability, or sexual orientation, among other things. The couple complained to the Colorado Civil Rights Division, which enforces the law. That agency ruled that Phillips had violated Colorado's law. They said that if Phillips was going to create cakes for opposite-sex weddings, he had to do the same for same-sex weddings.

Phillips appealed that ruling, and a Colorado court confirmed that he had violated the Colorado law. Phillips then asked the Supreme Court to hear his case, and the Court agreed to do so.

Issue

Does enforcement of Colorado's anti-discrimination law require Masterpiece Cakeshop to create expression in a way that violates the baker's Free Speech or Free Exercise rights under the First Amendment?