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## Lawsuit against Arlene's flowers allowed to go on

Published: October 8, 2013 Updated 12 hours ago

By The Tri-City Herald

A Benton County Superior Court judge has decided against dismissing part of a discrimination lawsuit against Barronelle Stutzman and her Richland flower shop.

Judge Sal Mendoza Jr., in a written order, ruled that the gay couple who sued Stutzman and Arlene's Flowers can continue with their claim under the Consumer Protection Act, or CPA.

Stutzman refused to design the flowers for the couple's wedding, citing her religious views. The couple's suit alleges violation of the state's anti-discrimination law and the CPA.

Attorneys for Stutzman and her shop argued the CPA claim doesn't hold up because private consumers must show financial injury to their business or property, and the couple didn't do that.

Attorneys for the couple, Robert Ingersoll and Curt Freed, argued that a violation of the anti-discrimination law that happens in the course of business is of itself a violation of the CPA, and that the couple suffered injury in wasted travel and time spent finding another florist.

Mendoza found that showing injury to business or property is required but that the travel and time count.

A spokesperson for the ACLU, which filed the lawsuit on behalf of the couple, could not be reached late Tuesday afternoon.

JD Bristol, one of the attorneys for Stutzman, said the order confirms that "aside from politics, we're going to trial over \$5 or \$10 of gas."

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