

American Marriage Ministries Files Lawsuit Against Tennessee Officials to Protect Religious Freedom

Press Release
June 18, 2024

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Related Services

Litigation

Seattle, WA – Foster Garvey has filed a lawsuit on behalf of the [American Marriage Ministries \(AMM\)](#), a Seattle-based non-profit organization, challenging the constitutionality of certain provisions of Tennessee law that restrict the rights of AMM ministers to officiate weddings. The lawsuit names Russell Johnson, District Attorney General for Morgan County; Cheryl Collins, County Clerk for Morgan County; Jennings H. Jones, District Attorney General for Rutherford County and Coty Wamp, District Attorney General for Hamilton County as defendants.

AMM, a non-denominational church that ordains ministers across the United States, believes that every couple has the constitutional right to choose who performs their wedding ceremony. The complaint alleges that Tennessee Code Annotated § 36-3-301, as amended by Tennessee 2019 Public Chapter 415, violates the constitutional rights of AMM, its ministers and persons who wish to have their marriages solemnized by AMM's ministers. The plaintiffs are suing the defendants on eight counts, alleging violation of both the U.S. Constitution and the Tennessee Constitution.

[Ben Hodges](#), Foster Garvey attorney representing AMM, stated, "This case is about protecting the fundamental rights of individuals to make personal decisions about marriage and religion without undue interference from the state. By preventing AMM ministers from solemnizing marriages, Tennessee is violating the First Amendment rights of our clients and the couples they serve."

The lawsuit seeks declaratory and injunctive relief to invalidate and enjoin the enforcement of the challenged provisions of Tennessee law. AMM's mission is to ensure that all people, regardless of their background or beliefs, have the right to marry

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and to choose who will officiate their marriage.