



FACT SHEET
Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association
v. Vespa-Papaleo

ABOUT Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association v. Vespa-Papaleo

- This federal lawsuit was filed to protect the constitutional rights of a private religious organization to practice its faith without threat of retribution from the state.
- The New Jersey Division on Civil Rights launched an unconstitutional investigation that carries the threat of prosecution against a Christian organization, Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association.
- In accordance with its deeply held religious beliefs and its mission, OGCMA declined to host a same-sex “civil union” ceremony at one of its worship facilities.
- The religious association has the right to use its own private property for purposes consistent with its mission.
- OGCMA is a religious non-profit corporation formed in 1869 to promote Christian spiritual birth, growth, and renewal through worship, education, and cultural and recreational programs in a Christian seaside setting. Ocean Grove’s site has hosted church and worship services for more than 100 years.

CURRENT STATUS of Ocean Grove Camp Meeting Association v. Vespa-Papaleo

ADF attorneys filed a federal civil rights lawsuit on August 11 in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey in response to the state of New Jersey’s investigation of a complaint from a same-sex couple that demanded to use OGCMA’s private worship facility for a “civil union” ceremony.

FOCUS OF LAWSUIT – WHAT IS AT STAKE?

The government cannot force a private religious organization to use its property in a way that would violate its own religious beliefs. The state of New Jersey is applying its Law Against Discrimination in a manner that interferes with OGCMA’s First Amendment rights to free speech, free association, and free exercise of religion.

CONTACT

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ABOUT ADF

The Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) is a legal alliance defending the right to hear and speak the Truth through strategy, training, funding, and litigation. ADF, with nearly 1,000 allied attorneys, provides resources and free legal defense to protect religious liberty, sanctity of life, marriage, and the family.

ABOUT Brian Raum

Brian W. Raum is Senior Legal Counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund. Before joining ADF in 2006, he served seven years in private practice and five years at the American Center for Law and Justice.