



**Press Release**

For Immediate Distribution

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**Court of Appeals denies stay of enforcement in Bend religious discrimination judgment**  
*“Employers cannot force workers to attend Scientology-based training,” says Avakian*

**BEND**—The Oregon Court of Appeals has denied a Bend dentist’s request for a stay of enforcement in a Bend religious discrimination case.

Last year, an investigation by Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) found that Dr. Andrew Engel ordered an employee to attend a Scientology-based training, despite the employee’s concerns that the training conflicted with her religious beliefs. In response, Dr. Engel badgered the employee and refused to find a non-religious training alternative. As a result, the employee eventually was forced to move out of state to find other employment, creating substantial expenses, stress and anxiety. The woman also endured separation from her teenage daughter during the subsequent job search.

**“Dr. Engel attempted to force his employee to take a Scientology-based training, despite her religious objections,”** said Labor Commissioner Avakian. **“It is wrong and illegal to violate an employee’s religious beliefs. No employee should be forced to quit a good job to get away from such a hostile work environment.”**

In the Final Order, Labor and Industries Commissioner Brad Avakian directed Dr. Andrew W. Engel and his Bend dental practice, AWE Dental Spa, to pay nearly \$350,000 in damages for the employee’s lost wages, expenses and emotional strain.

Dr. Engel and AWE Dental Spa sought a stay of enforcement with the Oregon Court of Appeals (Court of Appeals No. A152910). In denying the motion, the court found that Dr. Engel failed to provide sufficient information for the temporary halt to the order.

**“We will hold employers accountable if they violate employees’ civil rights,”** said Avakian. **“I’m pleased that the Oregon Court of Appeals has denied this request by AWE Dental Spa to avoid taking meaningful responsibility for its discriminatory actions.”**

The Final Order can be found online [here](#). Visit [www.oregon.gov/BOLI](http://www.oregon.gov/BOLI) for more information about all of BOLI’s work to protect workers’ rights and support local employers in Oregon.

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*The mission of the Bureau of Labor and Industries is to protect employment rights, advance employment opportunities, and protect access to housing and public accommodations free from discrimination.*