



For Immediate Release

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**Avakian on Oregon Court of Appeals ruling: Oregon protections remain strong**  
*Court of Appeals affirms finding that Sweet Cakes unlawfully discriminated against couple*

**PORTLAND, OR**—The [Oregon Court of Appeals today upheld](#) emotional distress damages for a same-sex couple denied service by the Sweet Cakes bakery in Gresham. The ruling affirms BOLI’s finding that the owners unlawfully discriminated against the couple in violation of the Oregon Equality Act of 2007 by denying them full and equal access to a place of public accommodation.

The court affirmed both the damages and the underlining violation of ORS 659A.403 while rejecting BOLI’s finding that the Klein’s public statements represented an intent to unlawfully discriminate in the future.

Under Oregon law, businesses cannot refuse service based on sexual orientation, just as they cannot turn customers away because of race, sex, disability, age or religion.

In response to the ruling, Commissioner Brad Avakian issued the following statement:

For the past ten years, the Oregon Equality Act of 2007 has protected Oregonians from unlawful discrimination in housing, employment and public places. Today’s ruling sends a strong signal that Oregon remains open to all.

Within Oregon’s public accommodations law is the basic principle of human decency that every person, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity, has the freedom to fully participate in society.

In each civil rights investigation, the Bureau of Labor and Industries approaches the complaint not with a bias for or against the complainant, but with a duty to determine the unique set of facts. In the vast majority of all employment, housing and public accommodations complaints filed under the Oregon Equality Act of 2007, BOLI investigators have found that no substantial evidence exists to support charges of discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

Any Oregon employer seeking to navigate the Oregon Equality Act or other civil rights protections can contact BOLI’s Technical Assistance for Employers with questions at (971) 673-0824.

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