



THE RIGHT TO PRACTICE FAITH IN DAILY LIFE

USCCB Fact Sheet

2014

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY UNDER ATTACK *A Concrete Example*

The Green family began what became **Hobby Lobby Stores**, a retail chain of arts and crafts stores, out of a garage in the family's home in Oklahoma. The Hahn family likewise began **Conestoga Wood Specialties**, a cabinet-making business, out of a garage in the family's home in Pennsylvania.

The Greens are evangelical Christians who strive to operate Hobby Lobby in a manner consistent with biblical principles. Hobby Lobby pays full-time employees at **almost double the minimum wage**, offers generous health benefits, and allows employees ample time off from work. The Hahns, who are Mennonite, similarly strive to operate Conestoga Wood in a way that honors their faith.

Both the Hahns and the Greens believe that **life begins at conception**, and their religious beliefs prohibit them from facilitating abortion.

Unfortunately, a mandate from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) would force the Greens and the Hahns to cover certain drugs and devices that can end life after conception. Coverage of these drugs and devices is required in the companies' health plans under threat of potentially fatal fines by the federal government.

The Greens and the Hahns were forced to sue the federal government to vindicate their rights under the U.S. Constitution and federal law to exercise religion.

They argued that **Americans do not give up their freedom when they open family businesses.**

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in both cases in March of this year, and a decision is expected in late June (likely during the *Fortnight for Freedom*), at the end of the Court's term.

At stake is the freedom of families like the Greens and the Hahns, as well as Catholic families who operate businesses in accordance with their faith, not to participate in funding or facilitating potentially life-terminating drugs and devices.

The U.S. bishops have voiced their strong support for families like the Greens and the Hahns. The bishops filed a friend-of-the-court brief with the U.S. Supreme Court supporting Hobby Lobby and Conestoga in their challenge to the HHS mandate. The bishops explained that they oppose "any rule that would require faithful Catholics and other religiously motivated business owners to choose between providing coverage for products and speech that violate their religious beliefs, and exposing their businesses to devastating penalties."

The bishops have repeatedly voiced their concern for faithful people in business so that they can continue to live out their faith in daily life. Please pray that the Supreme Court will uphold this basic right!

What can you do to ensure the protection of religious freedom at home and abroad?

The U.S. Bishops have called for a Fortnight for Freedom from June 21 to July 4, 2014. Please visit www.fortnight4freedom.org for more information on this important time of prayer, education, and action in support of religious freedom!