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Attorney General Steve Marshall Celebrates Landmark SCOTUS Opinion Reinforcing Free Speech in America

(Montgomery) – Alabama Attorney General Steve Marshall welcomes the U.S. Supreme Court’s opinion in *303 Creative v. Elenis*, which reaffirms that the First Amendment prohibits the government from forcing citizens, including business owners, to speak messages with which they disagree. In the 6-3 opinion, the Supreme Court reversed the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals decision against wedding website owner Lorie Smith.

“The Constitution and our First Amendment prevail. All Americans enjoy the right to freedom of conscience, and that freedom means the government cannot coerce anyone to speak against their deeply held beliefs,” said Attorney General Marshall. “Today’s decision confirms that state and local government are not ‘immune to the demands of the Constitution.’”

In June 2022, Attorney General Marshall signed on to a 20 state amicus brief urging the Supreme Court to protect the First Amendment rights of business owners. The brief argued in support of 303 Creative and its owner, Lorie Smith, a graphic artist and website designer in Colorado. Smith planned to expand her business into wedding website design, but her religious beliefs prohibited her from promoting same-sex weddings. According to Colorado’s anti-discrimination law, if Smith designed and promoted custom websites for opposite-sex weddings, she would have to design and promote custom websites for same-sex weddings too. Smith alleged that the law violated her First Amendment rights, and today the Supreme Court agreed.

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