



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on August 29, 2011

Vermont B&B Sued by ACLU Over Gay “Wedding” Event

The owners of a bed and breakfast in Vermont are being sued by a lesbian couple and the ACLU for refusing to host the couple’s “wedding” reception at their facility. As reported by CNSNews.com, the lesbian couple, Kate Baker and Ming Linsley, plan to “marry” this autumn in Vermont, one of the handful of states that have legalized same-sex marriage. Nearly a year ago Ming’s mother, Channie Peters, contacted the Wildflower Inn (picture at left) about scheduling the couple’s reception there. But according to the ACLU, when she explained that the couple would consist of “two brides,” she received a subsequent e-mail from a planner at the inn, explaining: “After our conversation, I checked in with my innkeepers and unfortunately due to their personal feelings, they do not host gay receptions at our facility.”



In July the ACLU took the case to the Vermont Superior Court, arguing that the inn’s policy excluding homosexuals violates the state’s human rights law which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Declared the ACLU: “This case is about discrimination, pure and simple. When a business that is open to the public refuses to serve two people and their guests solely because the two people are a same sex couple, it is no different than restaurants not serving individuals because they were black, or other businesses keeping out women or Jews. It is discrimination and it is illegal.”

On the inn’s [website](#), owners Jim and Mary O’Reilly explained the distinctive quality of their vacation facility: “The fact that we have 8 children of our own, and knew the need to create a family friendly inn when we bought the property, was just the start to making us different in the hospitality business.” As the ACLU began to harass the family business on its website and in the media (view its [You Tube video on the case](#)), the inn’s managers felt compelled to issue this response on the inn’s [Facebook](#) page: “The Wildflower Inn is a small family owned and operated country inn. We are a devout practicing Catholic family who believes in the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman. We have never refused rooms or dining or employment to gays or lesbians.”

In the most recent development in the case, [Fox News](#) reported on August 23rd that in a court filing a lawyer for the inn insisted that the O’Reillys “were never told about the lesbian couple’s request to hold their wedding reception and that the inn’s meeting and events director wasn’t authorized to reject requests from same-sex couples.”

In a statement the O’Reillys explained that many of their guests “have been same-sex couples. We welcome and treat all people with respect and dignity. We do not, however, feel that we can offer our personal services wholeheartedly to celebrate the marriage between same-sex couples because it goes



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against everything that we as Catholics believe in.”

Fox News reported that in their first court filing in response to the ACLU lawsuit, “the inn’s owners insisted that applying Vermont’s Fair Housing and Public Accommodations Act would violate their right to free speech and freedom of association by forcing them to hold ‘expressive events.’”

In response ACLU spokesman Allen Gilbert said: “The Wildflower Inn owners do not deny that they refused to host Kate and Ming’s wedding reception. Instead, they continue to claim a right to discriminate against the couple, which is in violation of Vermont law. We are confident that the owners’ claim that they have a First Amendment right to discriminate will be found meritless by the courts.”

Inn owner Jim O’Reilly declined to comment on the specifics of the case, saying simply: “... we hope that it is resolved quickly and fairly.”



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