

ABC's World News Tonight with David Muir

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13 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Supreme Court Battle]

DAVID MUIR: The Supreme Court battle tonight. The new case asking this question: Can some businesses in the U.S. turn away same-sex couples as customers? And what the justices signaled today. Terry Moran live in Washington.

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6:40:38 p.m.

2 minutes and 24 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Supreme Court Battle]

MUIR: Back here at home and to the Supreme Court tonight, hearing oral arguments in a case that at its core asks this question: Can some businesses turn away same-sex couples as customers? And what the justices already signaled today. Terry Moran has covered the Court for years for us.

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Breaking News; Supreme Court Battle; Clash Between Free Speech and LGBTQ Rights]

TERRY MORAN: Lorie Smith Colorado designs wedding websites in Colorado, but she doesn't want to serve gay couples because of her religious beliefs. Colorado's anti-discrimination act prohibits discriminating against LGBTQ people and requires that any business that's open to the general public must serve all equally.

LORIE SMITH: A website is my canvass and I cherish the freedom to express unique and custom messages that celebrate causes that I'm passionate about.

MORAN: Smith says obeying that law would effectively force her to endorse gay marriage and violate her First Amendment right to freedom of speech. For more than two hours of sometimes sharp arguments today, the justices clashed over her case, but it was clear that the Court's strong 6-3 majority is sympathetic to her claim. Justice Samuel Alito suggesting that if Smith can be made to serve gay couples, so could someone who helps couples write their ceremonies.

JUSTICE SAMUEL ALITO: They can now be forced to write vows or speeches that espouse things they loathe?

MORAN: But the liberals pushed back hard, Justice Sonia Sotomayor grilling Smith's lawyer about other issues where people might have religious or ideological objections.

JUSTICE SONIA SOTOMAYOR: You're saying, I don't want to serve a particular person, a disabled person, black and white couple, a disabled couple, a — a gay couple. You're basing it not only the nature of the message, you're basing it on who you're serving.

MORAN: And Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson, who, like Justice Clarence Thomas, the Court's other black justice, is married to a white person, said history shows religion has been used to justify discrimination.

JUSTICE KETANJI BROWN JACKSON: Historically, opposition to interracial marriages and integration in many instances was on religious grounds.

MORAN: Many of the questions raised in court today were thought to have been settled long ago during the civil rights era by public accommodation laws which were passed after lunch counter sit-ins and other protests against business and those laws required businesses that served the general public to serve all equally. This c — this court — this case could change that and more. David?

MUIR: Yeah, back front and center again. Terry Moran at the Supreme Court tonight, thank you.