## Faith-Affirming Foster Care at the Supreme Court

## Fulton v. City of Philadelphia



WHO

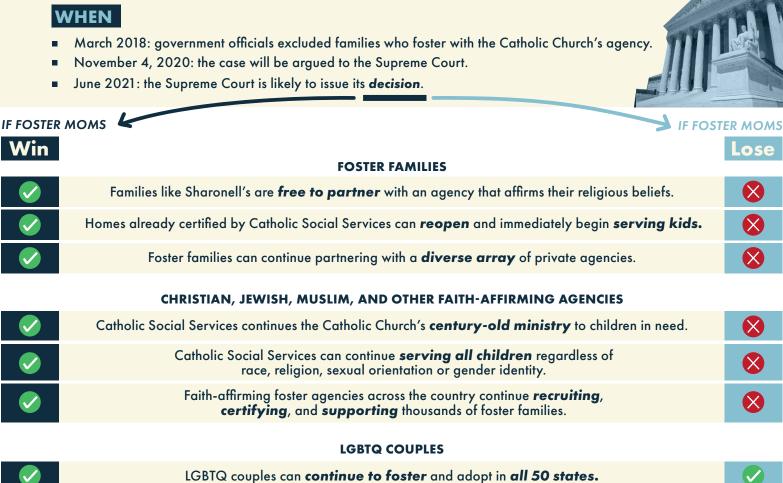
**Heroes** of the foster care system

Foster moms Sharonell Fulton and Toni Simms-Busch More than **25 years** partnering
with the Catholic
Church's foster
agency

Over **45 kids** fostered

## **WHAT**

The government is discriminating against the Catholic Church's foster care agency in Philadelphia because of its religious beliefs. This harms black, disabled, and older foster children while also preventing foster parents like Sharonell Fulton—a single mom of color and a hero of the foster care system—from continuing to care for kids in need.



LGBIQ couples can <b>continue to toster</b> and adopt in <b>all 50 states.</b>	
In Philadelphia, LGBTQ couples continue to foster with 29 different foster agencies (three of which are certified by the Human Rights Campaign for their excellent service to LGBTQ families).	

#### **RELIGIOUS LIBERTY**

RELIGIOUS EIDERT			
	Faith-affirming charitable ministries—like homeless shelters, soup kitchens, prison ministries and immigrant legal assistance—participate as <b>full members</b> of society without having to abandon their religious beliefs.	×	
	Religious groups are <b>not punished</b> because the government dislikes or disagrees with their religious beliefs.	X	

Faith-affirming social service providers **grow and flourish** knowing that they can serve those in need without compromising the beliefs that motivate their service.



# How Does Foster Care in Philadelphia really work?

## 1. RESEARCH AND EVALUATE

Families interested in fostering research and evaluate local agencies to find one that will be a good fit for them.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

In Philadelphia, there are **30 different private foster agencies** that can certify foster families, many with **unique focuses** and **specializations**.

## 2. PARTNER OR

REFER

When a family reaches out to a foster agency, the agency must also determine if it can partner with the family or whether it should refer that family to another agency.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

**Referrals are common** and have worked for decades to help match families with the best possible foster care partner. Common referral reasons include: long waiting lists, location, Native American ancestry, language barriers, behavioral health, and disability.

## 3. HOME STUDY

Once a family matches with an agency, the agency will perform a "home study" to evaluate whether the family is ready to care for a foster child.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

These home studies require agencies to ask **deeply personal** questions and evaluate, among other things, the strengths and weaknesses of an applicant's intimate relationships. Foster parents need to partner with an agency that can affirm their core beliefs and values throughout this process.

## 4. PLACEMENT

Once a foster family completes a home study, the foster agency will endorse and certify that family's home. The government can then place a foster child with that family.

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Only agencies that partner with the government are allowed to perform home studies and provide the certifications necessary for that family to begin fostering.

## 5. SUPPORT

The family's foster agency will continue to partner with them and support them throughout their foster care journey.

## **REFERRALS IN FOCUS**

Referrals have worked for decades to protect diversity, religious liberty, and dignity in the foster care system.

Finding the right match between family and agency means: families will be **more supported**, provide **better homes** for children, and **stay fostering longer**.

