



Fulton v. City of Philadelphia

Top Facts to Know

1. Catholic Social Services currently provides foster care services under a contract with the City, which it has done for more than 50 years. As a Catholic organization, Catholic Social Services exercises its faith and carries out this mission through foster work. This is an integral, fundamental, and central part of Catholic Social Services' religious exercise.
2. The City admitted it has at least 250 children in group homes who need a loving foster family. Yet the City refuses to place any foster children with the 35 available spots Catholic Social Services has available right now.
3. An award-winning foster parent's home is sitting empty because the City refuses to send more foster children to families who work with Catholic Social Services.
4. The City could not point to a single gay couple who has ever approached Catholic Social Services about becoming foster parents, or who was ever discouraged from becoming a foster parent by Catholic's religious beliefs.
5. High-ranking City officials called religious foster care agencies, and only religious foster care agencies, to ask about their policies. They spoke to one secular agency whose leader happened to be a friend. Then they summoned the leadership of Catholic Social Services to City Hall.
6. At that meeting, City officials told Catholic Social Services that "times have changed," their religious beliefs need to change too, they need to stop listening to their religious leader in Philadelphia, and "it's not 100 years ago anymore."
7. The City encourages foster parents to find an agency that is a good fit for them, and allows lots of agencies to refer foster parents elsewhere, including for geographic reasons, the specialty of the agency, and even for convenience. But the City refuses to allow Catholic Social Services to refer couples to agencies who can best serve them.
8. This case is about whether the City's discrimination against Catholic Social Services will stop the agency from serving foster children. Evidence at the hearing showed that is happening now.
9. Multiple foster families testified about how they and their children will be devastated if the City forces Catholic Social Services to close its program.