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Page 1 of 1

Attorney General Steve Marshall Hails Religious Liberty Victories in Two Key Supreme Court Cases

(MONTGOMERY)—Attorney General Steve Marshall hailed separate U.S. Supreme Court rulings Wednesday in support of employers’ and religious schools’ ability to exercise their religious and moral beliefs.

“The First Amendment rightly recognizes that one of the unalienable rights all men and women possess is the right to exercise their faith. And today the Supreme Court has reaffirmed that fundamental truth in two important decisions,” said Attorney General Marshall. “Thankfully, the Court recognized that the federal government need not force nuns to violate their sincerely held beliefs by providing contraceptive coverage to employees who help them care for the sick. And the Court likewise reaffirmed that the government has no authority to tell religious schools who they must hire or retain to teach their faith.”

In [*Little Sisters of the Poor v. Pennsylvania*](#), the Court upheld federal regulations that employers with religious and moral objections may opt out of providing contraceptive coverage to employees under the Affordable Care Act. As the majority stated: “After two decisions from this Court and multiple failed regulatory attempts, the Federal Government has arrived at a solution that exempts the Little Sisters from their complicity-based concerns—the administratively imposed mandate. We hold today that the Departments had the statutory authority to craft that exemption, as well as the contemporaneously issued moral exemption.”

And in another significant decision, the Court held in [*Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Morrissey-Berru*](#) that the First Amendment prevents courts from intervening in employment disputes between religious schools and the teachers at those schools who are entrusted with the responsibility of instructing their students in the faith.

In its 7-2 decision, the Court stated: “The religious education and formation of students is the very reason for the existence of most private religious schools, and therefore the selection and supervision of the teachers upon whom the schools rely to do this work lie at the core of their mission. Judicial review of the way in which religious schools discharge those responsibilities would undermine the independence of religious institutions in a way that the First Amendment does not tolerate.”

The State of Alabama previously joined multistate amicus briefs to the Supreme Court in both cases, supporting the Little Sisters of the Poor and Our Lady of Guadalupe School: [*Little Sisters of the Poor v. Pennsylvania*](#); and [*Our Lady of Guadalupe School v. Morrissey-Berru*](#).

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