

Steve Marshall
Alabama Attorney General



September 17, 2025

For **press** inquiries only, contact:

Amanda Priest (334) 322-5694

William Califf (334) 604-3230

Page 1 of 1

Attorney General Marshall Joins Multistate Effort Defending Religious Liberty

(Montgomery, Ala) – Attorney General Steve Marshall announced that Alabama joined a Virginia-led multistate coalition in filing an amicus brief in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit defending the constitutional right of religious organizations to determine their own missions and employment practices without interference from secular courts.

At issue is a Maryland law prohibiting employment discrimination, which includes an exemption for religious organizations. The Maryland Supreme Court recently narrowed this exemption, holding that it applies only to employees who “directly further” a religious organization’s “core mission.” That interpretation forces secular courts – not churches, synagogues, mosques, or temples themselves – to decide what a faith’s “core mission” is and which employees count as essential to it.

“Courts have no business telling a church what its ‘core mission’ is. That role belongs to the religious community alone, as the Founders understood when they enshrined religious liberty in the Constitution. Our coalition will continue to stand against every encroachment on this fundamental freedom, and I am confident the court will correct the lower court’s deeply misguided ruling,” Attorney General Marshall said.

The case arose when the General Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists and Adventist Risk Management, Inc. challenged Maryland’s restrictive interpretation. The organizations require all employees to be members of the Church in good standing, reflecting their belief that every employee plays a role in advancing their religious mission. Under Maryland’s new rule, however, that practice is threatened by judges second-guessing which employees are “close enough” to the church’s mission.

The amicus brief argues that this intrusion violates the Religion Clauses of the First Amendment, which together safeguard the autonomy of religious organizations. The Free Exercise Clause protects the right of religious groups to shape their own faith and mission, while the Establishment Clause bars government from inserting itself into ecclesiastical matters. The brief stresses that even the threat of litigation can chill religious exercise by pressuring organizations to make decisions based on legal risk instead of religious conviction.

Attorney General Marshall joined Virginia Attorney General Jason Miyares and the attorneys general of Alaska, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, and West Virginia in filing the brief.

To read the brief, [click here](#).

