



## **PRESS RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

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### **With Their Own Hands: CRE Files Amicus Brief Supporting Christian Artists**

**Phoenix, Arizona** — March 6, 2018. The Center for Religious Expression (CRE), along with co-counsel Center for Arizona Policy, filed a friend-of-the-court brief in the Arizona Court of Appeals, requesting that the state court protect the right of Christian artists Joanna Duka and Breanna Koski to decline to handwrite and paint messages that violate their conscience.

Joanna and Breanna own Brush and Nib Studio, an art studio through which they create and sell custom artwork including hand-painting, hand-lettering, and calligraphy on event invitations and décor. They use their creativity and skills to design messages that uniquely celebrate each wedding or other special occasion for which they are commissioned. They gladly sell any product to any person, but, recognizing their artistic gifting comes from God, they decline to produce messages that contradict to their faith. For this reason, they cannot, in good conscience, create messages promoting same-sex marriage.

But the City of Phoenix maintains a law that makes their decision a crime. According to the City, it is illegal discrimination for Joanna and Breanna to decline to produce wedding décor and invitations asserting that God blesses same-sex marriage because they produce messages saying God blesses opposite-sex marriages. Joanna and Breanna are subject to fines and loss of business if they don't comply with the City's scheme. The artists sought protection from an Arizona district court, but the court declined, affirming the City's mantra that refusing to promote same-sex marriage is invalid discrimination. They have appealed this ruling.

CRE's amicus brief demonstrates the patent unconstitutionality in forcing artists to author particular words and messages they do not wish to communicate. A wide consensus acknowledges that it is not discriminatory for someone to refuse to produce messages with which they disagree. The First Amendment ensures that artists like Joanna and Breanna are free to choose which words they will (and will not) write and paint with their own hands.

Center for Religious Expression is a servant-oriented, non-profit 501(c)(3) Christian legal organization dedicated to the glory of God and the religious freedom of His people. For more information, visit <http://www.crelaw.org>.