

APPEAL IN VERMONT

The ACLU has filed Notice of Appeal to the Vermont Supreme Court in *Paquette v. Regal Art Supplies*. On February 18, 1994, Judge Linda Lavitt of the Franklin Superior Court entered an order dismissing the case against Chuck and Susan Baker, Catholic owners of a printing company who had been sued for discrimination when they refused to print materials for the pro-abortion front group "Catholics for Free Choice."

Judge Lavitt ruled that Vermont's anti-discrimination statute is unconstitutional and unenforceable as applied to the facts of this case. The State of Vermont's interest in eliminating discrimination does not override a person's rights to free speech and freedom of religion, said the judge. Stating that the operation of a printing press is a form of speech because it involves putting together and publishing information in a written format, Judge Lavitt found that forcing the Bakers to print the objectionable advertisements would violate their freedom of speech as well as their freedom to practice their religion.

"There is no doubt," wrote Judge Lavitt, "that...compelling defendant (Bakers) to print plaintiff's materials would place a burden on its ability to freely exercise its religious beliefs by forcing the owners to assist in disseminating a message which is contrary to their religious beliefs."

-NJG