

CATHOLIC NURSES WIN

Over the summer, two Catholic nurses from upstate New York won a major victory in court that gives new legal rights to pro-life hospital employees. The New York State Appellate Division ruled in late July that nurses who are dismissed from a hospital for refusing to assist in an abortion have a legal right to sue the hospital. Previously, the law in New York held that nurses could excuse themselves from participating in abortion procedures but could not file a civil suit if they were penalized for doing so.

In November 1996, Deborah Larson and Christine Thornton were asked by the head nurse whether they would assist in an abortion. When they said they would not, they were cited with insubordination; subsequently they were fired.

The appeals court ruled that they were fired for adhering to their religious beliefs and could therefore bring suit against the hospital. Hopefully, the nurses will now go forward and win in the courts.