

HIGH COURT VICTORY

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On June 30, in a 6-3 decision, the U.S. Supreme Court held that the First Amendment rights of a Colorado woman, Lorie Smith, must be respected when it comes to forcing her to express beliefs that are contrary to her conscience. This was a great victory for free speech and freedom of religion. The Catholic League submitted an amicus brief in this case.

Our brief was prepared by Kathleen A. Gallagher and Russell D. Giancola of Gallagher Giancola LLC, a Pittsburgh-based law firm.

They argued that “it is clear that the First Amendment provides dual protections for religious expression (or non-expression) in its guarantees of free speech and free religious exercise. This reality compels the conclusion that religious speech enjoys the highest constitutional protection.”

Colorado tried to compel Smith to design a website that celebrates same-sex marriage. Smith had never refused to service anyone on the basis of sexual orientation. But she drew a line when it came to compelling her to violate her Christian beliefs. That’s a big difference.

Justice Neil Gorsuch, writing for the high court, said, “The First Amendment protections belong to all, not just to speakers whose motives the government finds worthy. In this case, Colorado seeks to force an individual to speak in ways that align with its views but defy her conscience about a matter of major significance.”

We are delighted with this outcome, and we are just as

delighted to have played a role in it.