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### August 15, 2015: No Religious Right to Refuse Government Service

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Title: No Religious Right to Refuse Government Service

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8/15/2015--Word comes now of the refusal of a Kentucky clerk to issue a gay wedding license for "religious reasons." Reportedly a handful of county clerks are refusing to obey a court order to issue the licenses. This will all sort itself out soon enough. We are still a nation of law even though we now know that law is arbitrarily man made. Aside from the obedience to law aspect, this episode is one of a number of religious conscience cases. A few days ago, a Colorado court ruled against a baker who refused to bake a wedding cake. Here's the thing. Principle should go out the window here. The country is split over gay marriage still and we should leave small businesses alone who don't want to serve gay weddings. I say that even though there used to be racists who would do the same thing. This case is different because major religions did not teach racism. Do supporters of gay marriage want religious martyrs? I say this as one such supporter who does not. But, as the group of pro-gay marriage supporters who also support religious conscience have said before, conscience cannot trump government services. If someone in such an office objects, someone else must issue the license. Gay rights are a beautiful thing. They won't stay beautiful long if religious people are hounded. As long as everyone can get their needs met, this issue of religious objections does not have to absolutely worked out. And it shouldn't be. This should be a matter of live and let live until everybody gets used to the idea of gay equality. I am not demeaning discrimination. That is what it is. But I am also not interested in fights over symbolic denials of services for the sake of forcing a symbolic affirmation of equality.