



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James Sanders Jr.

## Senator James Sanders Jr. Says Recent Supreme Court Ruling Opposing Gays Sends Wrong Message to Business Owners

JAMES SANDERS JR. June 5, 2018

NEW YORK – Senator James Sanders Jr. (D-Queens, NY) said the recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling siding with a Colorado baker who refused to create a wedding cake for a gay couple raises concern among marginalized people, who could find themselves denied services because of one's religious beliefs.

"Shop owners in the 1960s used faith as a way to discriminate against Black and Italian shoppers," said Senator Sanders. "Business owners today should not think that the recent Supreme Court ruling is an excuse to use religion to deny any person, rightfully entitled to services, regardless of one's race, skin color, ethnic origin, or even their religious affiliation."

In a narrow decision, Justices Monday made their ruling leaving open the larger question, whether a business can discriminate against gay men and lesbians based on rights protected by the First Amendment.

Senator viewed the ruling as a potential threat to civil rights for all people.

"We must not let the steps our nation has made forward in equality, stumble us backwards because of one's ignorance," said Sanders.

The case, Masterpiece Cakeshop vs. the Colorado Civil Rights Commission follows a 2012 incident when two men, married in Massachusetts, were looking for a wedding cake for a Colorado reception. Shop owner Jack Phillips refused David Mullins and Charlie Craig stating that he would not use his talents to convey a message of support for same-sex marriage. The Commission said Phillips violated a state law barring discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Senator Sanders encourages people of all faiths and backgrounds to speak out against hatred, and not be dismayed by the Supreme Court ruling.