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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AiG to File Discrimination Suit against Kentucky Lawsuit seeks to defend religious freedom

PETERSBURG, Ky., February 3, 2015 – Answers in Genesis (AiG), developer of the Ark Encounter theme park in northern Kentucky, confirmed today it is filing a federal lawsuit against state officials for denying the park participation in the state's tax rebate incentive program. Although the program is available to all qualifying tourist attractions seeking to build in the state, AiG's application was rejected solely because of the religious identity and message of AiG. The lawsuit explains how this action by Kentucky officials, including Gov. Steve Beshear, violates federal and state law and amounts to unlawful viewpoint discrimination.

"Our organization spent many months attempting to reason with state officials so that this lawsuit would not be necessary," said AiG president Ken Ham. "However, the state was so insistent on treating our religious entity as a second-class citizen that we were simply left with no alternative but to proceed to court. This is the latest example of increasing government hostility towards religion in America, and it's certainly among the most blatant."

AiG has produced a video that provides relevant background concerning its suit. It features Ham, who became nationally known for his debate against Bill Nye "The Science Guy" one year ago this week, and constitutional law attorney Mike Johnson. Johnson is the chief counsel of Freedom Guard, and is providing his legal services to AiG free of charge. The video also features clips of a 2010 press conference, at which Gov. Beshear originally expressed his enthusiastic support for the Ark project.



It View the video at www.AnswersForFreedom.org

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After Kentucky granted preliminary approval in 2014 for AiG to receive a rebate of some of the new state sales taxes the Ark will generate after it opens in 2016, secularist organizations exerted tremendous pressure on state officials to rescind the approval. Anti-Christian groups objected to AiG's statutory right to limit its hiring to people of the Christian faith, and to the content of the messages that will be presented at the Bible-themed park. Bowing to this pressure, state officials (including Gov. Beshear) announced a reversal on December 10, 2014. Included as defendants in the lawsuit are Gov. Beshear and Robert Stewart, Kentucky's Secretary of the Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet.

In the video, Johnson explains the well-established legal principles supporting AiG's case, and why these principles are so important to defend. AiG notes that all freedom-loving Americans should be concerned with these government abuses, regardless of their individual perspectives on the book of Genesis. When such an unconstitutional state action goes unchallenged, it sets a dangerous precedent for all other religious and minority groups.

Serving as counsel in the case with Johnson is Nate Kellum, chief counsel of the Center for Religious Expression. Both public interest law firms are providing their legal services at no charge to AiG.

More information on the lawsuit, along with the video, is found at www.AnswersForFreedom.org For construction progress, go to www.ArkEncounter.com

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