

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI  
Jackson Division

NYKOLAS ALFORD and STEPHEN )  
THOMAS; and ACLU OF MISSISSIPPI, )

Plaintiffs, )

v. )

JUDY MOULDER, in her official capacity as )  
MISSISSIPPI STATE REGISTRAR OF )  
VITAL RECORDS, )

Defendant. )

Civil No. 3:16cv350DPJ-FKB

**DECLARATION OF NYKOLAS ALFORD**

1. I am the plaintiff in the above-captioned action. I have actual knowledge of the matters stated in this declaration.

2. My name is Nykolas Alford.

3. I am 26 years old.

4. I was born and raised in Mississippi, and I currently live in Lauderdale County. .

5. I have been in a long-term committed relationship with my fiancé, Stephen Thomas, for three and a half years.

6. When Stephen and I first started dating in 2012, neither of our families approved of our relationship or of the fact that we were gay. Over the years, however, most of our family members have changed their minds. They have become supportive not only of us, but of our relationship. This past Christmas, we hosted both of our families for the holiday.

7. Stephen and I were engaged on Christmas Eve in 2014. I deeply love and am thrilled to marry him. We have very similar morals and a strong sense of what is right and

wrong. We support each other, understand each other, and we build each other up. We are so excited to take our vows—before each other, our families, and God.

8. Stephen and I plan to marry within the next three years, after we both complete our undergraduate education. I have an associate's degree in broadcast communications, and I will be returning to college in January 2017 for a bachelor's degree in communications with a minor in theater. Stephen completed several college credits after graduating high school, and he will be returning to college in August 2016 for a bachelor's degree with a major in music. We plan to marry within the next three years even if one of us is unable to finish our undergraduate education by then as a result of some unforeseen circumstance.

9. When marriage came, I thought it was a new beginning for our state. I believed that marriage equality was the path to a more just and dignified life for us.

10. When HB 1523 passed, it was heartbreaking because the law takes away our chance to be treated equally in the eyes of the law. Every other couple seeking to legally marry can obtain a marriage license from any employee at the county clerk's office responsible for issuing marriage license. But as a result of HB 1523, government officials can "recuse" themselves from issuing us a marriage license solely because they disapprove of our relationship. It is hard to feel like Stephen and I will have a status equal to straight couples when HB 1523 treats our marriage differently than every other legal marriage.

11. This unequal treatment feels especially degrading because it is part of a second-class status that our relationship will be subjected to for the rest of our lives under HB 1523. It feels like a new Jim Crow law for gay people. I have relatives and ancestors who fought in the civil rights movement. They fought hard for the dignity of themselves and others who were treated as second-class citizens in Mississippi. They had to endure the type of humiliations that

HB 1523 promises to bring into my relationship and my community. It is very upsetting to me that Stephen and I and same-sex couples across the State now have to fight this kind of battle all over again.

Pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016.

By: Nykolus Alford  
Nykolus Alford