

All Noah's Ark theme park staff must "profess Christ as their saviour"

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All workers at the Kentucky 'replica' of Noah's Ark – including cleaners and ticket staff – will have to sign a [statement](#) "professing Christ as their saviour"; after a judge ruled that the park can discriminate even though it benefits from tax incentives.

A US District Court [found](#) that Ark Encounters is allowed to have a religious requirement for its employees, and the group has said that all employees, regardless of their role, will have to sign statements affirming evangelical Christian beliefs.

"We're requiring them to be Christians, that's the bottom line," said Ken Ham, founder of Answers in Genesis, the ministry behind the attraction.

400 posts will be advertised and Ham said that all applicants will have to sign the documents after the judge ruled that the theme park can "choose to hire people who adhere to certain religious beliefs while still being in compliance with state and federal law".

Ham, described on the Ark Encounter's website as "the visionary" behind the theme park, [complained](#) that attempts to stop the group benefiting from tax exemptions were "blatantly violating our rights under the federal and state constitutions, as well as the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Kentucky Civil Rights Act."

He complained that these efforts represented discrimination against Christian groups – before welcoming the fact that his park can now discriminate against non-Creationists.

The president of the Kentucky Paleontological Society, Dan Phelps, [questioned](#) if Ham would discriminate against non-creationist Christians.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State said on the case: "Officials were warm to the idea at first, but they soured on the Ark Park after it became clear that Ham intended to restrict hiring to members of his own faith and use the attraction to evangelize visitors. They announced that Ham's project didn't qualify for funding.

"Americans United has said all along that Ham has the right to open the Ark Park attraction – with his own money. Indeed, if Ham's followers thought the park was a good idea, they would have dug deep into their pockets to make it a reality. That is how religion has traditionally been funded in the United States – through the voluntary donations of the faithful.

"Unfortunately, Ham and some others have decided to go down another route. When the believers don't come through, they look to the taxpayer for help."

NSS Campaigns Director Stephen Evans said: "This demonstrates the absurdity of allowing broad religious exemptions to employment and equality law. Unless the requirement to have a particular religion or belief is genuinely necessary to do a particular job, no employer should be permitted to discriminate in this way.

"Of course, it's not only in America where such unjustifiable discrimination occurs. Many state funded schools in the UK can place religious requirements on teaching posts without any legitimate reason for doing so. You hardly need to be a practicing Catholic to teach maths in a faith school."

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