

Ordain Women's Kate Kelly loses last appeal; husband to resign from Mormon church

by [Peggy Fletcher Stack](#)

March 3, 2015

c. 2014 Salt Lake Tribune

SALT LAKE CITY (RNS) Ordain Women co-founder Kate Kelly has lost her final appeal to regain membership in the Utah-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The activist, who is pushing for female ordination to the all-male Mormon priesthood, received word Saturday from her former lay leader in Virginia that the faith's governing First Presidency had rejected the appeal of her June 2014 excommunication from the LDS church.

"I am disappointed in the outcome, but not surprised since the disciplinary process has been entirely opaque and inequitable from the get-go," Kelly said in a news release posted on the Ordain Women website. "I am proud of what I have done. . . . We will continue to act with integrity and courage. Mormon women and their legitimate concerns cannot be swept under the rug or summarily dismissed by one 'Court of Love.' "

Her husband, Neil Ransom, plans to resign his Mormon membership.

The couple were married, or, in LDS parlance, sealed for eternity, in 2006 in the Salt Lake LDS Temple. Under Mormon teachings, her excommunication—and his exit from the faith—would nullify that ordinance in heaven.

"He was never punished by the church," Kelly said in an e-mail, "in spite of doing many of the same things I was accused of."

Kelly was ousted from the LDS Church last summer for "conduct contrary to the laws and order of the church," later defined as apostasy.

She appealed the decision to the church's highest authority, the First Presidency, comprised of LDS Church President Thomas S. Monson and his two counselors, Henry B. Eyring and Dieter F. Uchtdorf. It is the last avenue for excommunicated Latter-day Saints hoping to regain their memberships.

Kelly, who now lives in Kenya, said she got an e-mail informing her that the top leaders had affirmed the excommunication in a letter.

Saturday's news "saddened" Ordain Women executive board chair Debra Jenson.

"We are profoundly troubled by a definition of apostasy that seems to include members asking sincere questions of our leaders," Jenson said in the group's news release. "We reaffirm our commitment to faithful action and our hope for gender equality in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."