

Ex-Firefox CEO Demonized, Yet Not All Gays Are Celebrating

Rep. Frank Wolf is denouncing the gay activists who pressured Mozilla's CEO before he stepped down last week.

CEO Brendan Eich of Mozilla, of the Firefox Internet browser, gave \$1,000 to Proposition 8 in 2008. After gay activists found out, they called for a boycott on Firefox and demanded his resignation.

Wolf on Monday gave the following speech on the House floor about the issue:

"Mr. Speaker, our nation was founded on two core principles: freedom of speech and freedom of religion, both of which are contained in the First Amendment of the Constitution.

"No one in America is arrested for criticizing elected officials, including the president.

"No one in America is imprisoned for going to a mosque on a Friday, a synagogue on a Saturday or a church on a Sunday.

"The fact that we as Americans can express ourselves so freely and choose to worship wherever and whenever we want are at the heart of America's greatness.

"That is why I was so troubled by the recent events surrounding high-tech entrepreneur and Mozilla co-founder Brendan Eich, who despite his unquestioned professional credentials was forced to resign because of a \$1,000 personal donation he made in 2008 in support of Proposition 8, the California ballot initiative in support of traditional marriage.

"Regardless of your views on marriage, any American who values the First Amendment should be deeply troubled that this man

was essentially driven from his job because of his personal beliefs. I want to stress, his personal beliefs. Not his company's. His own.

"Nowhere have I read that Mr. Eich ever discriminated against co-workers. In fact, by all accounts, he is a fair and honorable employer. Yet because of his private beliefs about traditional marriage, which I share, he has been demonized and his livelihood compromised.

"As troubling as this particular incident is, the chilling effect it will have on broader issues of free speech cannot be overstated.

"I find it notable that Andrew Sullivan, a leading activist in the gay community, has come to Mr. Eich's defense. Mr. Sullivan has been widely quoted as writing: 'The whole episode disgusts me—as it should anyone interested in a tolerant and diverse society. If this is the gay rights movement today—hounding our opponents with a fanaticism more like the religious right than anyone else—then count me out.'

"Yes, public opinion on gay marriage has shifted since 2008, when both then-presidential candidates Barack Obama and John McCain supported defining marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

"But America has never been defined by mob rule. Even if just 1 percent of the country supported defining marriage as between a man and a woman, which is hardly the case, that 1 percent still has the right to hold that view, particularly when it is a view based in many cases on one's most deeply held faith convictions.

"I understand that reasonable people can disagree on issues. In fact, robust debate in the public square is itself an American hallmark. But what happened last week was not debate. It was the stifling of debate. It was the silencing of dissent. It was the compromising of two of our nation's most

cherished principles: free speech and freedom of religion.

“The implications are vast and deeply troubling. We should all be concerned. I know I am.”