

Hispanic Pastor Challenges Chicago Mayor in Chick-fil-A Battle

Comments from **Chick-fil-A** president and chief operating officer, **Dan Cathy**, regarding his opinion of natural marriage as one man and one woman expressed during a syndicated radio talk show interview more than two weeks ago continue to reverberate as city officials, political activists and media engage in a **culture war** over redefining marriage.

Following Cathy's comments supporting natural marriage, government officials from three cities said they would ban **Chick-fil-A** from opening restaurants in their municipalities. Demanding a public apology, Chicago Alderman Joe Moreno said that he would deny Chick-fil-A from opening a restaurant in Chicago's Logan Square.

"If you are discriminating against a segment of the community, I don't want you in the 1st Ward," Moreno told the *Chicago Tribune*. Boston Mayor Thomas Menino told the *Boston Herald* that he would block Chick-fil-A from opening a restaurant in the "Cradle of Liberty." Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel followed suit stating, "Chick-fil-A values are not Chicago values. They disrespect our fellow neighbors and residents." And the Mayor of the District of Columbia called it "hate chicken."

"It's clearly unconstitutional for the city to deny permits based on a person's opinions," says UCLA law professor Eugene Volokh. "It opens the city up to criticism and even litigation."

Choco DeJesus, pastor of New Life Covenant Church in Chicago and vice president of the Social Justice Directive for the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, was

commissioned by Chicago's Mayor Daley in 2005 to serve on the Chicago Zoning Board of Appeals.

"I was not commissioned to the Zoning Board of Appeals to legislate my own belief system. As I served on this board for five years, I was asked to make sure all zoning requirements were met. I had an ethical obligation not to discriminate based on my Christian beliefs. During my tenor on the board, I had to approve zoning for bars, tattoo parlors and a number of businesses that went against my Christian beliefs and values. There was no room for discrimination against any business that met required zoning laws," he says.

"Chicago is a diverse city and every community within our city is different. I don't know if the mayor is in touch with all of the value systems in every community of Chicago. **Chick-fil-A** would bring 110 new jobs to Chicago. Additionally, Chick-fil-A does not discriminate against their employees or their clientele. As long as Chick-fil-A follows every law and passes all zoning requirements, they should be allowed to build in any city across America."