

Houston Mayor Calls Homosexual Partner 'First Lady'

A **megachurch** pastor in Houston is taking exception to a lesbian mayor who refers to her homosexual partner as "First Lady."

Steve Riggle, senior pastor of Grace Community Church, wrote a confrontational letter to Houston Mayor Annise Parker. In the letter, Riggle asked Parker to abide by her oath of office to uphold the constitution of Texas—which includes defining marriage as a union between one man and one woman—or step down.

"During her first term of service, the issue of **gay marriage** never really came up much. There were a ton of people in the city who didn't even know she's homosexual," Riggle says. "When she got into her second term, it seems she was emboldened. She has met with 80 mayors who have come out in support of gay marriage. She's starting to advocate for gay marriage."

Riggle says he wrote the letter to challenge Parker to be an advocate for **traditional marriage**. He still remembers the mayor's swearing in ceremony, at which she put her hand on the **Bible** and swore to uphold the laws of the state—and that's what Riggle and his 15,000 church members expect her to do.

Riggle refuses to be silent. He asked Grace Community Church members to email or call the mayor's office to make their voices heard—and many did. Riggle also asked his members to encourage their friends to do the same—and many did.

"I hope this goes somewhat viral within the city because I'd love to see the mayor get more phone calls than she did

votes,” says Riggle, noting that Parker only got 60,000 votes in her re-election and barely escaped a run-off.

“The church didn’t take a stand on **abortion**. Marriage must be the line in the sand. We don’t have to be ugly—just determined,” Riggle says. “They can call us names all they want. We’re not moving. We’ll keep **praying** for city officials but we will also oppose them by every means possible if they try to redefine marriage.”

The following is the text of the letter Riggle sent to the mayor:

Dear Mayor Parker,

I am writing on behalf of myself and as the senior pastor of Grace to express my deep disappointment in your recent public actions and statements that undermine the express will of the people of the state of Texas in regard to traditional marriage.

As you are aware, we have declared by constitutional amendment that marriage is to be defined as between one man and one woman. While you are certainly entitled to your personal views and lifestyle that does not embrace traditional marriage (even if I happen to disagree with those views and I do), it is very disturbing to me when you make statements as an elected official that are contrary to what the people have decided should be the foundational values and definitions that define our culture.

I was deeply disturbed some months ago when a memo was circulated by an office connected to your office that titled your partner as the first lady of Houston. You should have corrected that since you know that title has been given only to the wife or husband of the mayor in the appropriate gender language.

At your swearing in, I heard you take your oath of office and

swear to uphold the constitution of the State of Texas. To then, just a few weeks later, stand with other mayors and call for action regarding marriage that would violate the very constitution you were swearing to uphold is less than integral. In what I have seen, you were described not as citizen Annise Parker, but as Mayor Annise Parker. That says to me, you were speaking as our mayor.

I respectfully request that you not use your office or title to press your personal views and lifestyle on this subject that we, the people, have so clearly spoken to. Additionally, as our mayor, I would request that you be true to the vow you took to uphold the constitution of the State of Texas and stand for traditional marriage since we as the citizens of Texas have expressed by amending our constitution that marriage will be defined as between one man and one woman.

Respectfully, if you cannot uphold the Texas constitution, then you should do the honorable thing and step down.

I do appreciate the commendation you have given Grace and our service to the social needs of the community as we ongoingly care for the least among us, and our hosting the services when a first responder falls in the line of duty. However, on the issue of marriage, I respectfully, but very strongly, stand in opposition to what seems to be your agenda. While we will continue to serve the needs of our city as we have done for many years, we will oppose your efforts to represent us as our mayor.

We, the 15,000 people of Grace, have always done our best to be supportive of our elected officials and to pray for them on a regular basis. Regretfully, while we will continue to pray for you, we will not support your actions or stand passively by and allow you to redefine what has always been the definition of marriage.

Respectfully,

Steve Riggle
Senior Pastor
Grace Community Church