

FAITH MONEY POLITICS U.S.

Conservative leaders urge Chick-fil-A to reverse 'betrayal'

'Allied' with 'bully-tactic leftist movement that will never be satisfied'



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**A Chick-fil-A franchise in Stuart, Fla., was packed with patrons on Aug. 1, 2012.
(WND photo / Joe Kovacs)**

Leaders who describe themselves as supporters of Chick-fil-A's well known defense of traditional marriage are urging the restaurant chain to reverse its decision to stop donating to the Salvation Army and other Christian charities, calling it a betrayal that only emboldens the left.

"We are tremendously disappointed at your company's complicity in defaming the mission and intent of the Salvation Army, one of America's oldest and most accomplished charitable organizations," reads the letter sent Tuesday to Chick-fil-A CEO Dan Cathy.

Among the signatories are Penny Nance, CEO and president of Concerned Women for America; Ginni Thomas, president of Liberty Consulting; Richard A. Viguerie, chairman of ConservativeHQ.com; and David Kupelian, WND vice president and managing editor.

"Your company's stated mission is 'To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us and to have a positive influence on all who come into contact with Chick-fil-A,' the leaders point out.

"Yet, by bowing to the pressure of left-wing extremist groups, you've allowed those 'faithful stewards' of the Salvation Army to be branded as 'extremists,' likely triggering a series of future events detrimental to the organization and the millions of American poor they serve," they wrote.

Cathy's defense of marriage in a 2012 interview prompted fierce opposition from LGBT activists that included boycotts. However, a counter-protest from the right

boosted the company's sales, and this year Chick-fil-A became the third biggest restaurant chain in the nation, behind only Starbucks and McDonald's.

"When you were under attack by the left in 2012, America's families stood with you," the leaders write. "We, the signers of this letter, stood with you, and many of us urged our supporters to do the same. We helped form long lines at your stores, stretching out the doors and around the buildings, in many cases. As a result, your restaurant chain vaulted into the top 3 nationwide."

However, they said, "your latest decisions to withdraw charitable giving to the Salvation Army and other Christian charities has betrayed the very people who stood with you."

"You have instead allied yourself with a bully-tactic leftist movement that will never be satisfied with your compromises."

A Chick-Fil-A spokesman insisted Nov. 18 that support for the Salvation Army and the Fellowship of Christian Athletes ended merely because of the fulfillment of a multiyear commitment in 2018 and a shift in focus.

"Moving forward you will see that the Chick-fil-A Foundation will support the three specific initiatives of homelessness, hunger and education," the spokesman said.

The company stated in a press release that its foundation "will no longer make multiyear commitments and will reassess its philanthropic partnerships

annually to allow maximum impact."

"These partners could include faith-based and non-faith-based charities."

Not good enough

Leading gay-rights groups immediately reacted to Chick-fil-A's announcement, declaring the move was a step forward but far from sufficient.

GLAAD said in a statement that it wants Chick-fil-A to ensure a "safe" workplace for LGBT employees and to forthrightly denounce the company's "anti-LGBT reputation."

"If Chick-Fil-A is serious about their pledge to stop holding hands with divisive anti-LGBTQ activists, then further transparency is needed regarding their deep ties to organizations like Focus on the Family, which exist purely to harm LGBTQ people and families," GLAAD said.

"Chick-Fil-A investors, employees, and customers can greet today's announcement with cautious optimism, but should remember that similar press statements were previously proven to be empty," the activist groups said.

The gay-rights Human Rights Campaign said that "while this is an important step for Chick-fil-A, the company still does not have workplace protections and policies that are fully inclusive of LGBTQ people."

"We look forward to the day when Chick-fil-A's commitment to welcoming all is reflected in their workplace policies and practices by including explicit sexual orientation and gender identity nondiscrimination protections," HRC said.

Salvation Army 'saddened'

Meanwhile, the Salvation Army said it was "saddened" by the decision, arguing it serves more than 23 million individuals a year and is "the largest provider of poverty relief to the LGBTQ+ population."

"When misinformation is perpetuated without fact, our ability to serve those in need, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, religion or any other factor, is at risk," the Salvation Army said. "We urge the public to seek the truth before rushing to ill-informed judgment."

Chick-fil-A President and Chief Operating Officer Tim Tassopoulos discussed the new policy in an interview with Bisnow published Nov. 18.

"There's no question we know that, as we go into new markets, we need to be clear about who we are," he said. "There are lots of articles and newscasts about Chick-fil-A, and we thought we needed to be clear about our message."

Bisnow said the new initiative will no longer include donating to organizations such as the Salvation Army, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the Paul Anderson Youth Home.

Signatories of the Nov. 26 letter to Cathy include:

- J. Christian Adams, president and general counsel Public Interest Legal Foundation
- Aaron Baer, president Citizens for Community Values
- Dr. David L. Black, founder and chairman 2nd Vote
- Hon. J. Kenneth Blackwell, former United States ambassador United Nations Human Rights Commission
- Morton C. Blackwell, president Leadership Institute
- Andersen Blom, president Hawaiian Values
- Dick Bott, founder Bott Radio Network
- Rich Bott, chairman/CEO Bott Radio Network
- Susan Carleson, chairman American Civil Rights Union
- Stephanie Coleman, executive director Liberty Action Network
- Chad Connelly, president Faith Wins
- Charlie Copeland, president Intercollegiate Studies Institute
- Justin Danhof, general Counsel National Center for Public Policy
- Dr. Tim Daughtry, author and commentator
- Elaine Donnelly, president Center for Military Readiness
- Becky Norton Dunlop, Reagan administration (1981-1989)
- Robert K. Fischer, meeting coordinator Conservatives of Faith
- Daniel Greenfield, Shillman Journalism fellow David Horowitz Freedom Center
- Rebecca Hagelin, columnist for the Washington Times
- Colin A. Hanna, president Let Freedom Ring
- Philip B. Haney, founding member DHS, retired CBP officer
- Jake Hoffman: president and CEO Rally Forge

- Bishop E. W. Jackson, president STAND Foundation, Inc
- Sheryl Kaufman, board member Americans for Limited Government
- Andrew Klavan, the Daily Wire
- Kelly Kullberg, author American Association of Evangelicals
- David Kupelian, vice president and managing editor WND.com
- Jim Ross Lightfoot, retired member of Congress
- Trevor Loudon, author, filmmaker
- Rick Manning, president Americans for Limited Government
- Gary Marx, former executive director Faith & Freedom Coalition
- John McLaughlin, McLaughlin & Associates
- Cleta Mitchell, attorney Washington, D.C.
- Stella Morabito, author
- Penny Nance, CEO and president Concerned Women for America
- Lisa B. Nelson, CEO American Legislative Exchange Council
- Richard Norman, founder and president The Richard Norman Company
- Dr. Everett Piper, former university president, author & Washington Times columnist
- Nancy Schulze, co-founder with Vonette Bright The American Prayer Initiative
- Kelly Shackelford, president/CEO First Liberty Institute
- James Simpson, author, investigative journalist
- Carlton H. Smith, president Architekton Global, Inc.
- Mat Staver, founder and chairman Liberty Counsel
- Ginni Thomas, president Liberty Consulting
- Richard A. Viguerie, chairman ConservativeHQ.com
- Billie Tucker Volpe, CEO Service Bureau, Inc.