



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on September 27, 2013

Christian Football Analyst Fired by Fox Sports Strikes Back

Fox Sports is facing a possible religious discrimination lawsuit by the former NFL star and football analyst Craig James (shown), who was fired by the network over comments he made about homosexuality and same-sex “marriage” while running for the U.S. Senate in 2012. Craig James, who played during the 1980s for the New England Patriots, was terminated by Fox Sports just two days after he was hired this summer, after comments he made during a campaign debate surfaced in the news. James was running as a Republican for the Senate seat in Texas that was ultimately filled by Ted Cruz.



The [Christian News Network](#) reported that during a debate before the 2012 Republican primary, “Craig was asked about his views on homosexuality and same-sex marriage. As a Christian, he responded that he could not support unbiblical behavior, and neither should any other civil leader.”

Craig said he believed that America’s “moral fiber is sliding down a slope that is going to be hard to stop if we don’t stand up.” He emphasized, “I’m a guy who believes in [marriage between] a man and a woman, [and] the greatest government is occurring in a home at night between a husband and wife, Adam and Eve, and what the Bible says.”

As for same-sex “marriage,” Craig said that “if someone chooses to do that, that’s them. And God’s going to judge each one of us in this room for our actions. And in that case right there, they’re going to have to answer to the Lord for their actions.” He added that “we should not give benefits to those in civil unions. We have to stay strong on this. This is important.... We have a fiscal issue in this country, [but] we also have a moral issue in this country, and as Christians we’ve got to stand up.”

James was hired by Fox Sports Southwest on August 30 of this year to appear as an on-air college football analyst for the network’s post-game show. But after his comments came to light, he worked just one game before being fired by Fox Sports on September 2. Fox Sports quickly announced that “Craig James will not be making any further appearances on FOX Sports Southwest’s football coverage this season.”

Explaining the quick departure, a Fox Sports spokesman told reporters: “We just asked ourselves how Craig’s statements would play in our human resources department. He couldn’t say those things here.”

On September 24 Fox Sports learned that James had retained the Texas-based legal advocacy group [Liberty Institute](#) to challenge his termination. In an [e-mail to the network](#), Liberty Institute attorney Jeffrey Mateer wrote that James’ firing by Fox Sports “raises serious questions of religious discrimination, unlawful disparagement of the character of Craig James, malicious interference with his employment, and unlawful termination of your employment agreement with him.”



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Mateer argued that Fox Sports officials knew, “or should have known,” about James’ well-publicized statements concerning his Christian views on marriage before they pursued him for the job from which they quickly fired him, views that were completely personal and had no bearing on his ability to do the job for which he was hired.

Mateer concluded the e-mail by declaring that Fox’s decision to fire James because of his Christian beliefs “is a severe violation of Mr. James’ religious liberty ... and an affront to all Americans who cherish that bedrock principle of American freedom.” He demanded that the network re-instate James to his job, or face a possible lawsuit.

In response to the e-mail, Fox Sports officials appeared to change their reason for releasing James two days after hiring him. “At Fox Sports we respect all points of view, and despite reports to the contrary, the decision to no longer use Craig James in our college football coverage was simply because he was not a good fit for Fox Sports,” a Fox spokesman said. “Mr. James, while both experienced and knowledgeable, is a polarizing figure in the college sports community. Regrettably, the decision to use him was not properly vetted, and as a result he will no longer provide commentary on Fox Sports Southwest’s college football coverage.”

Liberty Institute president Hiram Sasser challenged Fox’s explanation, saying that “Fox Sports cannot revise history and pretend they did not tell the public the reason he was fired was because of his religious views on marriage. Fox Sports has made it clear that despite our efforts to resolve this matter amicably, they are unwilling to follow the law. They will be held accountable.”

Craig James told [Breitbart News](#) that he was “shocked that my personal religious beliefs were not only the reason for Fox Sports firing me, but I was completely floored when I read stories quoting Fox Sports representatives essentially saying that people of faith are banned from working at Fox Sports. That is not right and surely someone made a terrible mistake.”

James added, “I have worked in broadcasting for 24 years and have always treated my colleagues with respect and dignity regardless of their background or personal beliefs.... I have never discussed my faith while broadcasting and it has never been an issue until now.”

James told [One News Now](#) that he hopes his situation will prompt other Christians to take a bold stand for their beliefs. “I do think we’re at a fork in this road in this country and we have got to be heard,” he said. “I believe brothers and sisters have got to be bold and passionate because the other side is being bold and passionate — they’re being heard and we’re not. And I just believe that is important.”

He added that “this is a time where evil prevails when good people do nothing, and you can’t shine light on darkness unless the light shows up.”

Photo of Craig James: AP Images



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