



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on February 6, 2012

Tenn. Senator Tossed From Bistro for “Anti-Gay” Views

The story sounds like something out of 1960s Nashville, when diners were thrown out of restaurants by managers and owners who didn't like the color of their skin. Only in this case it's 2012, the town is Knoxville, Tennessee, and the manager of the restaurant — a little place called the Bistro at the Bijou — didn't care for the views the patron, Republican State Senator Stacey Campfield (left), has on homosexuality.



According to the [Tennessean](#) newspaper, the restaurant's owner, Martha Boggs, said she ordered Campfield out of her establishment during a Sunday brunch January 29 because of remarks he had made on a local radio program about the AIDS epidemic. The state senator, whose conservative, pro-family opinions have been criticized over the past year by the state's homosexual activist community, asserted during the program that AIDS is a disease that predominantly afflicts male homosexuals.

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Of course, Boggs was no doubt also upset over Canfield's introduction of a [bill in the state Senate](#) last year that would ban elementary and middle-school instructors from teaching their students about homosexuality. The bill is currently stalled in the House.

“When I saw him at the front door, I told him to leave,” Boggs said of what critics called her boorish treatment of Campfield as he waited to be served. “It's just my way to show support for the gay community and stand up to somebody I think is a bully. He's really gone from being stupid to dangerous. I think he needs to know what it feels like to be discriminated against.” ([YouTube video of Boggs' explanation.](#))

Campfield's recollection of the incident was slightly different, according to the local [CBS News affiliate](#). “The lady who, I guess, is the owner came up and said, ‘I'm not serving you, you're a homophobe and hate gay people,’” Campfield recalled. “I said, ‘I don't hate gay people. I don't care what they do.’ She said, ‘Well you said all those terrible things.’ I said, ‘Well, all that stuff is backed up by the CDC.’ I directed her to the site. She said, ‘I'm not serving you, I don't care.’ I said okay.”

Boggs noted that Campfield responded to her immaturity by graciously exiting the restaurant. For his part, the senator said that he and his friends simply went down the street to a more gracious host — [Latitude 35](#) — “and had a good breakfast.”

According to the *Tennessean*, after the incident went public thousands of people logged on to the



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bistro's [Facebook page](#) to applaud Boggs' behavior toward Campfield.

Later on his [blog site](#), Campfield reflected on the incident, recalling that with all her supposed righteous indignation, the only thing Boggs demonstrated was a lack of professionalism. "In my legislative role I have always had an open door to any of my constituency," wrote Campfield. "Gay rights groups have been in my office several times and I would like to think that even though we may disagree on some issues I have always treated them graciously."

Campfield noted that in his business as a property owner and manager, "I have rented to people of all races and creeds. Black, white, Asians, gay, straight, Christian and non-Christian alike. I do not discriminate." He wondered "how the owner of the restaurant would act toward another restaurant if the shoe were on the other foot and the business refused service to a gay person? I know I would not eat there."

The senator recalled that in the 1960s his own grandfather sat in solidarity with blacks at Knoxville's segregated lunch counters. "I guess some people still support segregation," he suggested of the incident. "Just segregation of thought." He added that supporters had informed him that "my civil rights were violated under the 1964 civil rights act in that a person can not be denied service based on their religious beliefs. (I am Catholic and the Catholic Church does not support the act of homosexuality.)"

Campfield said that the unfortunate incident is merely "another example of the open minded tolerant left. They claim tolerances for divergent points of view — until someone actually has one. Then they don't know how to handle it."



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