



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on September 12, 2019

Texans File Lawsuit Against City of San Antonio for Excluding Chick-fil-A from Local Airport

Texas residents have filed a lawsuit against the city of San Antonio for its decision to ban Chick-fil-A from opening a shop in the local airport, arguing that the ban was motivated by the company's religious beliefs.

Plaintiffs Patrick Von Dohlen, Brian Greco, Kevin Jason Khattar, Michael Knuffke, and Daniel Petri filed suit against the city under SB 1978, dubbed the "Save Chick-fil-A bill." Signed by Republican Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, SB 1978 outlaws government retaliation based on "membership in and support to religious organizations."



State Rep. Matt Krause, R-Fort Worth, who sponsored the bill in the House, said all Texans were affected by a local government who oversteps its bounds. The law, he argued, seeks to ensure that the government cannot punish businesses or people for their religious beliefs.

"Hopefully this bill will be a reminder for many and a deterrent for others so that we don't have another situation like we had in San Antonio," Krause said.

The lawsuit states the city of San Antonio is in violation of SB 1978 by banning Chick-fil-A from the San Antonio airport and asks the court to issue an injunction to block the city and airport shop operator Paradies Lagardere from banning the restaurant chain in the future. The plaintiffs also seek to stop the city from "taking any adverse action against Chick-fil-A or any other person or entity, which is based wholly or partly on that person or entity's support for religious organizations that oppose homosexual behavior."

The lawsuit also seeks the city to pay the plaintiffs' legal fees.

According to the group Texas Values Action, by banning the restaurant chain from opening a shop at the airport, San Antonio officials are engaged in bullying.

"The continued religious ban on Chick-fil-A by the San Antonio City Council has left citizens with no choice but to take this case to court," said Texas Values Action president Jonathan Saenz, according to [The Texas Tribune](#). "Any other vendor that tries to replace Chick-fil-A at the airport will be doing so under a major cloud of long and costly litigation with the city."

This is certainly not the first time Chick-fil-A has been blocked from certain regions because of its traditional values. Rider University in New Jersey removed the restaurant from consideration for a new restaurant on campus because of "the company's record widely perceived to be in opposition to the LGBTQ+ community."

Earlier this year, Buffalo Niagara International Airport in New York nixed plans for a Chick-fil-A restaurant, a decision applauded by Democratic Assemblyman Sean Ryan of Buffalo.



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"The views of Chick-fil-A do not represent our state or the Western New York community, and businesses that support discrimination have no place operating in taxpayer-funded public facilities," he said in a statement.

Chick-fil-A has established a reputation for its charitable endeavors and well-intentioned employees, but the company also made enemies with those on the Left for daring to espouse a traditional, Christian view on marriage.

In 2012, Chick-fil-A founder Dan Cathy made a statement in which he expressed support for one-man/one-woman marriage.

"I think we are inviting God's judgment on our nation when we shake our fist at Him and say, 'We know better than you as to what constitutes a marriage,'" Cathy [said at the time](#). "I pray God's mercy on our generation that has such a prideful, arrogant attitude to think that we have the audacity to define what marriage is about."

Chick-fil-A has not once denied service to any customer based on any particular bias, but that did not stop LGBTQ activists from launching a boycott against the restaurant because of its corporate values rooted in deeply held Christian beliefs. GLAAD staged a "kiss-in" at Chick-fil-A restaurants across the country, while another campaign attempted to shirk the restaurant out of money by encouraging customers to order only a large water at Chick-fil-A drive-thrus, Slate.com reports.

Those boycotts did little to hurt the company's successes. Despite the intolerance from those on the Left, Chick-fil-A is now the third largest restaurant chain in the United States, according to data from the Nation's Restaurant News — up from the No. 7 spot last year. Business Insider reports, "The chicken chain's massive growth in 2018 moved it into the No. 3 spot on the ranking of the largest restaurant chains in the US, with \$10.46 billion in American system-wide sales."

These numbers are particularly impressive given that Chick-fil-A competes with chains with many more locations, Kalinowski Equity Research founder Mark Kalinowski told Business Insider. And Kalinowski believes that Chick-fil-A's growth could double in the "not-to-distant future," particularly if lawsuits like the one in San Antonio are successful, as Chick-fil-A would then have the opportunity to break into bigger markets.

"They're severely under-penetrated," Kalinowski said. "Once you start looking at all these other big metropolitan areas in all these states, there's room for growth for, not just years and years to come but potentially decades to come."

The San Antonio City Council is confident, however, that it will be victorious in the lawsuit. Laura Mayes, chief communications officer for the city, told the *Texas Tribune* via email that the lawsuit was merely an attempt to "improperly use the court to advance [a] political agenda."



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