



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on December 8, 2016

State Official Threatens Christian Group Over Opposition to Gay Agenda

An openly homosexual elected official in Connecticut is threatening to strip the American Family Association (AFA) of its status as a charity to which state employees may donate via payroll deduction because he considers the group's traditional Christian positions discriminatory.

Connecticut State Comptroller Kevin Lembo (D), shown, the first openly gay man elected to statewide office in the Nutmeg State, is "married" to Charles Frey; the two men have adopted and reared three children. Naturally, Lembo is not particularly fond of the AFA's opposition to the homosexual agenda and its defense of traditional marriage. On November 30, he sent a [two-page letter](#) to AFA president Tim Wildmon announcing that he was "initiating an investigation to determine whether AFA is in compliance with the requirements of the" Connecticut State Employee Campaign for Charitable Giving (CSEC), a program that allows state employees to contribute to nonprofit charities via payroll deduction.



According to [OneNewsNow](#), the AFA's news division, the AFA "applied for qualified charity status through a group called Neighbor to Nation, which confirmed to OneNewsNow that the pro-family group meets every standard that Connecticut demands of its charities." Indeed, the charity has long participated in CSEC, though not with particularly impressive results: OneNewsNow reports that the group received a total of \$124 from Connecticut employees between 2000 and 2015.

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That minuscule amount, however, is apparently too much for Lembo, who cannot stomach the thought that even \$7.75 a year of state employees' own earnings should go to an organization such as the AFA. In his letter, he suggested that the group "may be in violation of the regulations governing the [CSEC] that broadly prohibit discrimination," as well as other state and federal nondiscrimination laws.

"What's being foisted upon the American Family Association is the latest iteration of 'If you don't adhere to the nouveaux orthodoxy of the day — which is the sexual deviancy agenda — then you must be castigated and expelled from public life,'" AFA general counsel Abraham Hamilton III told OneNewsNow.

While Lembo demanded the presumed-guilty AFA prove itself innocent by providing reams of



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documentation, “the letter never cites any state or federal laws of which AFA might be in violation,” Wildmon [observed](#). Instead, Lembo merely described various AFA policies of which he disapproves and asserted that such policies “may be violating these anti-discrimination prohibitions.”

Lembo derisively referred to the AFA’s “so-called attempts to protect family values [that] involve ‘combatting the homosexual agenda’ by boycotting companies that promote equal treatment, tolerance and acceptance of all families and marriages.” He specifically pointed to the group’s “nationwide petition to boycott Target for the company’s inclusive transgender restroom policy and denouncing Zales for ‘normalizing sin’ by advertising wedding bands to same-sex couples.”

Of course, as the AFA’s [Bryan Fischer](#) pointed out, “Target has made it company policy to allow men who may be sexual predators or video voyeurs to wander unchallenged into female dressing rooms, where they may film or molest our wives, our daughters, and our granddaughters. In Lembo’s utterly twisted view of the world, the bigots are those who want to protect the sexual integrity of females.”

Lembo also cited the AFA’s opposition to “gay and Muslim individuals serving in the U.S. military” and the fact that the group “has equated homosexuality with pedophilia, disease and violence.”

The comptroller didn’t counter these positions with facts but with feelings. “These actions and statements,” he wrote, “are extremely troubling to me — not only as an openly gay father and spouse — but as administrator of the CSEC.” The AFA’s opinions, he added, “appear to discriminate against the LGBTQ communities” and Muslims, and “it remains unclear what actual charitable services the AFA provides.”

One waits with bated breath for Lembo to voice similar concerns about such “charities” as Planned Parenthood, the National Abortion Federation, the National Council of La Raza, and the Hartford Gay and Lesbian Health Collective, all of which also qualify for CSEC, according to the program’s [website](#). Such organizations “discriminate” against people of opposing viewpoints much as the AFA does. But unlike the AFA, some of these “charities” also kill (unborn) people.

The AFA charges that Lembo is engaging in unconstitutional discrimination against them and any state employees who wish to contribute to them. Besides the U.S. Constitution’s guarantee of “free exercise” of religion, the Connecticut constitution states that “the exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination, shall forever be free to all persons,” although this provision “shall not be construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness, or to justify practices inconsistent with the peace and safety of the state.”

Fischer argues:

AFA’s views do not “excuse acts of licentiousness,” but quite the reverse. Our views urge moral self-restraint, adherence to the moral standards of the Ten Commandments, and the channeling of sexual energy into marriage, which according to God’s design consists of the union of one man and one woman. This is a recipe that is not “inconsistent with the peace and safety of the state” but instead produces it....

While accusing AFA of discrimination, Mr. Lembo is practicing it, exhibiting it, and displaying it. He is the one guilty of discrimination, and is a part of the reprehensible attempt on the part of secular fundamentalists to purge all traces of Christianity from the public square.

The AFA wants Lembo to retract his letter and issue a public apology for it. Whether he does or doesn’t, he certainly won’t forget his run-in with the group. He told the [Connecticut Post](#) Wednesday that AFA



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supporters had “swamped” his office switchboard and sent him over 10,000 e-mails. Not bad for a supposedly “fringe” organization.



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