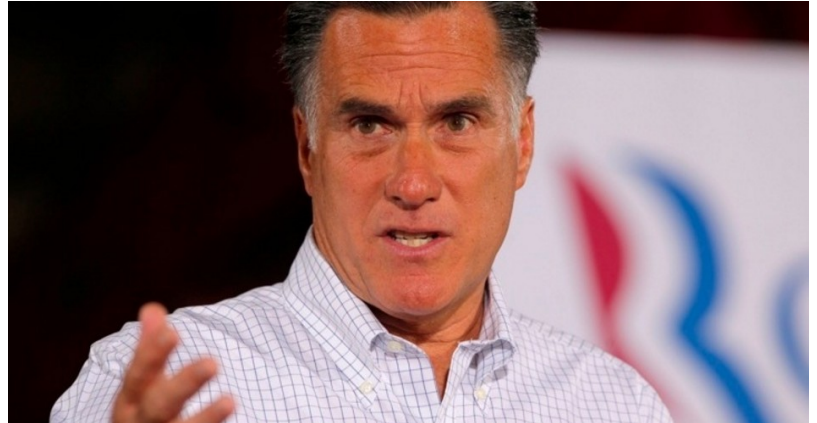




Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 7, 2012

Romney Keeps Distance From Chick-fil-A Controversy

Even as his former Republican campaign rivals Mike Huckabee and Rick Santorum and 2008 vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin were making pilgrimages to Chick-fil-A restaurants to show their support for company president Dan Cathy, Mitt Romney was carefully keeping his distance from the controversy over Cathy's statements in opposition to same-sex marriage. At a [press conference](#) in Las Vegas, Romney turned aside questions about the chicken restaurant and recent comments by Rep. Michelle Bachmann (R-Minn.) in which the former GOP presidential hopeful claimed American Muslims are engaged in an effort to spread the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the United States.



"Those are not things that are part of my campaign," Romney said at a news conference in Las Vegas on August 3. While Romney has in the past stated his support for the traditional concept of marriage as a union between a man and a woman, he seemed determined to keep his message centered on the faltering economy as the campaign draws closer to his nomination as the party's presidential candidate at the Republican National Convention in Tampa, Florida later this month. The online publication [Politico also reported](#) that the candidate declined to say whether other Republicans talking about those issues created a distraction.

"I'm not going to tell other people what to say," Romney said.

Proponents of same-sex marriage have urged a boycott of Chick-fil-A after the *Baptist Press* quoted Cathy, a devout Southern Baptist, as saying that he and his family-owned restaurant chain are "guilty as charged" of supporting groups that champion "the biblical definition of a family unit." Cathy later said that America is "inviting God's judgment on our nation when we shake our fist at him and say, 'We know better than you do as to what constitutes a marriage.'" The statement got more attention when the mayors of Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco said Cathy's restaurants would not be welcome in their cities and same-sex couples organized a "kiss-in" at various Chick-fil-A sites across the country.



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Apart from the marriage issue itself, the statements from the mayors provoked controversy over constitutional issues involved if city officials were to sue their offices to try to prevent a business from operating in their jurisdictions because of opinions expressed by its owner. Romney, however, is steering as far away from First Amendment questions as he is from the marriage controversy. He may also be wary of offending the Log Cabin Republicans whose votes he courted as “moderate” in Massachusetts politics, when, as a U.S. Senate candidate in 1994, he promised to be a more effective leader than Sen. Edward M. Kennedy in promoting “full equality for America’s gay and lesbian citizens.”

Whatever the reason, Romney has made clear that speaking up in defense of a beleaguered citizen’s First Amendment-guaranteed rights is not one of those things that are part of his campaign for President.

Photo of Mitt Romney in Las Vegas: AP Images



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