



March 10, 2013

Just over a year ago, an after-school charity started by a church on the west side of Charleston and housed in various churches throughout the city was sued. The lawsuit alleged that the ministry had committed discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

After all was said and done, the ministry had spent over a year in litigation and its leaders were pronounced guilty of discrimination. During the litigation, the mayor of Charleston reviewed a grant that Charleston had sent to assist the important work of this ministry. But, the mayor was upset by the fact that this ministry had declined to appoint a lesbian as its executive director.

According to reports, the mayor questioned the leaders of the ministry at a city council meeting, loudly criticizing them for their intolerance. In the end, the mayor removed the grant of about \$14,000 from the ministry because, he said, "It's because of their religion. Why did you fire her? Because you think homosexuality is a sin . . . I personally don't think we should fund anyone who goes against these ordinances, anyone who goes against what we stand for."

That is the case that supporters of adding "sexual orientation" to the state's Employment and Housing Nondiscrimination Act point to as motivation for their efforts.

As with the mayor of Charleston and a myriad of other examples from across the country teach us, such laws more often constrict religious liberty. Business owners and ministry leaders are protected by the First Amendment and ought not to be punished by the state simply for being a person of faith in public.

Learn more about this issue and how the Family Policy Council of West Virginia is working to advance, defend, and equip West Virginia's families through policy, politics, and preparation by visiting [FamilyPolicyWV.com/action](http://FamilyPolicyWV.com/action).



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