

Headline	Protest targets chicken chain in gay marriage row		
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## Protest targets chicken chain in gay marriage row

WASHINGTON: Protesters targeted a Chick-fil-A food truck in Washington after the fast-food chain's president came out candidly against same-sex marriage.

"Ho-ho, hey-hey, Chick-fil-A is anti-gay," chanted a young crowd of around 20 demonstrators, with no apparent impact on the steady flow of patrons picking up chicken sandwiches and nuggets under the hot midday sun.

Mainly present in the southern United States, but expanding into other parts of the country, Chick-fil-A is as famous for its Christian values – it never opens on Sundays – as it is for its menu.

But company president Dan Cathy angered gay rights groups and their allies when he criticized marriage equality, saying last week that Americans are "inviting God's judgment" by accepting the idea that two people of the same sex can wed.

Elected officials in Boston and Chicago have gone so far as to tell Chick-fil-A to stay out of their towns, while the Jim Henson Company said it would no longer supply its popular puppet toys to the family-owned chain.

Dan Rafter of the Human Rights Campaign, which organized the Washington protest, told AFP that Chick-fil-A has a "long history" of funding groups that oppose

greater rights for gays and lesbians.

"We're here to educate consumers," he said. "The Cathys have their personal beliefs, and that's fine... but there's a difference between personal beliefs and having them dictate your company's decisions and donations."

The dean of evangelical preachers in the United States, Billy Graham, sided strongly with Chick-fil-A and the Cathy family, which launched the 1,600-outlet chain in 1967.

"Each generation faces different issues and challenges, but our standard must always be measured by God's word. I appreciate the Cathy family's public support for God's definition of marriage," Graham, 93, said in a statement.

He endorsed a call by former Republican White House candidate turned talk show host Mike Huckabee for supporters of traditional marriage to go out and eat en masse at their local Chick-fil-A on August 1.

"As the son of a dairy farmer who milked many a cow, I plan to 'Eat Mor Chikin' and show my support by visiting Chick-fil-A next Wednesday," he said, quoting the chain's advertising slogan.

Critics of Chick-fil-A plan their own same-sex "kiss-in" for August 3. – AFP

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Customers line up at a Chick-fil A food truck in Washington that was targeted by about two dozen protesters after the fast-food chain's President Dan Cathy came out against marriage equality in the United States. – AFPphoto