

# SAN FRANCISCO MAYOR SHOWS INTOLERANCE FOR CATHOLICISM

Willie Brown, the mayor of San Francisco, is at war with the city's archdiocese. Showing his intolerance for Catholicism, Brown is trying to force Catholic Charities to abide by a domestic partnership bill. Under the bill, any organization that contracts with the city must provide health, pension and other benefits to its employees. Archbishop Levada of San Francisco has said that if the law were to apply to the Catholic Church, it would violate the Church's "ethical tenets."

It is the position of the archdiocese that to grant benefits to unmarried gay partners would send a message that gay relations and traditional marriage were equitable. In response, Mayor Brown has said that he will not allow Catholic Charities to be exempt from the law; the city has \$5.5 million worth of contracts with Catholic Charities. The Catholic League released the following statement to the media on this issue:

"Despite the fact that the Catholic Church doesn't impose its teachings on others (it rightly proposes lots of things), critics of the Catholic Church like to accuse it of such. Yet when people like Mayor Willie Brown truly seek to impose their views on others, the critics of the Church go mute. "

In virtually every city in the nation where domestic partnership bills have been passed, exemptions have been made for religious organizations. San Francisco stands in stark contrast to the tolerance exercised by other municipalities by coercing its contractors to collapse their principals so as to service the city's gay agenda. It is hoped that Archbishop Levada will stand fast and challenge this imposition in court.

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What Mayor Brown is saying is that those who contract with the city to service the poor, AIDS patients, the elderly, the disabled and the the homeless cannot do so unless they are prepared to sacrifice their principles on the altar of extremist politics. If Mayor Brown thinks that sex between people of the same sex is on a moral par with heterosexual unions in the institution of marriage—and what Catholics regard as the Sacrament of Matrimony—that is his business. But it is none of his business to jeopardize the welfare of the dispossessed by forcing those who disagree with him to forfeit their First Amendment rights of freedom of expression and freedom of religion.”

The league would like to see this issue tested in court. The First Amendment and the Religious Freedom Restoration Act offer constitutional protection from this kind of state interference in religion. It is the height of irony that San Francisco, which prides itself as the nation’s most tolerant city for gays to live in, is proving itself the most intolerant city for Catholics to reside.