

The Arena

Join the Debate

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Driving the Conversation:

Arena Ref: [David Mark](#)

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Let's take this chronologically. Chick-fil-A CEO Dan Cathy [told Baptist Press](#) that he supported "the biblical definition of the family unit." That was too much for [Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel](#), [Boston Mayor Thomas Menino](#), and others, Emanuel saying he'd block a new Chick-fil-A location in the city, Menino warning that "if they need licenses in the city, it will be very difficult - unless they open up their policies." That led to Mike Huckabee's call for a Chick-fil-A "[appreciation day](#)" and yesterday's massive show of support for CEO Cathy.

So to today's questions. Are politicians getting too involved in this controversy? Absolutely. It's one thing for them to express their opinions - they're free to do that, just as Dan Cathy is. But they go over the line when they threaten to use their power to punish Cathy for expressing his opinion. Emanuel and Menino are bully boys, plain and simple. Cathy's views may be narrow and intolerant. I'm of the view, for example, that people ought to be free to associate as they wish, as long as they respect the rights of others, and others ought to be free to respect those associations, or not. Government, however, cannot pick and choose which associations to respect. It belongs to all of us.

We don't know whether Cathy would support banning same-sex marriage - or at least I haven't seen evidence of that. We do know, however, that Emanuel and Menino would punish Cathy for speaking his mind. That's intolerance not simply of action but of speech. So, to today's second question, to the extent that the mayors' intolerance has been condemned, that's a good thing.