

POLITICS & GOVERNMENT MARCH 9, 2016 10:27 AM

LGBT Chamber president steps down after criticism of his sex-offender status

HIGHLIGHTS

Chad Sevearance-Turner was criticized by NC Values Coalition for record as a sex offender

Conservative group raised questions about LGBT Chamber's role in crafting expanded nondiscrimination ordinance



BY STEVE HARRISON

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The former president of Charlotte's LGBT Chamber of Commerce has resigned after he came under fire from a conservative group, which noted that he is on a sex offender list and questioned his role in supporting the city's expanded nondiscrimination ordinance.

Chad Sevearance-Turner had been the president of the chamber, which supported the newly expanded ordinance that gives legal protection for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals.

At a City Council meeting Feb. 8, Mayor Jennifer Roberts cited a survey that showed discrimination was a real problem for the LGBT community. During the meeting, she said the survey was conducted by the LGBT Chamber.

That prompted questions from the N.C. Values Coalition, which opposes the new LGBT protections in the ordinance.

Tami Fitzgerald, who leads the Raleigh-based coalition, first mentioned Sevearance-Turner's record at a Feb. 8 news conference outside the Government Center, which Sevearance-Turner attended. On Feb. 18, the coalition issued a news release further questioning the chamber's role in the survey.

Because of his record, "any supposed evidence provided by the group is discredited," she wrote.

Scott Bishop, the head of MeckPAC, a lobbying group for the LGBT community, said last month the chamber wasn't involved in the survey. He said a social worker distributed the surveys, which were then forwarded to MeckPAC.

In an interview with the Observer, Sevearance-Turner said his group didn't conduct the survey.

Sevearance-Turner was arrested in 1998, when he was 20, and charged in Cherokee County, S.C., with a "lewd act, committing or attempting a lewd act upon a child under 16."

A 2000 story in the Spartanburg Herald-Journal said Sevearance-Turner had been a youth minister at a church in Gaffney. A jury there found him guilty of fondling a 15-year-old teenage church member while the boy slept.

Before he stepped down as chamber president, Sevearance-Turner said the N.C. Values Coalition's criticism "did not surprise him."

He said his conviction had not stopped him from achieving success, such as being chamber president.

He couldn't be reached for comment Wednesday. Q Notes, a publication that covers Charlotte's LGBT community, reported Thursday that he had resigned.

Fitzgerald said Thursday that Sevearance-Turner's role in supporting the ordinance is troubling.

"No one who is a convicted sex offender should be leading a campaign to allow men to be in women's bathrooms and showers," she said. "It's just common sense."

The most controversial part of Charlotte's expanded nondiscrimination ordinance would allow transgender individuals to use either a men's or women's restroom. If the person identifies as female, they would be allowed to use a women's restroom in places of public accommodation.

Opponents have said that would make it easier for men to prey on women and girls inside women's bathrooms. Supporters said there are already laws against that, and that transgender people are the ones who face danger in bathrooms.

The N.C. General Assembly is considering a special session to overturn part of the ordinance.

The N.C. Republican Party issued a news release Monday highlighting Sevearance-Turner's role in the nondiscrimination ordinance.

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COMMENTS

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Virginia Marlow

I wouldn't be afraid to say around 60 % or more of our government officials are sex offenders or pedophiles themselves that's why they are so quick to push to pass all these sinful laws. That way when they get caught it won't make them look so bad. WAKE UP PEOPLE GOD KNOWS WHAT YOU ARE DOING AND NOT DOING BEHIND THE CLOSE DOORS! & He will be your judge.

Like · Reply · 1 · Mar 27, 2016 5:11pm



Neal Angel · Greer, South Carolina



What's next? Equal rights for pedophiles? LGBT to become LGPBT? It stands to reason. Thanks to the Observer & City Council for helping make this a reality. You've really raised the bar.

Like · Reply · 2 · Mar 11, 2016 10:08am



Tim Collie · Fort Mill, South Carolina

The Observer knew. I tweeted at reporters in mid Feb. ignored

Like · Reply · 4 · Mar 11, 2016 7:00am



Angela Bruce McGaha · Secretary at Corinth Baptist Church

How about bathroom designated by what your current body parts are....one bathroom for vaginas and one for penises? And 99.9999999 percent of the time that will be the same as women and men. And before someone calls me out about my statistics, I just made that up but I bet it is pretty accurate. Lol So who cares if you identify as female, if you still have a penis you probably still should stand up. This has got to be one of the dumbest ordinances ever. This is where we are in America today. Stupid silly little trivial things.

Like · Reply · 2 · Mar 11, 2016 2:36am



Bob Terrell

By stupid, trivial, silly little people! People without a brain, apparently.

Like · Reply · 1 · Mar 24, 2016 3:50pm



Jonathan Akash Poddar · Christ College, Bangalore

Just build another toilet for the trannies

Like · Reply · Mar 11, 2016 1:14am



John Blakely · North Mecklenburg High School

Makes you look really smart Mayor Roberts!

Like · Reply · 3 · Mar 10, 2016 4:58pm



De Har

To All: Consider that this entire campaign to get the City Council to vote on the 'Bath Room' ordinance is based on deceit, deception, and mis-direction. Chad Sevearance-Turner (Chad ST) used deceit as to his pedophile background and his guilty conviction as a sexual predator. The 'survey' was deceptive in that it was biased in it's questions and sampling. (please put the survey on this thread - along with the verbal instructions preceding taking the survey). The Charlotte Observer (CO) has been deceptive in presenting the advocates of this 'Bath Room' bill as law abiding citizens rat... See More

Like · Reply · 6 · Mar 10, 2016 12:51pm



Scott Kendall

To all: An adult who fondles a 15-year old is not a pedophile. Please do not abuse the English language in your excitement.

Like · Reply · 1 · Mar 24, 2016 5:01pm



Karl Lopez · Lakeland Junior Senior High School



Karl Logan · Lakeland Junior - Senior High School

Gary Metzgerwhich is neither here, nor there, in this argument. Stop bashing gays, Gary.

Like · Reply · 2 · Mar 10, 2016 10:11am



Jeff Thompson · Myers Park High School

Honey, are you OK??? Have you thought about going to Daniel Stowe gardens for a nice walk and calm down with hate and rage? But then again, you would probably find it a bigoted place because of types of plants they have there,

Like · Reply · 2 · Mar 10, 2016 12:59pm



Karl Logan · Lakeland Junior - Senior High School

Jeff Thompson Jeff, just a yes or no question: are you coming on to me, and am I the only one you call "Honey"?

Like · Reply · Mar 10, 2016 4:35pm



Gary McPherson

If I were the LGBT community, I would have vetted this guy better. He only serves to enforce stereotypes the community is trying to shed. Not to mention, this guy's final comments, "He said his conviction had not stopped him from achieving success, such as being chamber president." He has a whole lot of defiance and very little contrition for a man convicted of sexually assaulting a teenage boy while he slept.

I believe in live and let live, but when it comes to Pedophiles everyone should be doing their part to ensure Pedophiles don't insert themselves into leadership positions that can make boys vulnerable.

Like · Reply · 12 · Mar 10, 2016 9:34am



Marty Smith · Gastonia, North Carolina

And Charlotte likes to make fun of gastonia? Doesn't Charlotte have a building named after Bob walton?

Like · Reply · 8 · Mar 10, 2016 8:20am



Jeff Thompson · Myers Park High School

I NEVER understud that, AT ALL !!!

Like · Reply · 3 · Mar 10, 2016 9:22am

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