

Fargo coffee shop ‘bans’ legislators who voted down anti-discrimination bill

By [Adrian Glass-Moore](#) on Apr 3, 2015 at 7:31 p.m.

FARGO – A downtown coffee shop Friday mockingly declared it would deny service to all the legislators who a day earlier killed a bill that would have outlawed discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

A sign inside the Red Raven Espresso Parlor explained there was a ban, effective immediately, on 55 House Republicans who voted “no” – except, of course, if they were accompanied by a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, queer, intersex or asexual person.

A page of photos of each legislator’s face, cut out from the cover page of Friday’s Forum, was pasted next to the sign so that the politicians could be visually identified, if needed.

So, what if House Majority Leader Al Carlson, an opponent of extending legal protections to the state’s gays, wanted to order a coffee at the Red Raven sometime soon?

“I would serve him,” admitted Joe Curry, one of the cafe’s owners. “Hopefully he would be here to have a decent discussion.”

TRENDING

1. Grass fire that ravaged 500 acres a 'real close' call
2. DNR threatens to sue Detroit Lakes if city council approves new hotel near beach
3. 'I feel Cassidy with me': Fargo woman dedicates Boston Marathon run to girl who died by suicide
4. Historic Minn. bridge fire prompts investigation
5. Fargo woman badly hurt, charged with DUI in I-29 crash

[more >](#)

LATEST

Beavers beware: Fargo Park Board mulls trapping, killing
48 min ago

Hawley mom accused of lying passed out drunk, leaving baby in hot apartment with stove burning
53 min ago

Man accused of sexually assaulting man as he sleeps with children, fiancée
58 min ago

Mother Nature likely culprit in bison's new damage
1 hour ago

Gophers' Cobb gets second chance to impress with pro day
2 hours ago

[more >](#)

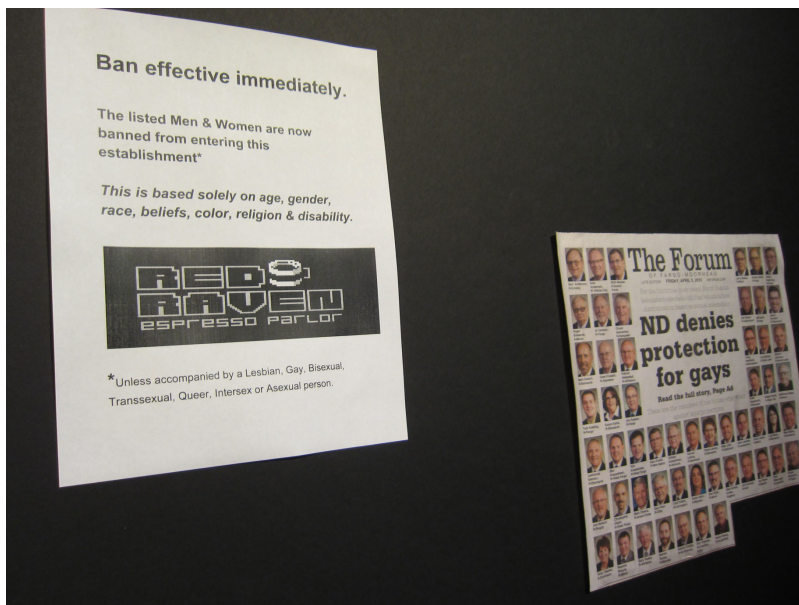
Top Ads

[VIEW ALL TOP ADS >>](#)

The satirical ban attracted plenty of attention online and delighted patrons of the coffee shop at 916 Main Ave.

“I think it’s (expletive) rad,” said 28-year-old Kendall Kerhes of Fargo, a regular at the Red Raven.

“It does bring a lot of awareness,” she continued, “and it’s cool that a business can do that for the community.”



Kerhes

said that a friend, the father of two young children, fielded questions from his kids about the people on the cover of Friday's edition of The Forum, which featured the faces and names of every House legislator who voted on the failed anti-discrimination bill.

After the parent explained what happened, the kids “were like, ‘Why can’t everyone be equal?’ ” according to Kerhes. “And if a 5-year-old can understand that, why can’t a bunch of adults understand that? It’s a little bit crazy.”

The bill, which had narrowly passed the Senate, was split into two parts before the House vote. If passed, the bill would have protected people from being discriminated against based on their sexual orientation, in matters of public accommodation and services as well as in housing, employment, credit transactions and brokerage services.

State law protects against discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental disability or status with respect to marriage or public assistance – but not sexual orientation.

When he learned that House Republicans killed the bill, Curry's reaction was: "Of course they did. We're gonna be the butt of more jokes."

Then he decided to make a joke of his own, but one that would spur a serious discussion.

His fake embargo on the opponents of the anti-discrimination measure was "a simple statement that I think a lot of people understand and identify with," he said. "We're just making a satirical, political statement."

After posting the ban message online in the morning, "a huge outpouring of support" followed, and the cafe was 10 times busier than normal Friday afternoon, Curry said.

"We've received presents, we've received phone calls in support," he said. Only one person called with a negative response.

One transgendered man made a cake with purple



frosting and delivered it to the Red Raven. Another person gifted a patch with the message, “Solidarity forever.” And that wasn’t all.

“I got a few hugs and high-fives,” Curry said.

Readers can reach Forum reporter Adrian Glass-Moore at (701) 241-5599

Related content:

[House members: Governor weighed in too late on sexual orientation discrimination bill](http://www.inforum.com/news/legislature/3714351-house-members-governor-weighed-too-late-sexual-orientation-discrimination)

(<http://www.inforum.com/news/legislature/3714351-house-members-governor-weighed-too-late-sexual-orientation-discrimination>)

[ND House kills bill outlawing discrimination based on sexual orientation](http://www.inforum.com/news/legislature/3713656-nd-house-kills-bill-outlawing-discrimination-based-sexual-orientation) (<http://www.inforum.com/news/legislature/3713656-nd-house-kills-bill-outlawing-discrimination-based-sexual-orientation>)

Adrian Glass-Moore

Readers are encouraged to reach Adrian Glass-Moore at (701) 241-5599 or aglassmoore@forumcomm.com with comments, criticisms and tips. He joined The Forum as its night reporter in 2014.

aglassmoore@forumcomm.com