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Church Sermons Under Scrutiny by Houston Mayor

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By [Doug Wead](#)

Houston city attorneys, under the direction of Mayor Annise Parker, have now subpoenaed sermons preached by selected pastors whom they believe are opposed to the city's new agenda.

Parker, the first openly lesbian mayor of a major city, promoted an ordinance banning anti-gay discrimination in the public and government subsidized venues. So far so good.

But a controversial part of the ordinance allowed transgender citizens to file discrimination lawsuits if prohibited from a restroom. Was this a problem? Where there signs up saying, "No transgenders allowed?"

Some Christian leaders now caught in the middle of the controversy contend that this was an angry politician, purposely poking the bear.

"No minister, anywhere, should ever have to submit a sermon to a government censor," Sen. Rand Paul said in a Twitter message.

Paul spoke up for the Houston pastors who have become the latest target in the city government's ongoing war against its own churches.

Paul declared, **"The First Amendment doesn't exist to keep religion out of government. It exists to keep government out of religion." Said Paul, "I stand with the pastors and churches in Houston against government interference and harassment."**

There were all kinds of discussions in the community. Who was to determine who was transgender and who was not? A doctor? A psychiatrist? Could a man suddenly declare himself a woman and enter a woman's restroom? With under age children?

As the proponents of the ordinance hoped, the churches reacted with confusion and panic. There was a recall effort launched to get the ordinance on the ballot. The churches gathered more than 50,000 signatures. It was well over the 17,269 needed.

And then the city poked again. The Houston city attorney declared that there were insufficient signatures. The churches sued.

The city attorneys issued subpoenas for their sermons. And not sermons from the churches who filed the lawsuit. No, they wanted sermons from other pastors whom they specifically targeted, whom they determined were against the ordinance and posed the biggest threat to the city. The subpoena called for "all speeches, presentations, or sermons related to HERO, the Petition, Mayor Annise Parker, homosexuality, or gender identity prepared by delivered by, revised by or approved by you or in your possession."

Concerned Christian leaders insist that this is not a comedy of errors, that it is not a mistake but it is a systematic, purposeful attempt to silence and frighten the churches into changing their doctrines and suborning free speech. The city attorney's will use taxpayer's money to bankrupt the churches and silence their political voices.

Thus the decision to go after the selected churches who were not even involved in the lawsuit with the city. It was much the same tactic that allowed the gay and lesbian takeover of the Episcopal Church, taking some congregations and using their resources to take over others.

Only this time it is acted out in the public square with public money which will now be used to destroy the churches and silence their voices.

The city has deep pockets. In fact, the churchgoers, paying their taxes, will ironically finance the city of Houston in its war to destroy their own culture.

Dr. Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission expressed sadness at the events and astonishment at the "audacity" of the Houston city government's attack on its own pastors and congregations.

Coincidentally, the day before the Houston subpoenas, Moore held a private meeting with Rand Paul at the senator's office in Washington, D.C. Part of the conversation was about the war on Christianity unfolding in places around the world. Who would know what the next volley would be fired by the city government of Houston, Texas?

Doug Wead is a presidential historian who served as a senior adviser to the Ron Paul presidential campaign. He is a New York Times best-selling author, philanthropist, and adviser to two presidents, including President George H.W. Bush. Read more reports from Doug Wead — [Click Here Now](#).