

Employee Fired for Commandments Pin

Says boss worried small lapel piece was 'public relations' problem

Posted: May 20, 2004
1:00 a.m. Eastern

© 2004 WorldNetDaily.com

Note from Pastor Kevin: As you read this article, think about what would happen if this employee had been fired for having a pin depicting the sword of Allah. I encourage you to call the Hoover Alabama Chamber of Commerce (205-988-5672 - <http://www.2chambers.com/hoover.htm>) and complain about their lack of tolerance, and share the gospel of Jesus with them.

A chamber of commerce employee in Alabama says he was fired for wearing a small lapel pin depicting the Ten Commandments.

Christopher Word – who attends the same church as "Ten Commandments judge" Roy Moore – said his boss, Hoover, Ala., Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Bill Powell, confronted him Monday after a weekly staff meeting, the Birmingham News reported.



Controversial pin (WSFA-TV, Montgomery, Ala.)

Word said he was told, "I could either take it off or I've got to go." The employee, who began wearing the pin in January, said he was allowed the rest of the day off to talk to his family about the decision. The next morning, Word said, "I told [Powell] I cannot violate my conscience to that point."

Word decided not to resign and was fired, he said, according to the Birmingham paper. The gold pin, in the shape of the Ten Commandment tablets, contained only the Roman numerals one through 10, the News said.

Moore, the former Alabama Supreme Court chief justice [ousted for refusing a federal court order](#) to remove his Ten Commandments display from the state judicial building, weighed in on the controversy. "The Hoover Chamber of Commerce should be embarrassed and ashamed to force a young man like Christopher Word to chose between his faith and his job," Moore said in a statement. "This demonstrates the perilous times in which we live.

We are fortunate to have men like Christopher who stand firm in the face of tyranny and will not surrender their right to acknowledge God."

Word said he had been wearing the pin "because I personally support the Ten Commandments and the public display of the Ten Commandments," the Birmingham paper reported.

An attorney for the Hoover Chamber of Commerce, A.W. Bolt, told reporters yesterday, "Wearing a monument pin in 2004 is a political act and we all know it." "Chris volunteered to a chamber employee that wearing the pin was the result of his long friendship with, knowledge and support of Chief Justice Roy Moore," Bolt said.

The pin appears identical to one Moore wears and sells on his website, according to WVTM-TV in Birmingham. Word said he stopped wearing the pin a few months ago after Powell told him "he had some concerns." But a week later, Word told his boss he wanted to wear it again after suffering a crisis of conscience. Powell, according to Word, agreed, saying he could continue to wear it as long as it didn't affect his work.



Christopher Word (WVTM-TV, Birmingham)

Powell also said, according to Word, he would support his employee if any chamber members raised objections. But Word said he was fired after a chamber member told Powell he was worried about the pin from "a public relations" perspective, the News reported.

Word had accompanied Powell on a trip to visit prospective chamber members when they dropped in on longtime member Don Levy, owner of Levy Advertising, who asked about the pin. Levy said he didn't object to "any religious connotation," but Word "took it one step further" and explained why he wore it.

Levy said Powell called him after the visit and he told Powell he was worried about the pin. "I think he's representing everyone when you're out trying to get chamber members," Levy told the News.

Word insisted yesterday the pin had no political connotation. A friend of Word's, Republican state Rep. Blaine Galliher, said Powell told him Word was making a political statement. Galliher disagreed, telling the News, "He didn't have 'Vote for Roy Moore' on his lapel, he had the Ten Commandments."

Word, whose father is executive pastor of CrossPoint Community Church in Gadsden, Ala., where Moore is a member, relates his firing to Moore's removal from office.

"Now this effort to choke out any reference to God has gone after normal people," Word told the Birmingham paper.

To: Hoover Chamber of Commerce Membership
From: Bill Powell, Executive Director Chamber Board of Directors
Re: Today's Press Conference

I'm sure most of you have seen or heard the news broadcasts within the past 24 hours of the termination of Christopher Word, formerly the Chamber's Membership Services Director. A press conference was held today at 3:00 p.m. outside the Chamber of Commerce office to clarify the Chamber Board's position on this matter. The Chamber Board's official announcement was made at that time as follows:

PRESS RELEASE The Hoover Chamber of Commerce is a non-profit organization composed of over 1,100 members who voluntarily join together to promote all businesses and all residents of the City of Hoover and surrounding areas. To achieve its goals, the Chamber does not get involved in partisan political issues in any way, except in very rare circumstances when authorized by the Board of Directors.

Last week, the Executive Director of the Chamber, Bill Powell, personally observed Christopher Word use his position as an employee of the Hoover Chamber of Commerce as a platform to advocate his personal political views about former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore. By that action, Christopher crossed the political line, and when he refused to follow the requests of his supervisor, he was terminated, with the full support of the Board of Directors.

This termination was not about religion or Christopher's particular beliefs in support of Judge Moore, as the Chamber is not against religion or Judge Moore. Rather, Christopher was terminated for making political statements while he was in the course and scope of his employment. Clearly, the Chamber cannot allow any employee at work to wear a lapel pin expressing a partisan political position, irrespective of whether the message is for or against Judge Moore.

Simply put, since the Chamber had not taken a position on that issue, it could not allow an employee to imply that it had. By its nature, the Chamber must enjoy the support and confidence of all citizens without regard to

individual views. To do so, it must insist that all employees refrain from partisan political activities while at work.

E-mail sent to Mr. Powell by Pastor Kevin on May 21, 2004

Dear Mr. Powell,

After reading about the firing of Mr. Word in a Worldnetdaily.com article, I called your chamber to see if it was true. I was referenced to your web site to read your Chamber's press release on the matter, where I learned it was your personal observation that Mr. Word was being "political" that led to Mr. Word's firing.

There are millions of Americans who would disagree with defining the Judge Moore issue as political. Instead, it was a very "historical" event when the judicial branches of our separated powers started exercising their tyranny over a man who was operating under the law of your great State.

I predicted then that this judicial tyranny would result in a rapidly escalating slippery sloop into national lawlessness. Now we have justices in Massachusetts telling the Legislative branch of that State what laws they must pass about marriage. Not only is this against the U.S. constitution about separation of powers, but also the State Constitution, which expressly states the legislative branch is responsible for making laws associated with marriage. The unchecked tyranny of four judges in Massachusetts will soon affect all citizens of this once great country.

No Mr. Powell, Mr. Word was not being political, he was a watchman on the wall, a modern day Paul Revere. Instead of shouting that the British are coming, he is saying that lawlessness and anarchy are coming. Those who would fire such a man are treasonous.

We are in a war for the survival of what this Country once stood for. It will take courage on the part of its citizens to win this war. If the cowardice of political correctness prevails instead, then you and your children will be cursed with the rest of us as we only remember what it was like to live in a free America that had a conscience based on the law, which was based on the commandments of the God of the Bible.

Hoping for a continuing America.

Sincerely,

Kevin Lea

(360) 876-7288