

Sports analyst Craig James claims religious discrimination

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DALLAS (BP)—College football analyst Craig James filed a religious discrimination lawsuit against [Fox Sports](#), alleging he was fired from a broadcasting position because of his Christian belief that homosexuality is sinful.

“This case is much bigger than me,” James said in a public statement from Liberty Institute, the Christian legal organization representing him. “It affects every person who holds religious beliefs. I will not let Fox Sports trample my religious liberty.

“Today, many people have lost their jobs because of their faith. Sadly, countless are afraid to let their bosses know they even have a faith. This is America, and I intend to make sure Fox Sports knows they aren’t above the law.”

After being hired by Fox Sports Southwest in 2013, James, a former NFL running back, worked one game and then was fired. A redacted copy of the lawsuit [posted online](#) by Liberty Institute states, “When James asked, defendants identified one—and only one—reason for terminating James: his beliefs about marriage, which are explicitly religious in nature.”

Eric Shanks, president of Fox Sports, said in [a 2014 deposition](#) James’ on-air performance had nothing to do with the decision to terminate him.

In response to James’ firing, a Fox Sports spokesman [told the Dallas Morning News](#) in 2013: “We just asked ourselves how Craig’s statements (about homosexuality) would play in our human resources department. He couldn’t say those things here.”

James made the statements at issue during a debate as he campaigned for the Republican nomination for a U.S. Senate seat in 2012, a seat Ted Cruz eventually won. In response to a question about civil unions, James said, "I'm a guy that believes in a man and a woman ... Adam and Eve, and what the Bible says."

In response to a follow-up question, James said he believes individuals choose to be gay, adding homosexuals are "going to have to answer to the Lord for their actions." James concluded, "As Christians, we've got to stand up."

The lawsuit seeks monetary relief of \$100,000 or more, plus punitive damages, attorney's fees and a declaration that the firing was illegal.