



Bolthouse Farms Responds to Boycott Over Founder's Contribution to Gay Marriage Ban

By Neal Broverman
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In front of a busy supermarket on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, a handful of protesters on Saturday stood up against Bolthouse Farms, a produce grower whose founder contributed \$100,000 to get Proposition 8 -- the initiative that would ban same-sex marriage in California -- on the ballot.

The protesters were representatives of Californians Against Hate, a group that draws attention to donors of Proposition 8. According to the group, Bolthouse founder William Bolthouse Jr. donated \$100,000 to a group called Protect Marriage/Yes on Proposition 8 in April. That donation helped put Prop. 8 on California's November ballot by providing money for petition circulators and signature gatherers.

Then Sunday, the current president and CEO of Bolthouse, Jeff Dunn turned up at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force brunch in Los Angeles with a contribution of his own... a personal donation of \$5,000 to benefit No on Prop. 8. According to a spokesperson for Bolthouse, William Bolthouse's contribution was made through his personal foundation, and the staff of Bolthouse Farms was unaware of the cash donation until it was made public in June.

Bolthouse Farms -- located in California's conservative San Joaquin Valley -- is one of the world's largest carrot operations in the world. In a 2004 *Christian Business Daily* article, Bolthouse Farms chairman of the board Andre Radandt stated, "Stewardship and integrity have always been a part of the business and have been well-established culturally... My job is to preserve that ... the integrity side involves using the business as a platform for ministry."

Hoping to discourage shoppers from buying Bolthouse products -- which in addition to produce includes juices and salad dressings -- the six demonstrators carried signs that included "No on Bolthouse,"

"William Bolthouse's \$100,000 contribution is an insult to gay and lesbian Americans," said CAH campaign manager Fred Karger in a press release. "Why should we spend our hard-earned money buying Bolthouse Farms' products only to have it used against us?"

In contrast, current Bolthouse CEO Dunn has done his part to reach out to LGBT people, beginning with his appearance at Sunday's brunch. In a fact sheet made available to the press, Dunn explained that Bolthouse offers full medical benefits to same-sex couples.