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# Court dismisses same-sex lawsuit against Gov. Haslam over state law

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NASHVILLE — The Tennessee appeals court dismissed a lawsuit against Gov. Bill Haslam over a state law that nullified a Nashville nondiscrimination ordinance in 2011, saying the plaintiffs weren't injured by the law.



The ordinance sought to bar companies that discriminate against gays and lesbians from doing business with the city. It also required protections for city contractors' employees as well. State law prohibits local governments from creating anti-discrimination regulations that are stricter than those of the state.

One of the plaintiffs was Lisa Howe, the former Belmont University soccer coach who parted ways with the university — a city contractor — after officials there learned she and her same-sex partner were expecting a child.

Her departure from the private Christian university was the impetus for the city's ordinance.

Howe is currently executive director of the Nashville Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Chamber of Commerce. She did not immediately return a call to The Associated Press on Thursday.

Plaintiffs in the suit argued that the state law sidelined protections against discrimination based on sexuality or gender identity.

A lower court ruled in 2012 that the plaintiffs lacked standing to sue because they weren't injured by the state law. The appeals court agreed in its opinion Tuesday.

"The trial court's judgment in this case is predicated entirely on its determination that appellants failed to allege a palpable, concrete, cognizable injury as opposed to one that is hypothetical or conjectural or that may arise at some future date," the appeals court ruled.

Plaintiffs can appeal to the Tennessee Supreme Court.

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