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A Lesson in Free Speech, Intolerance, and Libertarianism

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Sunday, April 26, 2009

[A Lesson in Free Speech, Intolerance, and Libertarianism](#)

The extremists in West Bend had a [petition drive](#) at various local businesses this weekend. They say ["intimidation tactics"](#) were used to bully some establishments to pull out their agreement to host them. Kevin Scheunemann, the [Libertarian Kewaskum Trustee](#) and [International Dairy Queen Drive-thru Champion](#), went so far as to say an ["intolerant gay lobby"](#) was involved.

Turns out it was just Maria Hanrahan, [who called each business](#) just to make sure they had actually agreed to host the petition drive. No threats were made, no intimidation, no bullying.

Surprise surprise: Ginny exaggerates.

But then the folks over at SafeLibraries stick their dirty noses into it, stating that a ["pro gay lobby is violating the free speech rights"](#) of Ginny and her crew.

WTF? Do these people even know what the [constitution says](#)? Long story short: your right to free speech protects you from *government* restrictions. You have no free speech right to sit in a business parking lot and collect signatures from people who support your intolerance. A business can allow you to do that, or they can decide not to. Further, anyone can call that business and talk to them about it; heck, even try to talk them out of it. There's no violation of any freedom of speech here.

But here's what I love about Ginny, SafeLibraries, and the various members of their club: their mastery of twisted logic and fair-weather use of principles when it meets their needs:

- Kevin Scheunemann, showing is Libertarian stripes, is tired of "government walking on the average taxpayer." But he seems to be fine with using the power of government to impose his values on fellow citizens by dictating what can be found in the library.
- If you are a member of the library board and make public comments about the current controversy, you've violated your code of ethics and [should be removed from office](#) (free speech be damned). But if you're a Kewaskum village trustee (Scheunemann) and publish your bigotry, you're a brave business leader, and any attempt to counter your actions is a [violation of free speech](#) (no need to pull him from his government position, apparently).
- And when confronted with a mother calling a few businesses to make sure they know about the petition drive they've agreed to host, it is being ["denied their freedom of speech by a vocal minority using threats and intimidation to shut them up"](#). But when it is a vocal minority using threats and intimidation to kick members off of library boards in order to get their homophobic intolerance into the libraries, that's just fine.

These people crack me up sometimes....