



11350 Random Hills Road, Suite 800, Fairfax, Virginia 22030 Phone (703) 934-6101 Fax (703) 352-3678

[fff@fff.org](mailto:fff@fff.org) [www.fff.org](http://www.fff.org)

## **What the Republicans Should Have Said** **by Scott McPherson**

According to the *Washington Times*, “Six Washington-area lawyers ... say they’d be happy to file suit against [a] landlord ... who ... cited a prospective tenant’s Republican affiliation when rejecting [his] request for housing.” “I assume someone will inform [the landlord] about the fair-housing laws,” one self-described “partisan” Republican, writing from Texas, told the *Times*.

The ruckus began when the parents of a young intern for Rep. John Linder (R.-Ga.), contacted a Mr. Peter Kelley about renting a room for their son while he was working in Washington for the congressman. In response, Kelley told them he was “quite alarmed” about “Rep. Linder’s [voting] record,” and therefore “would not feel right about having someone stay at [his] place who was working to advance views” with which he, Kelley, disagreed. “And so,” he wrote, “I must decline your request for a room here.”

No one can deny that this is a blatant case of discrimination. But rather than cite “fair-housing” laws, Representative Linder should boldly take to the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives and instead offer this moral lesson to the political Left:

“Mr. Kelley, you are absolutely right in your refusal to have your property used to further a cause with which you do not agree and by someone with whom you do not care to do business. In a society based on limited government, property rights, and individual freedom, your actions are the ultimate test of that foundation: Nothing better demonstrates the values we hold than to allow someone to do something we don’t like with his own property, as long as it does not infringe on the equal rights of others to do the same.

“Through a myriad of laws, rules, and regulations, the federal government has sought to inject itself, in violation of the Constitution, into the private relationships of its citizens and whittle away at the once-strong bulwark that private property provided between a free people and their political leaders.

“Once upon a time, a man could obtain, use, expand, sell, or trade his private property without so much as a nod from the government. Today, through its smorgasbord of fair-housing, environmental, equal-opportunity, revenue, labor, safety, zoning, and similar laws, not to mention an expansive definition of ‘eminent domain,’ government has established itself as the caretaker of all the property in the country and doles out to citizens only so much control over it as serves the interests of the government.”

“Mr. Kelley,” the congressman could proclaim, “you don’t like Republicans, and so have taken a principled stand against helping one. We won’t question, in law, the basis of your dislike for us. We applaud, if not your ideology and beliefs, then at least your refusal to have your property used as a means to another’s ends. We unhesitatingly respect your absolute right to control the circumstances under which your own property will be used.

“We ask only this in return: that you grant, to every single American, equal consideration.”

*Scott McPherson is a policy advisor at The Future of Freedom Foundation.*