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Group protests at Bellevue Baptist Church

(WMC-TV) - A group supporting gay, lesbian and transgender rights held a small protest in front of Bellevue



Baptist Church Saturday. The group claims the church is violating its tax-exempt status with a link on its website that directs users to the "Family Action of Tennessee" website. That website appears to endorse certain city council members in the October 6 election for their pro-family stance. About 20 people with the Tennessee Equality Project gathered Saturday to cast their votes at Bellevue Baptist, which is an early voting location. "They're welcome to talk about any issues they want to support," said Jonathan Cole with Tennessee Equality Project. "I don't want to interfere with anyone's religious beliefs, but when a 501 (3) (c) organization like a church steps over the legal line and starts recommending that people vote for certain candidates, they're acting like a political action committee and not a church." Bellevue Baptist's website still has the link to "Family Action of Tennessee," and has added a message saying, "Some members have inquired regarding Bellevue's tax-exempt status. Please know that we are fully aware of the law granting tax-exempt status to churches."

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