



Daley may appoint a homophobic alderman

By [Kevin Wayne](#)

The possible appointment of homophobic alderman stirs rage in Chicago's LGBT community

Chicago, IL - Chicago Alderman Billy Ocasio started his new job as a senior advisor for Illinois Governor Pat Quinn this morning, yet it's the news on who his replacement could be that is causing a major stir in Chicago's gay and lesbian community.

Ocasio announced his resignation from his post last month and has reportedly asked Mayor Richard M. Daley to appoint the Rev. Wilfredo De Jesus, a man who has said he opposes abortion and homosexuality, as his replacement in the 26th Ward serving Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood.

This appointment would make room for the first openly homophobic alderman on Chicago's City Council.

The 44 year-old De Jesus is the powerful evangelical pastor of the 4,000 member New Life Covenant Ministries on the city's West Side.

New Life is an Assembly of God church and a spiritual study guide on the church's Web site refers to homosexuality as the "work of the devil."

In October 2008, De Jesus told *Christianity Today* that "opposing abortion and homosexuality have been the paramount moral issues for him."

According to a report in the [Windy City Times](#), proponents of Chicago's Pride Campus, a high school where lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender teens would be able to study free from harassment and bullying, have accused De Jesus of being the driving force behind efforts to stop the proposal.

In opposition to the Pride Campus, De Jesus reportedly told the *Booster* newspaper, "What about that girl who is a virgin, who is being harassed by lesbians and guys to have sex, and yet you're going to build a gay school?" he said. "It's not fair."

Local gay-rights activists are urging Daley not to appoint De Jesus to the 26th Ward seat.

"The mayor has been made aware of the concerns of our community," 44th Ward Ald. Tom Tunney told the [Chicago Sun-Times](#). Tunney, the city's first openly-gay alderman, has not said whether he'd vote to confirm De Jesus. "I hope I don't have to make that decision."

"I am appalled and completely oppose that such a person could represent me in any city business," Carlos Mock, a Puerto Rican gay activist, wrote in a published letter in the *Windy City Times*. "I encourage every pro-choice and pro-gay member of the 26th Ward to write to Mayor Daley and complain."

Rick Garcia, Equality Illinois' director of public policy, told Laura Washington of the [Sun-Times](#), "We are very inclined to oppose his appointment because of his public statements about gay people, our civil rights and our relationships."

De Jesus also serves as vice president of Social Justice for the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, a national group which serves about 15 million born-again Christians.