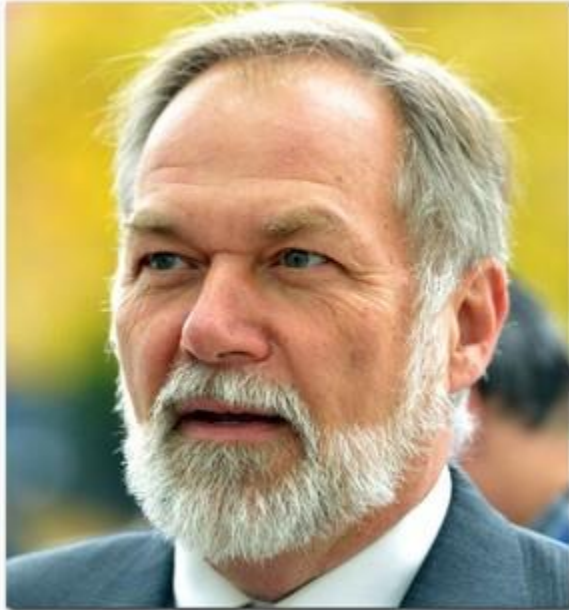


Anti-LGBT Springfield pastor Scott Lively to challenge Gov. Charlie Baker in GOP primary

Updated 1:52 PM; Posted 10:27 AM



Scott Lively, a controversial anti-gay pastor and activist, announced Friday Dec. 8, 2017 that he will run as a Republican in Massachusetts' 2018 gubernatorial contest, setting up a primary fight against incumbent Gov. Charlie Baker. (File photos)

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SPRINGFIELD -- [Scott Lively](#), a controversial anti-gay pastor and activist, announced Friday that he [will run as a Republican](#) in Massachusetts' 2018 gubernatorial contest, setting up a primary fight against incumbent Gov. [Charlie Baker](#).

Lively, who previously ran as an independent against Baker in 2014, said the governor's work on Beacon Hill has inspired him to once again throw his hat into the ring.

Calling the governor a "Republican-in-name-only," Lively contended that Baker has hurt conservative values, legislated as a "de-facto big government pro-abortion Democrat" and "plundered the treasury of the Republican Party to wage war on conservatives."

Further, Lively argued, the incumbent governor "has presided over a sizable drop in Republican enrollments -- on track to transforming the Grand Old Party into his own personal nest of corrupt patronage and cronyism that will represent less than 10 percent of the electorate by 2020."

"Somebody needs to stop Charles Baker before he completely destroys the Republican Party and its foundation of principled conservatism that is the only real hope for restoring Massachusetts to its former strength and health," he said in a statement. "I think that person is Scott Lively."

Lively runs the church Redemption Gate Mission Society and owns the coffee shop Holy Grounds.

In 2012, the Center for Constitutional Rights filed a "crimes against humanity" lawsuit against the pastor on behalf of Sexual Minorities Uganda for Lively's reported actions in Uganda in support of a controversial law criminalizing homosexuality in that country.

U.S District Court Judge Michael A. Ponsor dismissed the case against Lively in June, ruling it lacked the jurisdiction to proceed in a U.S. court.

He, however, noted in his 25-page decision, that he found Lively's views on LGBT issues ranging from "the ludicrous to the abhorrent" and that "the crackpot bigotry could be brushed aside as pathetic, except for the terrible harm it could cause."

Lively, in response to the ruling, filed an appeal charging that Ponsor, although reaching the correct conclusion, directed language at the pastor that was mean.

News of Lively's decision to enter the Massachusetts governor's race drew criticism from the Human Rights Campaign, which described the Republican's values as "hate."

"He is one of America's most notorious exporters of dangerous ideologies around the globe, and he's hell-bent on dragging Massachusetts down the same path," said JoDee Winterhof, HRC Senior Vice President for Policy and Political Affairs, in a statement. "Lively's politics of hate and fear do not represent Bay Staters."

Lively is not the only candidate looking to unseat Baker, [who announced](#) he would seek re-election in late November.

Newton Mayor [Setti Warren](#); [Jay Gonzalez](#), a former CEO of CeltiCare Health and ex-budget chief for former Gov. Deval Patrick; and [Robert K. Massie](#), an environmentalist and entrepreneur, have filed to run as Democrats in next year's gubernatorial election.