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Houston-area teacher fired for attending drag show at downtown bar

The 19-year veteran teacher was let go based on social media posts on her personal account from a drag performance at Houston's Hamburger Mary's.

By **Michael Murney** July 26, 2023



The 19-year veteran teacher was fired based on social media posts on her personal account from a drag performance at Houston's Hamburger Mary's.

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A Texas teacher was fired earlier this month for attending a drag performance in downtown Houston. Kristi Maris, a co-worker and her daughters went to a July 13 drag show at Hamburger Mary's, an iconic queer venue that attracted anti-LGBTQ and far-right protests at its downtown Houston location last year.

Maris posted photos and videos from the show on Facebook the next day with the caption "This was such a blast!!!!"

Soon after, Maris got a phone call from First Baptist Academy in Baytown, located east of Houston, where she'd taught for 19 years, informing her she had been fired. "I feel like we were treated like criminals," Maris said, according to ABC 13's Pooja Lodhia.

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Per ABC 13's Lodhia, the school's senior pastor referenced the school's operating policies manual when asked about the firing. The pastor specifically cited a line stating that employees "will act in a godly and moral fashion at work, on Facebook and in my community."

Maris agreed to the clause but wasn't aware attending a drag show violated it, she told Lodhia. "They're entertainers. I would've never thought in a million years

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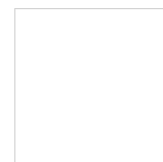
that this would happen. Never. We were in disbelief. We still are. We were heartbroken. We had relationships with parents and the kids, and I didn't even get to say goodbye to a lot of the kids," Maris told ABC 13.

The veteran teacher said the firing clashes with her devout Christian beliefs. "For almost 20 years, I've taught children to love each other. I've talked to them and told them, 'You have to get along. God loves

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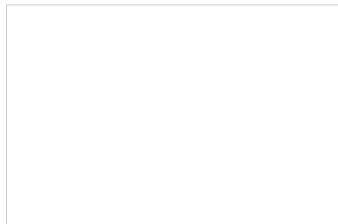
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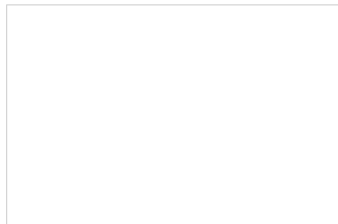
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Michael Murney is a reporter at Chron and a reporting fellow with the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting. He was previously a staff writer with the Dallas Observer and has written for Chicago's South Side Weekly and the Chicago Reader.

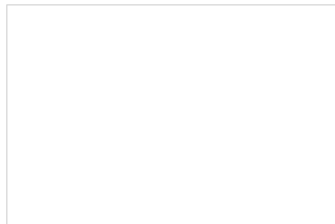
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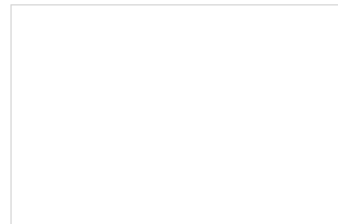
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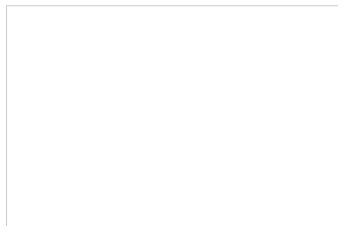


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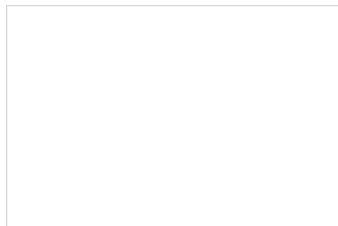
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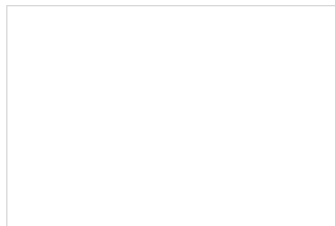
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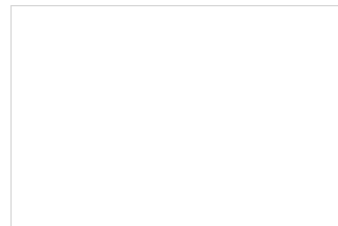
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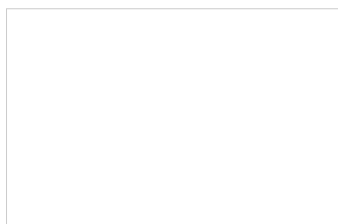
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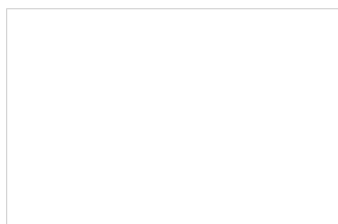
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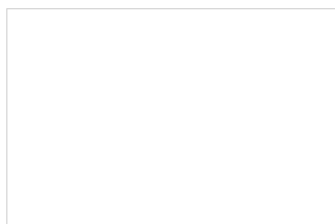
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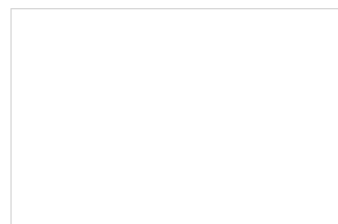
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