

Chicago mayor sued by journalist for limiting interviews to reporters of color

- *Lori Lightfoot says city press corps lacks diversity*
- *Reporter for Tucker Carlson-founded Daily Caller files suit*



Lori Lightfoot listens to a question in Chicago.

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A white reporter for a rightwing media outlet founded by the Fox News host Tucker Carlson has sued Chicago's mayor, Lori Lightfoot, over her temporary decision to grant interviews only to journalists of color.

Thomas Catenacci and the Daily Caller News Foundation argue in the lawsuit that Lightfoot discriminated against the reporter because of his race.

They argue that Lightfoot violated their first amendment rights and Catenacci's right to equal protection by not responding to an interview request on the day of her second anniversary in office or in the days that followed.

The suit was filed on Thursday in federal court in Chicago by a conservative organization, Judicial Watch.

Lightfoot, Chicago's first Black female and first openly gay mayor, said on 19 May she would grant interviews marking the second anniversary of her inauguration on 20 May exclusively to journalists of color.

She said she meant to draw attention to the fact that the press corps is “overwhelmingly white” and male in a city where white people make up only about a third of the population.

Critics included Carlson, who called Lightfoot “a monster” and racist.

Lightfoot reiterated her position at a 20 May event, and called on media organizations to diversify.

“The fact that the City Hall press corps is overwhelmingly white, has very little in the way of diversity, is an embarrassment,” Lightfoot said. “One day out of 365, I say that I’m going to mark the anniversary of my two years in office by giving exclusive one-on-ones to journalists of color, and the world loses its mind.”

Catenacci’s lawsuit says he emailed requests for a one-on-one interview on 20, 21 and 24 May. It says he had not received a response as of Thursday.

A University of Chicago law professor, Geoffrey Stone, told the Chicago Tribune he expected the lawsuit to be thrown out. He noted officials commonly pick outlets to favor, and that Lightfoot said her decision was not a blanket policy.

“Given that she’s talking only about one day, it seems to be blown out of proportion, to make a fuss over it,” Stone said.