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PEOPLE FOR THE AMERICAN WAY FOUNDATION

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Human Rights Groups Urge Public Officials Not to Attend Values Voter Summit, Avoid Legitimizing Anti-LGBT Extremism

A coalition of human rights groups is calling on public officials not to attend the upcoming Values Voter Summit in Washington, D.C., because its host, the Family Research Council, has spread demonizing lies about the LGBT community, and because one of its co-sponsors, the American Family Association, has linked homosexuality to the Holocaust.

"Given the FRC's and AFA's public statements, we urge you not to lend the prestige of your office to the summit," the coalition wrote in letters to House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan, Sens. Jim DeMint and Rand Paul, and other public officials who have been invited to speak at the summit.

"The FRC is far outside the mainstream," the letter states. "It has engaged in repeated, groundless demonization – portraying LGBT people as sick, vile, incestuous, violent, perverted, and a danger to the nation. One of its officials has gone so far as to say that homosexuality should be criminalized."

"The FRC's extremism is vividly illustrated," the letter adds, "by the fact that it has invited the American Family Association (AFA) to co-sponsor the Summit at which you have been invited to speak. Here is what Bryan Fischer, the AFA's Director of Issue Analysis, wrote in 2010: 'Homosexuality gave us Adolph Hitler, and homosexuals in the military gave us the Brown Shirts, the Nazi war machine and 6 million dead Jews.'"

The coalition letter also points out that the FRC has repeatedly claimed that gay men molest children at far higher rates than heterosexual men do, despite the fact that all credible scientific authorities reject the claim.

The three-day summit begins Friday. The letter can be read at: www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/VVS2012_Letter.pdf

The human rights groups that signed the letters are: the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC); People for the American Way Foundation (PFAWF); the Human Rights Campaign Foundation

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(HRCF); the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD); the National Black Justice Coalition (NBJC); the National Council of La Raza (NCLR); and Faithful America.

The public officials to whom the letter was sent are: U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann, Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer, House Majority Leader Eric Cantor, Virginia Attorney General Ken Cuccinelli, U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint, U.S. Rep. Jeff Fortenberry, U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp, U.S. Rep. Jim Jordan, U.S. Rep. Steve King, U.S. Rep. Jim Lankford, Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell, U.S. Sen. Rand Paul, U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan, and U.S. Rep. Allen West.

"Our message is a simple one," said Richard Cohen, president of the Southern Poverty Law Center. "Public officials should not lend the prestige of their office to groups that spread demeaning and false propaganda about other people."

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