

SPLC Statement on Dr. Ben Carson

In October 2014, we posted an “Extremist File” of Dr. Ben Carson. This week, as we’ve come under intense criticism for doing so, we’ve reviewed our profile and have concluded that it did not meet our standards, so we have taken it down and apologize to Dr. Carson for having posted it.

We’ve also come to the conclusion that the question of whether a better-researched profile of Dr. Carson should or should not be included as our “Extremist List” is taking attention from the fact that Dr. Carson has, in fact, made a number of statements that express views that we believe most people would conclude are extreme. They are described below.

We laud Dr. Carson for his many contributions to medicine and his philanthropic work, and we, like so many others, are inspired by his personal story. Nevertheless, particularly because Dr. Carson is such a prominent person, we believe that his views should continue to be closely examined.

“Marriage is between a man and a woman. It’s a well-established pillar of society and no group, be they gays, be they NAMBLA [North American Man/Boy Association, a group advocating pedophilia], be they people who believe in bestiality—it doesn’t matter what they are, they don’t get to change the definition.”

—Interview on Fox News’ “Hannity,” March 26, 2013

“I think people have completely taken the wrong meaning out of what I was saying. First of all, I certainly believe gay people should have all the rights that anybody else has. What I was basically saying is that as far as marriage is concerned, that has traditionally been between a man and a woman, and nobody should be able to change that.”

—Quoted on *The Baltimore Sun*, March 29, 2013, apologizing for remarks made three days earlier

“[I]f we can redefine marriage as between two men or two women or any other way based on social pressures as opposed to between a man and a woman, we will continue to redefine it in any way that we wish, which is a slippery slope with a disastrous ending, as witnessed in the dramatic fall of the Roman Empire.”

—*America the Beautiful: Rediscovering What Made This Nation Great*, 2012 book written with Candy Carlson



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“If you look in the writings of a lot of the neo-Marxists, when they talk about the New World Order, they say there’s only one stick in the mud: the United States. How do you get them out of the way, or how do you change them? And they said there were two fundamental things, their Judeo-Christian faith and their strong families. Those were the things that had to be attacked and those things have been systematically attacked over the last several decades.”

—**Speech to the National Organization for Marriage, June 19, 2014**

“Obamacare is really the worst thing that has happened in this nation since slavery. And ... in a way, it is slavery.”

—**Values Voter Summit, Washington, D.C., Oct. 11, 2013**

“I mean, [our government and institutions] are very much like Nazi Germany. ... You know, you had a government using its tools to intimidate the population. We now live in a society where people are afraid to say what they really believe.”

—**Quoted by Breitbart News, March 12, 2014**

“Throughout history many societies have failed to push back and have allowed an overly aggressive government to expand and dominate their lives. Nazi Germany is a perfect example of such a society. ... [Adolf Hitler’s] regime may have started out innocently enough, but because the people did not oppose a progressively overreaching government, the entire world suffered a great Holocaust.”

— ***One Nation: What We Can All Do To Save America’s Future*, 2014 book. In fact, Hitler’s regime did not start out “innocently enough.” The Nazis had repeatedly engaged in murder before coming to power in 1933, and the two parts of Hitler’s *Mein Kampf*, describing his hatred of Jews, were published in 1925 and 1926**

“Because 9/11 is an isolated incident.”

—**Quoted in The Daily Beast, June 5, 2014, on why he thinks Obamacare is worse than the Al Qaeda attacks that killed close to 3,000 Americans**

“Will you listen? You have to take a long-term look at the ascent of something that fundamentally changes the power structure of America. You have to be someone who reads. Who is well read. I want you to go back tonight. I want you to pull out what Saul Alinsky says about health care under the control of government.”

—**Quoted in The Daily Beast, June 5, 2014, after being pressed on why he thinks Obamacare is worse than 9/11.** He reference to the late Alinsky is to a man who wrote about community organizing and who is frequently attacked by far-right activists who see him having organized a long-term plan to turn America socialist

“They’re the most racist people there are. Because they put you in a little category, a box: ‘You have to think this way, how dare you come off the plantation?’”

—**To radio talk show host Mark Levin, April 1, 2013, talking about white liberal critics of racism**



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“These citizens of America who really are pretty upstanding people, they become terrorists because you don’t like the fact that they are standing in your way, doing what they have been doing for over 100 years.”

— **On Washington Times Radio, April 23, 2014, praising the armed militiamen and others who rallied to scofflaw Cliven Bundy, a radical Nevada rancher who refused to pay some \$1 million in grazing fees**

“I personally have talked to, you know, a number of military officials and CIA people who have told me that they are very vigilant, and they are not going to cooperate if there’s ever any type of government takeover of the people’s rights and that to me is very encouraging. ... What our government is doing is not unprecedented, by any stretch of the imagination. It always starts like this and freedom is not free and there may come a time when people have to actually stand up against the government. I hope that doesn’t happen.”

— **On Washington Times Radio, April 23, 2014, raising the specter of government action that would require armed resistance**

“Citizens should be able to own weapons, they should not have to report what weapons they own so that somebody can come and collect those weapons before, you know, they start their martial law.”

— **On Washington Times Radio, April 23, 2014, referring to the common right-wing canard that the government may soon impose martial law**

“The massive show of federal force in the Bundy case is frightening because it gives us a brief glimpse of the totalitarian regime that awaits a sleeping populace that does not take seriously its voting responsibilities and places in public office (and returns to public office) people who do not represent traditional American values.”

— **April 23, 2014, column in the conservative news site Townhall**

“Such domination is considerably more difficult when people have arms and can put up significant resistance. This is the reason that brutal dictators like Fidel Castro, Josef Stalin, Mao Zedong, Adolf Hitler and Idi Amin tried to disarm the populace before imposing governmental control. Such domination could occur in America in the not too distant future if we are not vigilant.”

— **April 23, 2014, column in the conservative news site Townhall, referencing the debunked right-wing claim that Hitler took citizens guns away to establish a dictatorship. In fact, Hitler loosened gun regulations for all Germans other than German Jews, whose weapons he did outlaw.**