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SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER**

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We understand that you've been invited to speak at the upcoming Values Voter Summit being held in Washington, D.C., from Sept. 25-27. Given the demonizing lies about the LGBT community spread by the host, the Family Research Council (FRC), and a major sponsor of the event, the American Family Association, we urge you to not lend the prestige of your office or candidacy to the summit.

The FRC has amassed an extensive record of vilifying gays and lesbians with falsehoods – portraying them as sick, evil, incestuous, violent, perverted, and a danger to the nation. Perhaps its most insidious claim is that gay men molest children at a far higher rate than heterosexual men. Despite the fact that this claim has been refuted by all credible scientific authorities, including the American Psychological Association, the FRC has continued to smear gays and lesbians by claiming that pedophilia, in the words of FRC President Tony Perkins, “is a homosexual problem.”

Perkins also says the “It Gets Better” campaign, an initiative designed to give LGBT students hope for a better tomorrow, is “disgusting” and part of a “concerted effort” to “recruit” children into the gay “lifestyle.” One senior FRC official has even argued that homosexuality should be illegal.

The AFA has called an Office Depot anti-bullying campaign a “horribly irresponsible” attempt to “indoctrinate your children that they are born gay,” adding that it would “ultimately lead children to a higher chance of becoming victims to alcohol and drug abuse, depression and even suicide.” Its president, Tim Wildmon has said homosexuality is “unnatural, it’s immoral, it’s unhealthy” and is a “destructive lifestyle and behavior.”

In addition, a speaker at the summit, Liberty Counsel Chairman Mat Staver, said last month that the Boy Scouts’ decision to allow LGBT leaders will result “in all kinds of sexual molestation” and create a “playground for pedophiles to go and have all these boys as objects of their lust.”

Demonizing the LGBT community has consequences. As FBI data demonstrate, this community is one of the groups most likely to be victimized by violent hate crimes. Defaming them publicly day after day – as the FRC, the AFA and the Liberty Counsel do – only throws fuel on the fire.

The bigotry of the FRC and the AFA is not limited to gays and lesbians. Wildmon has called Islam a “religion of war, violence, intolerance, and physical persecution of non-Muslims.” The

FRC's executive vice president, Lt. Gen. Jerry Boykin, has said Jews must be converted to Christianity and has argued that "Islam is not a religion and does not deserve First Amendment protections" – a statement that is antithetical to American ideals. Boykin also says that "Islam is evil."

In addition, the Values Voter Summit this year has extended a speaker invitation to ACT! for America founder Brigitte Gabriel, who has been described by *The New York Times Magazine* as a "radical Islamophobe." She says that a "practicing Muslim, who believes in the teachings of the Koran, cannot be a loyal citizen to the United States of America."

Most elected officials have been careful not to align themselves with racial bigotry. In 1999, for example, then-RNC Chairman Jim Nicholson called on party members to shun the Council of Conservative Citizens, a group that has described African Americans as "a retrograde species of humanity," arguing that a "member of the party of Lincoln should not belong to such an organization." Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and Rep. Bob Barr, both of whom had spoken at CCC events, immediately distanced themselves from the group and said they had been unaware of the group's racism.

In 2012, RNC Chairman Reince Priebus said that "people in this country, no matter straight or gay, deserve dignity and respect." The question before you today, therefore, is where the party of Lincoln stands in 2015 on vilifying the LGBT community and other minority groups. You can help answer that question by saying no to bigotry and declining the invitation to speak at the Values Voter Summit.

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Citations

1. The American Psychological Association concludes: “Despite a common myth, homosexual men are not more likely to sexually abuse children than heterosexual men are.”
Source: American Psychological Association, “Understanding Child Sexual Abuse: Education, Prevention, and Recovery,”
<http://mediamatters.org/print/research/2013/02/12/pedophilia-myth-tainted-cable-news-coverage-of/192627>
2. Tony Perkins writes that pedophilia is “a homosexual problem.”
Source: Tony Perkins, “Cardinal Ruffles Gay Feathers,” April 16, 2010,
www.academia.org/cardinal-ruffles-gay-feathers/
3. Tony Perkins writes that the “It Gets Better” series of videos is “disgusting” and part of a “concerted effort to persuade kids that homosexuality is okay and actually to recruit them into that lifestyle.”
Source: Family Research Council fundraising letter, August, 2011,
www.splcenter.org/get-informed/intelligence-files/groups/family-research-council
4. Peter Sprigg calls for criminalization of homosexuality. Sprigg, FRC’s senior fellow for policy studies, says that gay behavior should be outlawed and that “criminal sanctions against homosexual behavior” should be enforced.
Source: MSNBC’s “Hardball with Chris Matthews,” Feb. 2, 2010,
www.msnbc.msn.com/id/35224225/
5. The AFA called an Office Depot anti-bullying campaign a “horribly irresponsible” attempt to “indoctrinate your children that they are born gay,” adding that it would ultimately lead children to a higher chance of becoming victims to alcohol and drug abuse, depression and even suicide.”
Source: AFA Action Alert, July 20, 2012
<http://thinkprogress.org/lgbt/2012/07/23/569901/hate-group-attacks-office-depot-and-lady-gaga-because-homosexuality-is-a-poor-and-dangerous-choice/>
6. Tim Wildmon says homosexuality is “unnatural, it’s immoral, it’s unhealthy” and is a “destructive lifestyle and behavior.”
Source: Tim Wildmon, “Sandy Rios in the Morning,” AFA Radio, Oct. 2, 2012
<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/tim-wildmon-never-stop-fighting-big-gay>
7. Mat Staver says the Boy Scouts’ decision to allow LGBT leaders will result “in all kinds of sexual molestation” and create a “playground for pedophiles to go and have all these boys as objects of their lust.”
Source: Mat Staver, “Faith and Freedom Radio,” Aug. 11, 2015,
www.rightwingwatch.org/content/staver-boy-scouts-will-now-become-playground-pedophiles
8. Tim Wildmon calls Islam a “religion of war, violence, intolerance, and physical persecution of non-Muslims.”
Source: Tim Wildmon commentary, *Northeast Mississippi Daily Journal*, March 4, 2012

<http://djournal.com/opinion/tim-wildmon-newsweek-report-details-extent-of-muslim-christophobia/>

9. Lt. Gen. William Boykin says that “Islam is not a religion and does not deserve First Amendment protections.”

Source: William Boykin, “Family Talk,” February 2012,

www.rightwingwatch.org/content/dobson-and-boykin-expose-muslim-conspiracy-take-over-world

10. Gen. William Boykin says that “Islam is evil.”

Source: William Boykin, “Prophetic Perspectives with Rick Joyner,” Feb. 27, 2012,

<http://www.rightwingwatch.org/content/boykin-islam-evil>

11. Brigitte Gabriel says that a “practicing Muslim, who believes in the teachings of the Koran, cannot be a loyal citizen to the United States of America.”

Source: Brigitte Gabriel, Lecture at Joint Forces Staff College, June 2007,

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