

CNN Recklessly Attacks Pro-Family Organizations as Hate Groups

CNN has published a fake news article, "Here are all the active hate groups where you live," that recklessly lists pro-family organizations, including Liberty Counsel, as active "hate groups" throughout the nation.

Liberty Counsel has sent a demand letter to CNN regarding this article that cites the discredited Southern Poverty Center Law (SPLC), a reckless organization that falsely labels nonviolent people and organizations as "haters" or "hate groups."

"I am shocked that CNN would publish such a false report on the heels of the Charlottesville tragedy," said Mat Staver, Founder and Chairman of Liberty Counsel. "To lump peaceful Christian organizations, which condemn violence and racism, in with the KKK, Neo-Nazis and white supremacists is offensive. This is the epitome of fake news and is why people no longer trust the media," said Staver.

This CNN article is not only defamatory but causes a serious security threat to Liberty Counsel and other pro-family organizations, especially after the recent Charlottesville tragedy. The SPLC "hate" designations already have been linked to two attempted mass murders.

In fact, Tuesday was the five-year anniversary of an attempt at mass murder by Floyd Lee Corkins II, who entered the lobby of the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., "with the intent to kill as many employees as he was able." Corkins confessed to the FBI that he had searched the SPLC's "Hate Map" and selected the Family Research Council as his victim.

James Hodgkinson recently gunned down Rep. Steve Scalise, R-La., and others at a Republican baseball practice. In 2015, the SPLC wrote an article pushing the idea that Rep. Scalise promoted white supremacy and supported a “hate group” founded by former KKK member David Duke. The SPLC article clearly tries to infer that Rep. Scalise is a so-called “hater” and supporter of a “hate group.” Hodgkinson “liked” the SPLC’s Facebook page.

The SPLC’s caustic and false rhetoric is dangerous because it creates a “Hate Map” listing so-called “hate groups” that includes nonviolent, pro-family, Christian or conservative organizations. Mark Potock with the SPLC admitted in an interview: “Our criteria for a ‘hate group,’ first of all, have nothing to do with criminality, or violence or any kind of guess we’re making about ‘this group could be dangerous.’ It’s strictly ideological.” Mark Potok is on video in a public meeting stating: “Sometimes the press will describe us as monitoring hate crimes and so on. I want to say plainly that our aim in life is to destroy these groups, to completely destroy them ...”

Staver said, “I call upon CNN to retract and correct this article as it is fake, defamatory and puts innocent peace-loving people at risk. CNN is exploiting the Charlottesville tragedy to wage war against peaceful, Christian and conservative organizations. I denounce violence and hatred. CNN is irresponsible for publishing this false, defamatory and dangerous article. I call upon CNN to immediately correct the record and work to become part of the solution instead of part of the problem.”

“Using the Southern Poverty Center as a source for information shows that CNN is not interested in reporting news but rather creating scandal and security threats. It is well known that the SPLC label against peaceful, nonviolent people and organizations has motivated some unhinged people to commit violence. This is no time to exploit the tragedy of

Charlottesville," said Staver. {eoa}