

Senator Calls Out ABC For Labeling Law Firm as 'Hate Group'

A senator in Washington, D.C., is calling out ABC News for referring to the Alliance Defending Freedom as a “hate group.”

Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla., wrote a letter to ABC News President James Goldston expressing his concern over a July 12 article entitled “Jeff Sessions Addresses Anti-LGBT Hate Group, but DOJ Won’t Release His Remarks.”

The article cites the Southern Poverty Law Center, which added the Christian legal non-profit to their “Active Hate Groups of 2016” list, deeming the organization “anti LGBT.”

After the designation, mainstream media outlets like ABC News have followed suit, referred to the ADF as such.

“When ABC News came out and said there are individuals in the Trump administration meeting with a hate group, it immediately makes you think, ‘Okay, what is this hate group?’” Sen. Lankford told CBN News.

“And I look at the hate group and see it’s Alliance Defending Freedom and I’m like that’s not a hate group,” he said. ‘That’s a religious liberty group. That’s a group of attorneys just focused on how do you actually get religious liberty for every faith, or for people of no faith. That’s not a hate group.’”

In Sen. Lankford’s letter to Goldston, he encourages the network to choose their words more carefully and not feed “into a narrative that the news media frequently editorializes beyond the facts.”

"My challenge back to ABC News and their editorial team was let's all be responsible on what we're calling hate and what we're calling free speech, and just be able to honor differences of opinion," Lankford continued.

"It's an interesting day when a major media outlet looks at someone and says, 'This is a Christian group and they promote religious liberty for all people, so they must be a hate group,'" he charged.

In his letter, Sen. Lankford wrote:

"I found it odd that ABC would designate ADF as a hate group not based on any actual crime or action, but apparently based on their belief in religious liberty or traditional marriage. Since I think I can confidently assume that ABC News is a strong supporter of the First Amendment, why would ABC News label a peaceful group as a "hate group" simply because of a difference of opinion?"

The Oklahoma lawmaker hopes that his letter warrants more than just a response, but also a dialogue on how they can do better going forward.

"Continue to report the news. Continue to be fair on it and lay that out, but don't try to isolate people just based on a set of beliefs, especially if you look at their faith beliefs and say because they have a certain faith suddenly they're people of hate," Lankford said.

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