

Family Research Council added to 'hate group' list

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The Southern Poverty Law Center is adding the Family Research Council and four other conservative religious organizations to its list of hate groups because of "falsehoods" in their antigay statements.

Mark Potok, director of the center's Intelligence Project, said the groups were not chosen because of their beliefs that homosexual activity is sinful. "The religious nature of these organizations has absolutely nothing to do with our listings," he said in a recent interview. "The listings are based on the propagation of known falsehoods and demonizing propaganda."

The Alabama-based center, known for its monitoring of the Ku Klux Klan and other hate groups, published a November 22 report calling gays the "minority most targeted by hate crimes" and citing "the hard core of the antigay religious right" for their depictions of homosexuals as a global threat.

Its profile of the Family Research Council cites a staffer who said there should be "criminal sanctions on homosexual behavior." FRC was one of several groups cited for falsely accusing gays of being more linked to pedophilia than heterosexuals.

FRC president Tony Perkins called the center's report a "smear campaign," adding: "The left is losing the debate over ideas and the direction of public policy, so all that is left for them is character assassination."

When the center's new list of hate groups is published in February, FRC will be included for the first time. Other new additions will be the American Family Association of Tupelo, Mississippi; Americans for Truth about Homosexuality in Naperville, Illinois; Dove World Outreach Center of Gainesville, Florida; and the Illinois Family Institute in Carol Stream, Illinois. —RNS