

Hate groups hate being called hate groups

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The Southern Poverty Law Center has added several antigay organizations to its list of hate groups, citing their "demonizing propaganda" and "propagation of known falsehoods." SPLC Intelligence Project director Mark Potok (whom Amy Frykholm [interviewed](#) for the *Century* a while back) and president Richard Cohen discussed their decision on a web conference last week. Becky Garrison has the [highlights](#).

The Family Research Council, one of the more prominent groups named, is [fighting back](#), aided by some high-profile elected officials. An ad FRC placed in DC-area print publications accuses "elements of the radical Left" of "trying to shut down informed discussion of policy issues."

It's not worth quibbling over a pejorative word-bomb like "radical." The bigger problem is with, well, most of the other words in the quote:

- SPLC isn't "trying to shut down" anything. It's not advocating legal action against the antigay groups or a ban on their media appearances, nor is it accusing them of illegal activity. The goal is to curb FRC and others' *influence* by calling them out for their commitment to an antigay ideology that often trumps any commitment to facts.
- "Informed discussion" is exactly the standard these antigay groups so often fall short of. For example, SPLC cites FRC's ongoing claims that gay men are more likely to molest children, a [junk-science claim](#) that's been debunked repeatedly. Running with it anyway is uninformed at best and dishonest at worst.
- While there's [no doubt](#) these groups are deeply engaged in the serious "policy issues" facing the republic, SPLC isn't trying to silence opponents of same-sex marriage or "don't ask, don't tell" repeal. SPLC's focus is hate groups and hate crimes, and it's [reported](#) that gays and lesbians "are far more likely to be victims of a violent hate crime than any other minority group in the United

States."

The organizations on SPLC's list don't beat up gay kids, but they do spread falsehoods that fertilize seeds of hate and violence. Some of them even do this in the name of Christ.