



Religious right "hate groups" rush to defend Bachmann's "ex-gay" clinic

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Bachmann's accused of running anti-gay clinic on taxpayers dime

CHICAGO, IL -- A number of religious right groups, including those listed as hate groups by the Southern Poverty Law Center, rushed to Rep. Michele Bachmann's defense after reports that she and her husband perform "ex-gay" therapy at their federal- and state-funded clinic.

"If this is indeed a Christian counseling center then it should not be surprising that the counselors help clients live their lives constituent with Christian values," said Peter Sprigg of the Family Research Council, which is listed as a hate group by SPLC, during an appearance on MSNBC.

Sprigg was joined by R. Clarke Cooper, executive director of the Log Cabin Republicans.

Cooper told the cable news channel that this news could spell trouble for Bachmann's bid for the Republican presidential nomination.

"It will hurt her," said Cooper. "If voters see the Republican Party, if they see us as intolerant and attacking a certain population of fellow Americans, it's not a winning combination. I'm not the only one who says this. There are many other strategists that, regardless of their orientation, are concerned that we could lose the voters that we gained in the 2010 election cycle."

An [investigation by Truth Wins Out](#), a non-profit organization that fights anti-gay extremism, claims to have first hand knowledge that Bachmann's husband Dr. Marcus Bachmann's clinic, Bachmann & Associates, performs "ex-gay" therapy.

"They owe it to all Americans to provide a full and honest explanation for their embrace of these dangerous and fraudulent practices," said John Becker, Communications and Development Director for Truth Wins Out.

On Wednesday, Rep. Bachmann dodged reporter's questions on the ABC News investigation.

Peter LaBarbera, of the Naperville, Illinois - based Truth About Homosexuality, another group listed as a hate-group by SPLC, did speak and criticized the ABC News report, which confirmed Truth Wins Out's claims.

"Folks, it sure didn't take long for the liberal media to go into Christian-bashing mode against GOP presidential candidate Michele Bachmann (R-Minn.)," LaBarbera said in a statement.

Truth Wins Out has also questioned the use of state- and federal funds to endorse and practice reparative therapy, which is a controversial and discredited clinical method, aimed at changing a gay person's sexual orientation.

Last week, Rep. Bachmann [signed a vow](#) pledging to ban gay marriage on a federal level as part of her campaign for president. Some people have questioned whether her husband, who has called gays and lesbians "barbarians," is a [closeted gay man](#).

The Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center criteria for labeling a group or organization as a hate group requires that the group spread discredited and slanderous propaganda.

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