



Why do "family" groups destroy families?

With hundreds of millions of dollars to spend, right-wing so-called "family" groups ought to be helping LGBT youth instead of alienating them from their conservative parents.

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When was the last time so-called "family" organizations really did focus on family?

The responsibility that "family" organizations have taken on—without any need or request—to defend the family has virtually destroyed the very morals of what family is all about. Preaching to Americans that family means rejection, refusing to understand differences, and that we should isolate diversity does not follow American tradition.

"Family" organizations regularly and strictly define what a family is. According to their messages, their definition of family includes moral values and tradition. But here's what they get wrong: Family is defined not by uniformity but by individuality—by a celebration of differences that live with one another. Most importantly, family is about sticking together through thick and thin. Family has always been a supportive foundation in times of trouble and despair. Family is a safe haven, a home, a shelter that can withstand adversity.

So-called "family" organizations have not sought to maintain these true bonds of family. Instead they contradict their own mission by destroying the true core family values. Hundreds of LGBT youth around the nation are forced to call the streets home due to "family" organizations such as Focus on the Family, the American Family Association, and the Virginia Family Foundation. The message about being gay that these "family" organizations promote speaks solely of reparative therapies and defying the "gay agenda." There is no support, no safe haven. Gay teens must reject their identity or be rejected.

Focus on the Family's budget is greater than the combined budgets of the top 10 U.S. gay rights organizations: over \$127 million in 2003, according to a David-versus-Goliath study from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. According to the study, the combined budgets of the top three "family" organizations in the United States is over \$300 million, while the combined budgets of the Human Rights Campaign, NGLTF, Lambda Legal, and the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation is under \$60 million. Is there no room in the budgets of these "family" organizations for funding projects whose mission is to keep families together despite conflicting opinions on homosexuality?

If these "family" organizations are to remain immutable in their mission to maintain family, they should ensure that parents understand that disowning their gay or transgender children breaks down family values. Their message in defiance of the "gay agenda" and the "gay lifestyle" has led so many parents in this country to believe that there really is something wrong with their gay children. Are the budgets of these "family" organizations so minimal that they can not assist the hundreds of gay youth in need of homes? Are these organizations so wrapped up in "defending" marriage and fueling political wildfires that they have forgotten the importance of keeping families together?

Could these “family” organizations truly focus on the family and ensure that youths, despite their sexual orientation, have a safe home or family—or will they allow families to be torn apart? I challenge leaders like James Dobson (Focus on the Family), Don Wildmon (American Family Association), and Victoria Cobb (Virginia Family Foundation) to extend a humane hand to the gay youth in this country who have been rejected by their families, or to remove the word family from their vocabulary.