June 21, 2017

Mr. Jacob Harold
President and CEO
GuidestarUSA
1250 H Street, N.W.
Suite 1150
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Harold:

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, write to express our strong disagreement with Guidestar’s newly implemented policy that labels 46 American organizations as “hate groups.” Your designations are based on determinations made by the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), a hard-left activist organization. As such, SPLC’s aggressive political agenda pervades the construction of its “hate group” listings.

The SPLC has no bona fides to make such determinations. It is not a governmental organization using a rigorous criteria to create its lists, and it is not a scientifically oriented organization. The SPLC is merely another “progressive” political organization. It gained credibility attacking Klansmen, neo-Nazis, and skinheads – many of whom were engaged in violence. The SPLC is now trying to export the same tactics into areas of mainstream political discourse including debates about immigration and sexual-identity politics.

The “hate group” list is nothing more than a political weapon targeting people it deems to be its political enemies. The list is ad hoc, partisan, and agenda-driven. The SPLC doesn’t even pretend to identify groups on the political left that engage in “hate.” Mosques or Islamist groups that promote radical speech inciting anti-Semitism and actual violence are not listed by the SPLC even though many have been publicly identified after terrorist attacks. Radical, violent leftist environmentalists or speech suppressing thugs – like the rioting “antifa” movement – receive no mention from the SPLC.

Despite its denials to the contrary, this highly refined method of ostracism and dehumanization practiced by the SPLC isn’t just about verbal debate – it can foreseeably lead to violence. The SPLC’s primary goal is to achieve the political submission of its opponents, but its practice of sustained demonization in one’s community – which is what a “hate map” is all about – inflames passions of hatred and animus against its targets. In one article, in addition to the text, the SPLC published caricatures of the women being discussed that were

distorted, disfiguring, and degrading.² This was done to rob them of their dignity and value as human beings. Worse yet, the article included the hometown of each woman – thereby endangering their safety.

Can it be of any surprise then that SPLC’s hate map was used by a political activist and domestic terrorist to perpetrate the very sort of hate crimes SPLC claims to oppose? In 2012, a shooter entered the Family Research Council headquarters in Washington, D.C., to “kill as many as possible” because SPLC had identified FRC as a “hate group,” and the killer-to-be relied on SPLC’s website to identify targets, according to his sworn testimony. The SPLC continues to list on its website people such as House Majority Whip Steve Scalise who was recently shot by James T. Hodgkinson who “liked” SPLC’s Facebook page. Does it not concern you that within the past five years, the SPLC has been linked to gunmen who carried out two terrorist shootings in the DC area?

Mr. Harold, we think it is a reasonable point that an aggressive political partisan like the SPLC should not be allowed to be the judge and jury of its opponents’ character and motivations. The fact that the SPLC only targets groups on the political right supports this contention. As Karl Zinsmeister notes, while it is entirely acceptable to disagree vigorously with one’s political opponents, it is “utterly unfair to insist they are hate criminals.” He reproduces a statement made by SPLC’s Mark Potok: “Sometimes the press will describe us as monitoring hate crimes and so on.... I want to say plainly that our aim in life is to destroy these groups, to completely destroy them.”³

With these points in mind, we respectfully request that Guidestar return to its prior, non-political approach to evaluating non-profit organizations.

Please send your reply within one week of receipt of this letter to: Mathew Staver, Post Office Box 540774, Orlando, FL 32854.

Respectfully,

Eunie Smith
President
Eagle Forum

Pamela Geller
President
American Freedom Defense Initiative

Cathie Adams  
First Vice President  
Eagle Forum

Dale Wilcox  
Executive Director and General Counsel  
Immigration Reform Law Institute

Michelle Cretella, MD, FCP  
President  
American College of Pediatricians

LTG William Boykin, USA, Ret.  
Executive Vice President  
Family Research Council

Tom Benton, MD, MPH  
Board of Directors  
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David Barton  
Founder and President  
Wallbuilders

Mathew Staver  
Founder and Chairman  
Liberty Counsel

Tim Barton  
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Brian Brown  
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National Organization for Marriage

The Honorable Edwin Meese III  
Former Attorney General  
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Tim Wildmon
President
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Joe Weasel
Executive Director
Full Story Foundation and Films

Allen Roth
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Jake Hoffman
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Town of Queen Creek, Arizona

James Simpson
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Becky Gerritson
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