

GLAAD Activists Target Dr. Laura

By Peter LaBarbera

Gays and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD), a homosexual activist group, has launched a major pressure campaign against popular radio talk show host Dr. Laura Schlessinger, but the radical gay organization may have met its match in the feisty "Dr. Laura."

GLAAD and other gay groups are focusing their ire on Schlessinger after she did a 180-degree turnaround on the homosexual issue and began denouncing gay activism over the airwaves and in her syndicated newspaper column.

Schlessinger played a leading role (along with NARTH and the Family Research Council) in exposing a study in the journal of the American Psychological Association that advocated neutral terminology for "adult-child sex."

In recent months, she has also criticized pro-homosexuality lessons in elementary school, informed listeners about the possibility of change for homosexuals, and argued against homosexual adoptions and parenthood.

Schlessinger's radio program — in which she dispenses no-nonsense advice on life to morally and ethically conflicted callers — reaches an estimated 18 million listeners per week. It is the fastest growing program in the history of radio, and is syndicated on 450 radio stations in the U.S. and Canada, according to spokesman Amir Forester. Dr. Laura's show rivals that of Rush Limbaugh for the top spot in the ratings, and she will soon take her format encouraging personal responsibility to television. Her weekly column appears in more than 100 newspapers, Forester said.

Why Dr. Laura's View Changed

On her radio show, Schlessinger has referred to homosexuality as "sexually deviant behavior" and a "biological error," while affirming the historic Judeo-Christian "cultural norm" of male-female relationships in marriage. In a recent edition of her newsletter, Dr. Laura explained her change of heart on the issue (emphasis is hers):

I personally have been agonizing over this. I've always told people who opposed homosexuality that they were homophobic, bad, bigoted and idiotic. I was *wrong*. It is destructive.

Schlessinger said she began to reconsider her position on

homosexuality after receiving nasty faxed letters (she does not give out her phone number) from gay activists who were upset that she was not doing enough to support the homosexual cause. Gradually her eyes were opened to the far-reaching and aggressive homosexual activist agenda that goes well beyond "tolerance," and she became aware of the reality that men and women could overcome their homosexual identity.

Now Dr. Laura uses NARTH's information on the air and promotes reparative therapy. Her web site (www.dr-laura.com) is linked to NARTH's (www.narth.com).

Realizing Schlessinger's power to reach beyond the liberal media, GLAAD is telling its followers to contact their local radio stations to protest her program. The organization -- which has a projected 1999 budget of \$3.2 million and 24 staffers -- is also contacting Dr. Laura's advertisers. A recent special report on Dr. Laura in the GLAADAlert e-mail publication stated:

Clearly, Schlessinger needs to hear the truth about our lives and about how her comments incite hate....Think about your own experiences and help her see the impact her words have upon real people – how her words fan the fires of prejudice and discrimination.

In addition, you can send a copy of your letter directly to your local station which airs the program

It is ironic that GLAAD accuses Schlessinger of inciting hate, since the organization regularly hurls invectives at and demonizes its critics, particularly those it calls the "religious right." First, in the case of Dr. Laura, GLAAD Executive Director Joan Garry began by employing a soft approach. In a special section on GLAAD's web site devoted to countering Dr. Laura, Garry wrote:

...Of course, Schlessinger's agenda is not about enlightenment; it is about the "bully pulpit." Nothing new there. But what is new is how intensely I felt the escalating fervor of her mission to destroy our progress, and by incendiary commentary, our lives. When I pressed her on these points, she responded, "If your organization doesn't agree with me then they will attempt to shut me down. Which, frankly, you've got to tell your people that when they do public attacks, it makes me more popular. It gets me more sponsors. It's

counterproductive."

With that as the avowed challenge, you may wonder how GLAAD is to respond. Here is what we are doing: We are registering our objections and point of view with those who air Schlessinger's program. We are approaching other on-air personalities to consider our concerns in their upcoming programs and recurring topics. And we are asking you and your friends to write directly to her and express your opinions and disdain -- not angrily (which, frankly, she expects) but rationally and thoughtfully.....

Garry is referring above to a face-to-face interview she had with Schlessinger which was printed in Dr. Laura's newsletter. Schlessinger described Garry as a "thoughtful, intelligent woman with a good sense of humor ... [and] the first gay activist I've ever come across who actually takes the time to try and understand my positions."

Thoughtful. Good sense of humor. Understanding. These are not words that pro-family observers familiar with GLAAD's record would ever associate with the organization. Surely, if Schlessinger did not have the tremendous media power she does, GLAAD would instead have begun using the hard-edged, vitriolic denunciations and advocacy of censorship it normally employs to silence critics of homosexual activism.

Consider the following comments by Garry after GLAAD succeeded in lobbying a cable TV station--Central Florida News 13--to reverse itself and reject a paid commercial advertisement featuring Christian former homosexuals who left the lifestyle. On behalf of GLAAD, Garry said:

While the sponsors of these ads [a coalition of pro-family organizations] have dubbed it the "Truth in Love" campaign, its name is very much a misnomer. Don't be fooled: it's a politically motivated campaign that's deceptive, morally bankrupt, and espouses beliefs that are anything but loving.

Ask the nation's leading voices on issues of mental health, and they'll tell you that attempts at "conversion" can be extremely dangerous. What's more, the campaign perpetuates damaging stereotypes, and, in the words of News 13 and Time Warner, holds the potential for "subjecting the gay and lesbian community to discrimination."

In the current pro-gay media climate, homosexual activists are succeeding in pressuring such news outlets to reject even *paid advertisements* conveying the reality that homosexual behavior is changeable.

Dr. Laura is Extremely Influential

To counteract GLAAD's effects, the importance of Dr. Laura's outspokenness on homosexuality cannot be overestimated.

GLAAD has occasionally resorted to cheap shots to advance its campaign, by equating pro-family groups espousing Judeo-Christian cultural norms with vicious, hateful racists. In one instance in which GLAAD listed "anti-gay" web sites, it interwove racist fringe groups like the KKK and Aryan Nation with mainstream family groups like AFA and the Family Research Council.

GLAAD has called Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family a "radical religious mouthpiece" and Brent Bozell, Jr., of the conservative Media Research Center, a "professional media terrorist." One would not expect such name-calling from an "anti-defamation" group. GLAAD, like other homosexual groups, also has a habit of crying "gay bashing" when sincere people of faith, such as football star Reggie White, espouse their belief that homosexual practices are sinful.

GLAAD Turns Up the Heat

Recently, GLAAD has begun to take on a hard-edged pressure campaign against Dr. Laura, and subsequently released a statement clearly denouncing her. But Dr. Laura, who has a background in medical physiology, is no typical media target, grounded as she is in her Orthodox Jewish faith.

Pro-family Americans and culture-war veterans everywhere will be watching to see if Dr. Laura bends to any of GLAAD demands. In the meantime, her position on the gay issue represents an oasis of sanity in a world in which pro-gay "groupthink" is fast becoming the norm.

To support the airing of Dr. Laura's program on your radio local station, use the GLAAD web site to get the contact information and write a letter. Or to support Schlessinger directly, write her at:

Dr. Laura Schlessinger
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