

TRANSADVOCATE

Eavesdrop on a right wing anti-trans training camp: teaching fear mongering and lies

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Published November 29, 2013 | Updated March 31, 2026

https://www.transadvocate.com/eavesdrop-on-a-right-wing-anti-trans-training-camp-teaching-fear-mongering-and-lies_n_10962.htm

Abstract

Recently, an equality effort in Florida was defeated by appealing to the ‘trans people = rape’ meme. As it turned out, appealing to this meme was deliberate and is, in fact, part of a curriculum currently being taught to anti-LGBT activists. The TransAdvocate obtained audio from one of the training sessions given by the Christian Family [...]

Article

Recently, an equality effort in Florida was defeated by appealing to the ‘trans people = rape’ meme. As it turned out, appealing to this meme was deliberate and is, in fact, part of a curriculum currently being taught to anti-LGBT activists. The TransAdvocate obtained audio from one of the training sessions given by the Christian Family Association (CFC) on October 5th, shortly after their successful defeat of a Florida equality measure that included trans people.

The curriculum taught at this training camp was developed and successfully used by the following coalition of anti-LGBT groups:



Figure 1. Coalition of responsible for developing the curriculum being taught

You might be surprised to see The Florida Democratic League (FDL) among these groups. The FDL is headed by a man named Eladio Jose Armesto. Armesto gave the keynote speech for this anti-LGBT training camp. I called up Armesto and asked him to expound on his views of LGBT people and he was all too happy to do so. He asserted that trans people rape women in showers, dressing rooms and restrooms, that trans people are insane and expressed his dismay that LGBT aren't locked away in asylums, but I'll come back to Armesto in a little bit.

Training Orientation

The training was designed to teach anti-LGBT activists proven techniques that defeat LGBT equality initiatives.

If we had not been here in Dade County, this would have passed. And it would have passed unanimously. It passed everywhere else. It's passed in more conservative counties. It passed in Pinellas County, which is a Republican county passed it almost unanimously a couple of months ago. And do you know why it passed? Our side wasn't prepared. If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail. What was our messaging? We said whatever we came up with. We have a couple of attorneys here. Do you prepare your legal briefs the day you are to appear before your judge? No. How much more important is the safety of our children? I have a wife and three daughters. I don't want them to become a victim. And you're going to hear how women were victimized in Montgomery County, Maryland after this law was passed. How were they victimized? Raped, sodomized, okay? Assaulted sexually. "Oh, this really happens?" Yeah, it does! That's why we're here, to make sure it doesn't happen.

The incident this trainer is referring to was debunked a year ago. Here's the anti-trans group making this claim back in 2012:

Tuesday, January 17, 2012
 5:30pm until 7:30pm

≡ TRANSGENDER BILL #3-12 TUES JAN 17TH.....BE THERE....400 Washington Avenue 2nd floor Towson Maryland 5:30pm to sign up to speak out. If you are scared to speak...just show up...we need to be there in numbers. Look for Anita Schatz at the sign in area so we can sit together. We will not get another chance to stop this.

A large group dressing in purple will be showing up when the bill is voted on showing support FOR the bill. We need to outnumber them.

We can carpool from Marc train on eastern avenue across From Martins airport at 4:45 on Tuesday January 17. Contact Jackie Auburn for this carpool <http://facebook.com/mdactivist>

they want no discrimination for transgenders including our (restrooms, locker rooms, schools, etc.)..

Would you like to walk into a bathroom and see a man in there with our Children? This is just not right. Please show your support by objecting In Towson or contacting them here..if no answer you can leave message Or send Email .. (Bill #3-12)

Since Montgomery County passed a similar bill, there have been 4 rapes by men, dressing as women lying in wait for their victims in ladies rooms.

There is no provision in this bill to protect women and girls, leaving it open to all kinds of abuses.

"Since Montgomery County passed a similar bill, there have been 4 rapes by men, dressing as women lying in wait for their victims in ladies rooms."

Really? Four rapes you say? Well, lets see what law enforcement has to say about that testable assertion of fact:



"Since this law has been in effect, we have had no reported rapes committed in restrooms by men dressed as women."

The fact that this claim was debunked a year ago hasn't stopped anti-trans groups from repeating it to gullible audiences or from making it part of their training curriculum.

We're gonna give you the best arguments, the most compelling reasons why this should be opposed. Don't take anything for granted that you are presented with here today. "Bringing Miami-Dade into the 21st century" - these are 17 organizations that got together and said "NO" to this ordinance. This is not the other side, this is OUR side. This is how you win, not only this battle, it can be anything. By building coalitions, by uniting, by working together, because we're all in the same boat. We all face the same dangers, and so do our families.

The trainer went on to describe exactly how successful they were in executing the techniques being taught in the training camp that day:

The first reading, this ordinance was presented, in first reading, there were 12 commissioners there. At the time, there were 13, but there were 12 there. The vote was 11 to 1 of sending it to a public hearing. So, we started with a deficit of 10 votes. Our starting point was 11 to 1, against us, and then we began to mobilize. And we began to go to the radios, and we began to urge people to call, send out action alerts, emails. And you know what? It worked! They pulled it. They dropped it. They didn't even bring it for a public hearing, we got 300 people - we bused 300 people to the public hearing, Monday, July the 8th, which was the Monday after July the 4th. That's when they scheduled the public hearing, by the way. Why would you schedule a public hearing on a Monday after the July 4th weekend? SO NOBODY SHOWS UP! Hello?!? Everybody's still asleep. Everybody's had a long weekend, they don't know what's going on and before you know it, "Oh, it passed!" And then you start reading the headlines, "Oh, men show up to work dressed as women!" And by the way, that's one of the things that happens with this ordinance. Forget dress codes, there are no dress codes. People get fired from their jobs, men using the women's locker rooms and showers. "It's the law! Can't do anything

about it! Can't fight City Hall! Can't fight County Hall!" That's what they say. Well, we did and we won, because of your support. We did and we won because we united.



Figure 2. Media used in the anti-trans campaign: trans = rape

After the trainer made it clear that trans people want to sexually assault cis women and girls and that this message was successful in stopping LGBT equality measures, he went on to talk about the effort to overturn the California's law defining protections for trans children known as AB1266. Moreover, he went on to assert these children and those who wish to protect them from harm are the "enemy" of god:

You know, I read an email from California. You know, in California, it passed. And now, you've got people there who are just having a field day with public facilities. And we say a lot of times, "But they can't do that!" Yes they can. The enemy will do anything he wants to do as long as you allow it. In California, I got an email, because now they're collecting signatures to put this on the ballot and overturn the law, and they said something interesting. They said, "The enemy is not going to until you clear your schedule." The enemy is not going to wait until you are ready. "No, no, no! I gotta clear my schedule! I got too many things in my life!" That's what the enemy wants. "But I'm serving the lord in a 100 ministries, I can't take one more!" That's what he wants. "I can't even take care of my family!" That's what he wants. He's got you where he want's you! We have to make priorities in our lives and say, "What is important? What kind of community legacy am I going to leave for my children and grandchildren?" Okay? You tell me how strong the enemy is and I'll tell you how great my god is. Okay?"

Keynote Training Speaker

The keynote speaker for this anti-LGBT training was the Chair of the Florida Democratic League, Eladio Jose Armesto. Armesto's training focused on "debunking" claims made by LGBT people when they fight their our civil rights. The first lesson Armesto taught was that the right your gender and sexuality is not a human right:

A human right that is enjoyed equally and universally by everyone merely because of their humanity. Today, these human rights are officially listed in what is known as the UN Declaration on Human Rights. Among the 30 officially recognized human rights, among those 30 universally recognized human rights, you'll never find sexual preference, sexual [gender] identity, or sexual [gender] expression. None of these things are there because they are not a human right. These are practices, these are behaviors, these are conducts that people engage in, but they don't have a right per se, to

engage in them because these conducts are not morally and ethically neutral, like eating. But to present yourself, or misrepresent your sex, to say that you are a woman when you are a man, or that you are a man when you are indeed a woman - and how do we know that? Because everybody has chromosomes, there is such a thing as DNA. And your DNA establishes your sex. So that we know, regardless of your appearance - I could disguise myself as a female, but my DNA will always be that of a male. Because you can't change your DNA. You can alter your appearance cosmetically, I could have breasts implanted, I could have surgery, to look like a female, but my DNA can never be changed. My chromosomes are the same chromosomes that I was born in and those are the same chromosomes I'm gonna die with. So, we have to understand that these people are gonna come in a way that this is a human right. Well, excuse me, it is not a human right.

Later, Armesto expounded on his assertions:

There's gonna come in and say, "Oh, but I have a 'right.'" Well, first of all, that's not a right. Because, you don't have a right to misrepresent yourself if you're a man and say, no you're a woman or if you're a woman and say that you're a man. You don't have the right, if you're a man, to go into the lady's bathroom or use the lady's shower. You don't have the right, if you're a lady, to go into a men's dressing room. That's, just not a right. This is the scam that they try to push on society in order to have the right to discriminate against all of us. So, alleged sexual preferences, identity or expression are not human rights. They're not found in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, nor can they be found in ANY international treaty. This might startle some people because our opponents have been so adamant about imposing sexual [gender] identity and expression as if it were a human right that you would think they must have taken it from somewhere. Nope. It's nowhere. They made it up folks. They made it up and like Goebbels said, "You repeat a lie [begins choking on Godwin's law] often enough and what's gonna happen, people are gonna believe that it's true."

Armesto went on to make a big deal about ensuring that opponents of LGBT equality refer to the term "sexual" as much as possible. He admonished attendees to say homosexual instead of gay, transsexual instead of transgender, sexual identity and sexual expression instead of gender identity and gender expression because, he asserted, sex and sexual makes people feel uncomfortable. In an obviously ironic way, in one breath Armesto decried "news-speak" while in the next instructed participants of the training to bring attention to sex as much as possible and to refer to LGBT people as "aberrosexuals." The umbrella term "aberrosexual" seems to come from an organization called the "International Center for the Study of Aberrosexualism" run by blog troll, Judy Meissner.

If you can stand it, give Armesto's obtuse circular reasoning a listen. In the following clip, on top of everything, he claims that gay people have an annual orgy at Disney World. He also asserted that if someone referred to his ideology as "homophobic" or "transphobic," such assertions are sexist and are just as much of a pejorative as a racist slur. He then immediately compared LGBT people to the devil:

Note that Armesto advocates for the discontinued use of homo/transphobia in the news. While you might think that what he has to say is both absurd and ridiculous, the tactics he's teaching are being successfully implemented. The Associated Press has said that they would cease using the term homophobic and moreover, the techniques he's teaching successfully defeated a LGBT equality ordinance.

Since Armesto's techniques are taking root and are being actively used and decimated to other anti-LGBT organizations, I wanted to talk to they guy myself. So, I called him up.

The Interview

All I can tell you is that I had to stop myself from bursting out laughing numerous times. I even said that I was aware of nefarious activist site called the TransAdvocate, which was responsible for indoctrinating people with all sorts of wacky ideas. He seems to clearly believe that LGBT are insane and that the government should segregate us from normal people . He was very clear that he believes people like me rape women and that we transition in order to gain access to places where women might be vulnerable.

Once he got going, Armesto was super eager to talk about his ideas. He spent the majority of our 30 minute phone conversation pontificating and talking over me to ensure that I really got that LGBT people are insane conspirators working against the very fabric of the American ideal.

In Armesto's world, he is a victim. The discriminatory policies he supports are being discriminated against. It's his right to make sure that you know that marriage has only ever - throughout the entire history of history - been one man and one women. Also, Native Americans were not gay or trans. For him, it's his civil right to ensure that laws are based on these "facts."



Figure 3. quitsquirming

I've included the entire 30 minute phone conversation at the end of this post. Here are the highlights:

We are fair: you can't prove you're trans or gay!

We are fair-minded, and we are - we base out positions on the common good on right reason. Our position is based on five general principles. First of all, we believe that everyone should be treated with compassion and respect and that no one should receive or claim a special right or privilege or benefit based upon their alleged sexual behavior, sexual [gender] identity, or sexual [gender] expression. And we say alleged because, due to the fact that sexual behavior is private, and it is personal and intimate, there's really no way of verifying what someone claims to be their sexual behavior. It is something that is alleged and it's not verifiable, it's not confirmable.

Gender isn't real! Equivocation FTW!

Well, first of all, people don't have gender. Words have gender. People have sex, they have a sex. Gender is a term used to identify classes of words. It's a grammatical term. You know, masculine gender or female gender. The use of the word gender to refer to human beings is a fraudulent use. It's a false use. It's an incorrect use.

Chromosomes determines what sex you really are!

But, their chromosomes will still tell whether they're male or female because that's all there is in creation, in nature. You're a male or you're a female.

Transmen are insane and cis people need to be protected from them!

The fact of the matter is that we live in a world with a lot of mental health issues and society has to be protected from people have mental health problems, and it's not a mark, or a sign or a characteristic of sanity when someone who is female is not happy with who they are and wants to disguise themselves or masquerade or change themselves into something other than what they are. I would certainly not like to hang around people who are not too comfortable with who they are and that feel compelled to disguise themselves or to change their bodies to look like something other than what they are. That is certainly not a sign of mental balance and mental health and most of these people are not mentally well. Most of these people are mentally ill and covering up their mental illness doesn't help them.

Transwomen are insane rapists!

We have come across a lot of cases where rapes and sexual abuse has occurred in public showers, restrooms, dressing rooms, by individuals who claim to be of the sex of that facility, but they're not. They are the opposite sex. Our society is suffering from a great deal of mental health issues. People are not mentally well. People are [laughs], they are just not mentally well.*

*No evidence to support this was offered

LGBT rights groups are insane bullies!

Armesto: [rant against various LGBT rights groups]

Me: I actually heard about a lot of these things from an ideological group called the TransAdvocate and they are in the business of pushing a lot of this stuff [equal rights]...

Armesto: They intimidate legislators into going along with their lunacy, their craziness. If you stop

to think, just a few years ago, the only place where these issues would have ever been thought up to be discussed would have been in insane asylums.

Two men aren't equal to a man and woman because sanity!

[Finishing rant about how teh gheys are wrong for getting married] Two men or two women do not equal one man and one woman. You don't have to go to school to understand that one! How can you equate one thing with the other? How can you equal two men or two women with a man and a woman? It's insane!

Lastly, if you can stand the obtuse irony of what Armesto says...

LGBT Native Americans are imaginary

Me: When I argue against this stuff and when I come across it online, they say things like, "The Native people here in America, that they had transgender people and gay people and stuff like that and I don't know how true that is."

Armesto: [Laughing] It's all make believe, in their minds. In their mind the Native people had that. It's all make believe. Remember, these people have no problem with making up their own facts. These people have absolutely no problem, the truth has ever stood in their way. The truth has never stood in the way of these people. These people live in la la land. They feed on their own fantasies and they want everyone else to go along with them.

A lot has been made of former Colorado Navy chaplain Gordon 'Dr. Chaps' Klingenschmitt's recent assertion that people who transition are "possessed" of a "demon of rape," but how different is the substance of his talking point to that of the mainstream opposition to protections for trans children and adults? In a video titled "California Christians 620,000 petitions vs. Co-Ed Bathrooms," Klingenschmitt asserted on 11/27 that "There is a demon of rape inside of this movement, to violate your daughters." Klingenschmitt made the statement in reference to both the embattled California law, AB 1266 and the wider acceptance of allowing trans people to transition.

Klingenschmitt believes that trans people can be converted into cis people if they undergo certain ideological "therapies" that are outlawed in some states as being abusive to children. Let's be clear, no professional medical or psychological organization endorses the idea that trans people can become cis people if they undergo certain types of therapies. The American Medical Association, American Psychological Association, American Academy of Family Physicians, National Association of Social Workers, World Professional Association for Transgender Health, National Commission on Correctional Health Care, American Public Health Association, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists all agree that the ability to transition is necessary.

Considering what this consortium of anti-trans groups is teaching and successfully using to defeat LGBT protections, how is what Klingenschmitt said substantively different? Both compare LGBT equality to evil entities. Both appeal to the idea that trans people want to rape women and both refer to LGBT people as being mentally confused. All of these groups - the Pacific Just, Klingenschmitt and the coalition that developed the curriculum taught to anti-LGBT activists - promote the idea that LGBT people are in need of special therapy to fix us.

Let's be clear about how important the 'trans = rape' meme is to these groups. Let's review the way

these memes have been created and used:

- The Rio Incident: Debunked
- The Evergreen College Incident: Debunked
- The LA Incident: Debunked
- The Florence High Incident: Debunked
- The Oakland Incident: Debunked
- The Maryland Incident: Debunked

That's in addition to the claim debunked in this post. These myths are central to their strategy and for as much as they claim to represent truth, they seem to be okay with perpetuating these known falsehoods.

Suggested citation

Cristan Williams. "Eavesdrop on a right wing anti-trans training camp: teaching fear mongering and lies."

TransAdvocate, November 29, 2013.

https://www.transadvocate.com/eavesdrop-on-a-right-wing-anti-trans-training-camp-teaching-fear-mongering-and-lies_n_10962.htm