

The relationship between Cathy Brennan and the SPLC

By Marian

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Abstract

In late November of last year, Secular Woman began a petition asking the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) to list Cathy Brennan's Gender Identity Watch as a hate group. In January, during the SPLC's internal discussions concerning their yearly hate group list, Cathy Brennan made public her donations to the SPLC on her facebook page. [...]

Article

In late November of last year, Secular Woman began a petition asking the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) to list Cathy Brennan's Gender Identity Watch as a hate group.

In January, during the SPLC's internal discussions concerning their yearly hate group list, Cathy Brennan made public her donations to the SPLC on her facebook page.

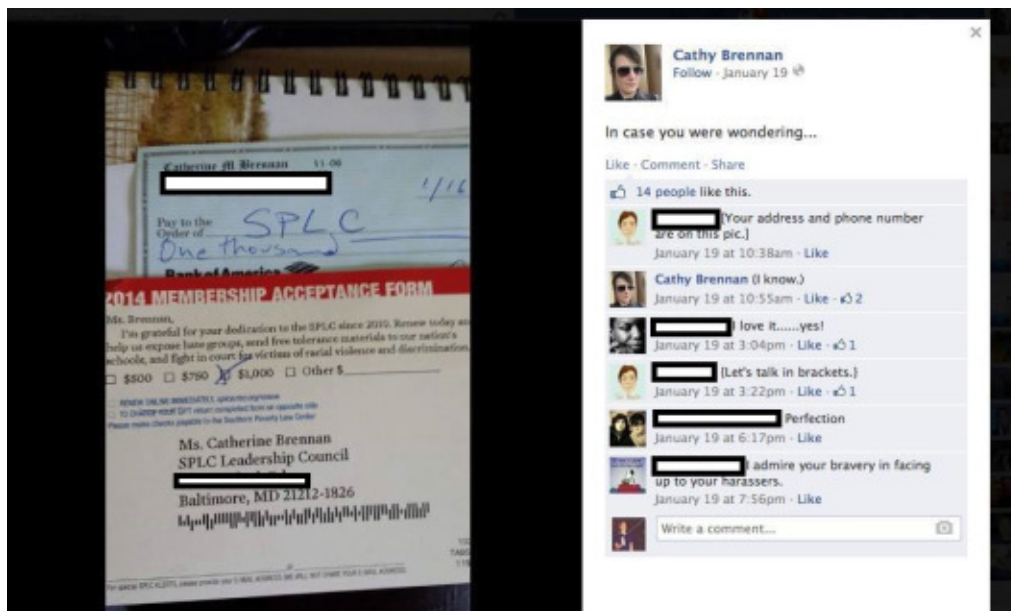


Figure 1. cb-check[1]

And the SPLC accepted her donation.

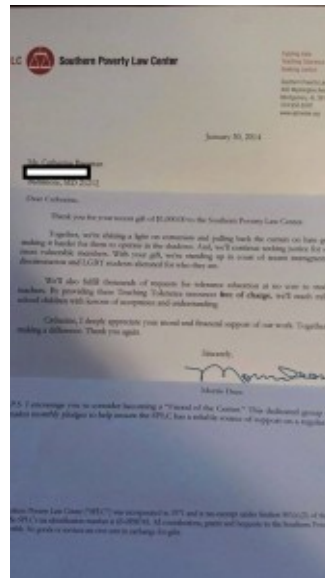


Figure 2. SPLCacceptance

When asked about the donations, the Gender Identity Watch twitter account claimed that Cathy Brennan routinely donated money to the SPLC. Cathy Brennan has also previously been consulted by the SPLC on issues concerning fringe Men’s Rights Activists.



Figure 3. cbsplcnarrative1

When the SPLC list was later revealed, Gender Identity Watch was not included. The stated reason was that Gender Identity Watch was not a “group” by their definition. However, the SPLC did list a vehemently anti-gay and anti-trans religiously motivated lobbying group, The Pacific Justice Institute (PJI).

California	
City	Chapter
Vallejo	Chaldean Foundation
Anaheim	Traditional Values Coalition
Sacramento	Save California
San Marcos	Ruth Institute
Sacramento	Pacific Justice Institute

Figure 4. pji listed

Although Brennan denies ties to the PJI, interactions between Gender Identity Watch and the PJI have been documented by Transadvocate.

Shortly after the new hate group list was revealed, Gender Identity Watch turned on the SPLC in a March 6th blog post attributed to Cathy Brennan:

The Southern Poverty Law Center continues to diminish its reputation by labeling faith-based organizations as “hate groups” for such organizations’ opposition to homosexuality.

The article later accuses the SPLC of having a liberal bias, and being swayed by donations from the “liberal” LGBT community.

The more likely explanation is the GLBT people tend to be liberal, and liberals donate money to the organization.

The article also lambasts the SPLC for “mission drift” for targeting anti-LGBT hate groups. It uses quotes around the phrases “hate crime” and “hate speech” in the context of the reaction to Matthew Shepard’s murder. Near the end of the article, Cathy Brennan writes:

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The article also implies that “faith-based” groups should be treated differently due to their ideological stances being based in religion.

The Southern Poverty Law Center continues to diminish its reputation by labeling faith-based organizations as “hate groups” for such organizations’ opposition to homosexuality. The Southern Poverty Law Center claims it adds these groups to its list for “**propagating known falsehoods debunked by science**,” but given that religious belief is not in fact grounded in science, many observers are incredulous about this explanation. The more likely explanation is the GLBT people tend to be liberal, and liberals donate money to the organization. Unfortunately, SPLC seems to be suffering from mission drift as it veers further away from its core issue of fighting white supremacy.

The rise of “hate crimes” and “hate speech” as tools used by GLBT activists began in earnest when Matthew Shepard was murdered in 1998. Activists began a 11-year campaign to pass **hate crimes legislation** to add a sentencing enhancement for crime motivated by gay bias. Now, GLBT activists routinely accuse anyone who disagrees with them of being a hate group, a tactic used unsuccessfully by Men’s Rights Activists against *Gender Identity Watch* because we reject that “gender” is innate, that acting out sex stereotypes turns a man into a woman and that human biology is just a social construct.

Importantly, academics have started noticing this trend towards labeling all non-GLBT Movement-approved speech as “hate speech,” including **Professor George Yancey of the University of North Texas**. Professor Yancey has written an interesting journal article, “Watching the Watchers: The Neglect of Academic Analysis of Progressive Groups” in which he describes SPLC’s “liberal” bias. From the *Christian Post*:

All the groups listed on Hatewatch, with the exception of black separatists, Yancey notes, are either political or religious conservatives. Yancey believes this is because SPLC is a liberal organization and it is using subjective criteria

Figure 5. *gidlesbians*[1]

Earlier, in late February, concerned with the donations made by Cathy Brennan, Sandy Hope of A Feminist Challenging Transphobia, contacted Mark Potok of the SPLC. At first, he was incredulous that Cathy Brennan was actually giving the SPLC money, responding in an e-mail:

I really have no idea what you mean when you talk about our “complicity” with Catherine Brennan. And where do you get the idea that we’re receiving donations from her? I don’t think that’s true.

Mark Potok
Senior Fellow

Hope then provided the SPLC with documentation of Brennan’s recent donation to the organization. After several weeks, on March 19th, Potok responded in an e-mail:

We will not be accepting any further donations from Ms. Brennan.

Best,

Mark

Suggested citation

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