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Gay Advocacy a Barrier to Safe Schools for All Children Says Anti-Bullying Advocate

No Name Calling Week an example of misguided activism

To: National Desk

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News Advisory for Jan. 18 /Christian Wire Service/ -- "It is not the job of the school to desensitize students concerning moral values. Strategies such as No Name Calling Week that focus on social advocacy do nothing to keep schools safe for ALL students." -- Brenda High, Executive Director of Bully Police USA (www.bullypolice.org)

No Name Calling Week is scheduled for January 24-28. This week is the brain child of the Gay Lesbian and Straight Educators Network and Simon & Schuster, the publisher of the book on which the week is based: *The Misfits*. However, a leading advocate of anti-bullying laws in the United States is questioning the helpfulness of NNCW and similar efforts.

"Of course, there is nothing wrong with teaching that no one should call names, but the use of the book, *The Misfits* as a basis for this teaching, puts the emphasis on the subgroup of the harassment victim instead of on the perpetrator of harassment - the bully," said Brenda High, Executive Director of Bully Police USA and author of the website www.bullypolice.com, a comprehensive resource for anti-bullying advocates. "Bullies will harass kids of all types, including kids who are gay-identified. However, it is not helpful to disrespect the beliefs of people who find homosexuality morally objectionable in order to try to stop harassment. Who will define what is name-calling and what is freedom of expression? Such approaches do not stop bullying but they stigmatize people with traditional views of sexuality," conclude Ms. High.

Several years ago, Brenda High lost her son to "bullycide," (a suicide attributed to the effects of bullying), and so has a personal view of this issue. "No one wants to see the end of school bullying more than me. However, bullying has little, if anything to do with beliefs about sexuality or the sexual preferences of the victim. Bullies bully because they can, and because they can get away with it. Anyone a bully considers weaker can become a target," she added.

As an advocate around the nation for laws protecting all students, Ms. High has noticed a trend for gay rights advocates to philosophically divide lawmakers on legislation that does not specifically mention sexual orientation or gender identity as a victim classification, hurting the possibility of anti bullying law passage. "The efforts to include definitions of classes of victims, also excludes other victims, thus making it more difficult to protect ALL kids."

Sexual orientation researcher, Dr Warren Throckmorton, Associate Professor of Psychology at Grove City College agrees that bullying and school harassment are best addressed by focusing on the

perpetrator and not the victim. "No Name Calling Week has an admirable objective but a dubious methodology. By basing the event around a book that has as its purpose to change beliefs about the controversial issue of homosexuality, the organizers are asking schools to become involved in social advocacy first and education second, if at all."

"Furthermore, the book *The Misfits* is developmentally inappropriate for children targeted by the No Name Calling Week, grades 5 through 8," added Throckmorton.

Dr. Throckmorton recently wrote an opinion article concerning the No Name Calling Week event called "No Name Calling Week?" that reveals the sponsors of NNCW use name calling as a tactic to meet social advocacy objectives. The article is archived at DrThrockmorton.com.

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