

September 8, 2017

VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Jay Wallace  
Fox News  
1211 Avenue of the Americas, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10036

Dear Mr. Wallace,

The Fox News story on the Southern Poverty Law Center that aired on September 6, 2017, as part of *The Five* program was inaccurate, defamatory, and irresponsible. Picking up on a bogus report from a publication called the *Washington Free Beacon*, Greg Gutfeld said that we provided just \$61,000 in "legal assistance" and "do virtually no law." That figure represents the amount that the SPLC spent on its own corporate legal services, not the amount it spent providing legal services for others. The same page of the SPLC tax returns that lists the \$61,000 figure for internal legal services shows that the SPLC spent more than \$1.8 million on out-of-pocket case costs for litigation brought on behalf of its clients. In fact, our publicly available audited financial statements show that during that same fiscal year the SPLC spent more than \$15 million on initiatives on behalf of its clients that were directed by its legal department. The department currently employs more than 100 people seeking justice for some of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Even a cursory review of the materials on our website would demonstrate the outrageousness of Mr. Gutfeld's statement that the SPLC "d[oes] virtually no law." Our legal department has a decades long track record of representing indigent people throughout the South on a broad range of issues, including children's rights, criminal justice reform, immigrant justice, economic justice, and LGBT rights. Our website has descriptions of many of these legal victories.<sup>1</sup> In May we filed a lawsuit in Mississippi seeking the same quality of education for black students as their white peers.<sup>2</sup> In June our attorneys secured a victory in a class action lawsuit brought on behalf of thousands of inmates in Alabama state prisons who were denied adequate mental health services. This was after a trial that lasted for two months and resulted in a 300-page ruling in which a

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.splcenter.org/seeking-justice>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/aug/27/two-schools-in-mississippi-and-a-lesson-in-race-and-inequality-in-america>

federal judge described the services that prisoners were receiving as “horrendously inadequate.”<sup>3</sup> Just yesterday we filed a complaint alleging that bail bond companies in Orleans Parish, Louisiana systematically overcharged people and reaped millions of dollars.<sup>4</sup>

The show also implied there was something nefarious about the fact that the SPLC uses investment vehicles incorporated outside of the United States, going so far as to claim it constituted a money laundering operation. As Fox News surely knows, it is common for universities, foundations, and other nonprofit organizations to have a portion of their endowments invested in off-shore funds.

The same news piece also disparaged the SPLC's hate group and extremist lists, which provide critical information to the public and the law enforcement community. No one questions 98% of the listings. When the SPLC makes an error, such as in the case of the listing of Ben Carson, it acknowledges it and apologizes. We expect Fox News to do the same and acknowledge *on the air* its errors in the story about the SPLC on *The Five* program.

Sincerely,



James M. Knoepp  
General Counsel

cc: James Murdoch (via email only)  
Dianne Brandi (via email only)  
Refet Kaplan (via email only)

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.npr.org/2017/06/27/534601344/alabama-prisons-ruled-horrendously-inadequate-must-improve>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.theadvocate.com/new\\_orleans/news/courts/article\\_214a67ea-93e3-11e7-907a-abbcedfa0bfd.html](http://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/courts/article_214a67ea-93e3-11e7-907a-abbcedfa0bfd.html)