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Romney Fires One Teen-Abuse Linked Financier One

Posted September 6, 2007 | 12:07 PM (EST)

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Radar has the news that Mitt Romney [has kicked troubled-teen titan](#) Robert Lichfield to the curb. Lichfield's organization Specialty Schools and Programs (WWASPS, previously WWASP), is being sued in a class action suit by over 100 plaintiffs for sexual and physical abuse. In the worst cases, teens were beaten, kept in stress positions, sleep deprived, made to walk through mud, and forced to eat their own vomit and held in dog cages. Mexican police shot footage of the dog cages and the track, which

Another lawsuit alleges educational fraud by one facility-- that facility was already made to pay parents back over \$1 million for illegitimate New York state high school diplomas, in one of the largest educational fraud judgments in New York history.

Lichfield was Romney's Utah co-chair for finance-- and he has been relieved of that position "until the lawsuit is resolved," WWASPS spokesperson Ken Kay told Radar. This is the same Ken Kay who said under oath in another lawsuit that the relationship between staff and teens in WWASPS programs was necessarily abusive.

But Romney's national finance co-chair, Mel Sembler, remains. While Sembler has not been linked with any abuse per se, Straight Inc., paid out millions of dollars in similar suits during the 1980's and 1990's. The abuse included kidnapping, humiliation (boys were called "fags," girls, "whores"), punitive use of isolation and restraint and bizarre incidents like teens being held on the floor for hours until they wet or even soiled themselves. In every state where Straight had a facility, regulators and parents reported serious abuse.

The treatment regime itself is essentially abusive-- it was virtually identical to a program in which Sembler was a participant compared to North Korean brainwashing. (That investigation prompted the founding of Straight as the prior group had resulted in bad publicity).

And in Florida, home to both Sembler and the first Straight site, when Straight finally folded in 1993 after nearly two decades of lawsuits and investigations, one final investigation suggested that political influence had kept regulators from shutting Straight down, serving as a U.S. Ambassador. The Florida Inspector General's report said, "there were indications that outside influence had kept Straight open. It appears that pressure may have been generated by Ambassador Sembler."

Of course, Lichfield has only raised hundreds of thousands for Romney; Sembler, who was national finance chair for t season, can raise many millions.

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It's about time someone is investigating how abusive treatment programs can not only stay open but thrive. I attended Republic whose headquarters is in Marion, IN. We were forced along with other girls in the house to scrub a girls uncl while she was repeatedly immersed under freezing mountain water. What psych book is this treatment found in? Who rich while dishing out torture. A bunch of sadist christians?

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Savea, yes. I think Mitt, W, Papa Bush, Charlie Crist, Bob Taft et all routinely affiliate in business and politics--even so career of this particular class of crimes. Why? Because they think the law is wrong--a hindrance to their saving the wo

And how do I know this? Cause my family has been involved in the cult for over 30 years. I've had better than average tracking these people's careers.

And it's not just the private sector. Look into the death of Martin Lee Anderson in a county boot camp in Florida about numerous close affiliates of Mel Sembler mixed up into that mess.

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Wow, now Mitt is being blamed for the crime of others? You think he would hire people like that knowing full well of the presidential candidates and dig up mud on each of their employees. It's like blaming your neighbor's dog for shiting in y

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Romney bought his way into Massachusetts politics. The first time he was trying to be a senator, but failed. I think that Will to keep at it, any dink can get a position in politics.

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Those lovely Mormon family values again.

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This is yet another example of the questionable character of Mitt Romney, and another example of the bad hiring decisions. He also had Larry Craig as a member of his campaign organization, before Craig got outed.

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This is the same Romney who made it very clear that anywhere, ANY environment was better for homeless children than for parents.

Now we know what he meant by "anywhere".

Considering the logical extension of this attitude, will he next "require" marriage of ALL heterosexuals, and then require such large numbers) from any and all available sources? What does this kinda sound like? (Hint: young men with ties and v

Makes as much sense as anything else he's done involving our most precious resource.

Thank you.

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This fits perfectly with my impression of Romney the very first time I saw him.

A plastic, closeted gay ken doll with a smarmy slimy voice and fake plastic smile. That he's best buds with Jeb Bush just there's this story, and then there's the Larry Craig thing. And then there's the way I heard him described by all the reg man with that hair and jaw and all) they were positively SWOONING over the guy...

He must be more attractive to men than he is to THIS straight woman, anyway.

This guy would be the worst thing to happen to America since W if he's installed in the Whitehouse. Ugh.

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i'm from massachusetts, so i know a bit more about romney than the general public. he became governor by lying. ron so this story is not surprising.

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