

## The Family Foundation asks C-J to retract false story on its position on marriage bill

LEXINGTON, KY —The Family Foundation today asked the *Courier-Journal* to publicly retract a story it ran asserting that The Foundation was working in the Kentucky General Assembly to defend the marriages of children under the age of 16. The headline of the story was, “Kentucky’s ‘child bride’ bill stalls as groups fight to let 13-year-olds wed.” In the body of the article, the only group it mentioned was The Family Foundation.

“We have seen a lot of false and misleading news stories in our time in Frankfort, but this one takes the cake,” said Martin Cothran, spokesperson for the group. “It was not only false, but scurrilous. We’re asking them to take down the story from their website and correct the record.”

Cothran said The Foundation’s concern was limited to one part of the original language of SB 48 and involved only the issue of who should be able to approve or deny the marriages of 17-year-olds. The original version of the bill allowed 17-year-olds to get married, but replaced current language in the law in which parents had a say, instead giving total discretion to judges. “The original version of this bill would have allowed a judge to approve a marriage, giving parents no way to contest it,” said Cothran.

Cothran said the language of the bill could easily be changed to correct this problem. “We have always been in full support of a full prohibition of the kind of marriages the story said we were defending.”

The story, written by Deborah Yetter, was taken by national media and rerun throughout the country. “Only a lazy journalist would repeat charges like this without checking them out before she published them in what is supposed to be a competent newspaper,” said Cothran. “A responsible journalist doesn’t go check her Twitter feed and just repeat undocumented accusations. This was total breakdown of journalistic ethics.”

Cothran said that in order to make it look like The Foundation didn’t contest the assertion, the reporter wrote: “Family Foundation Executive Director Kent Ostrander did not respond to requests for comment.”

The reporter left a message on The Foundation’s voicemail shortly before she ran the story in order to get comment from Ostrander, he said, who was in Frankfort at the time. “And the really outrageous thing is that Ostrander was in the same committee room in the Capitol about the time she called,” said Cothran. “She could have asked him right there.”

Cothran, The Foundation’s senior policy analyst and the organization’s normal contact with Yetter, said that he had not been contacted for the story, but had been quoted in an article in *Insider Louisville* that, he said, Yetter undoubtedly would have seen. “As far as I know, she never even tried to contact me.”



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