

SpongeBob Kid's video 'pro-gay' says Focus on the Family's Dobson

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Update: Jan 21, 2005 See the Video: [We are Family, The not so Gay Video](#)

See Update Jan 21, 2005 at PEJ.org; [SpongeBob next Gay Cartoon Demon for Dobson and America's Born-Again Army](#)

Thu, 20 Jan 2005 11:39:35 EST [CBC Arts](#)

WASHINGTON - A music video promoting tolerance of others and featuring cartoon character SpongeBob SquarePants is under fire from several U.S. religious groups, who charge that the "pro-homosexual video" is an attempt to "brainwash" kids.

Dr. James C. Dobson, founder of religious group Focus on the Family, spoke of the video Tuesday evening at a black-tie dinner in Washington, criticizing what he called a "pro-homosexual video."

Fans of SpongeBob SquarePants began stealing large inflatable versions of the cartoon character from

A DVD of the music video is set to be mailed out to U.S. elementary schools along with educational lesson plans developed in collaboration with the Anti-Defamation League and a "tolerance pledge" that includes a mention of tolerance for different sexual identities. Barney, Clifford, Arthur, characters from *Sesame Street* and *The Muppet Show*, Bill Cosby, Diana Ross and Whoopi Goldberg also appear in the footage.

The work itself, which has already appeared on several TV networks, doesn't include any reference to sexual identity. Though not mentioned on the video, the "tolerance pledge" which is borrowed from the Alabama-based Southern Poverty Law Center is available on the foundation's website.

Nile Rodgers, who penned the disco hit *We Are Family*, helped create the video through the We Are Family Foundation. He founded the organization following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks in order to teach children about diversity and multiculturalism.

"The fact that some people may be upset with other peoples' lifestyles, that is O.K.," Rodgers told the New York Times. "We are just talking about respect."

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Objections a misunderstanding?

Rogers also suggested that objections are based on a misunderstanding, with critics confusing the video with an unrelated website that supports gay youth, also called We Are Family.

Paul Batura, assistant to Dobson, stood by the accusation Wednesday.

"We see the video as an insidious means by which the organization is manipulating and potentially brainwashing kids," Batura said. "It is a classic bait and switch."

Though incredibly popular with children, SpongeBob SquarePants also has a substantial cult following among adults. Critics have previously suggested that the yellow sponge character is gay, pointing to his affectionate relationship with his sidekick Patrick and his favourite TV show, *The Adventures of Mermaid Man and Barnacle Boy*

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