

## **Mission Creep and the Southern Poverty Law Center's Misguided Focus**

**Carol Swain**

In case you missed the story, last November 4th a polling precinct in Philadelphia, PA was patrolled by an organization called the New Black Panther Party, a Marxist group that in 2000, was listed by the Southern Poverty Law Center as a racial hate group. Video footage shot in 2008, show Black Panther precinct workers intimidating white voters. This was covered by the news organizations, and resulted in charges being filed by the Bush Department of Justice, whose job it is to defend and protect the voting rights of all Americans.

What should have been an open and shut case has become something more troubling, after the Eric Holder-led Justice Department dropped charges against the Black Panthers, who supported President Obama. Currently, this decision to drop the charges, is being challenged by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, (an organization with which I am affiliated).

*Now this is the part where things really get interesting.*

The SPLC has been mum on the issue, despite the fact that in 2000, it included the New Black Panther Party among its annual list of hate groups. In fact, what is most shocking is that the SPLC has spent far more resources hounding conservative organizations, such as the Center for Immigration Studies, and prominent citizens like CNN's award-winning anchor Lou Dobbs, than it has protecting the civil rights of American voters, which includes white people as well as black. The unrelenting attacks on Mr. Dobbs and others are shameless. The once venerable organization wages war against conservative individuals, principles, and organizations. How unfortunate for America. How unfortunate for the organization's founders.

There is a name for what has happened. It is called "mission creep." Mission creep occurs when an organization strays beyond its original purpose and engages in actions antithetical to its goals. Rather than monitoring hate groups, the Southern Poverty Law Center has become one.

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