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Subject: Barbie Bails - Caving In to the Far Right on Gender

Barbie Bails: Caving In to the Far Right on Gender



WASHINGTON (January 6, 2006) Buckling under pressure from conservative groups, Mattel's Barbie.com website received a face-lift earlier this week. The toy manufacturer found itself under attack from the radical right for offering "Girl," "Boy," and "I don't know" as gender choices in an online questionnaire. The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC) called

the web changes an unnecessary retreat.

"Accusations that Mattel is promoting a gender-bending agenda are ridiculous," said Riki Wilchins, Executive Director of GenderPAC. "But equally sad is the company's caving in. Hasn't the far right ever heard of a girl who plays sports or a boy with long hair?"

"So far they've attacked Winnie the Pooh, Tinky Winky, SpongeBob SquarePants, *Shrek 2*'s Pinocchio and now Barbie for either sex or gender issues," continued Wilchins. "What's next? Finding that Bugs Bunny liked kissing Elmer Fudd, Heckel and Jeckel were having an affair, or that Daffy Duck was crossdressing as 'Duck Dodgers'?"

Mattel spokeswoman Lauren Bruksh explained in a statement that "Barbie.com always provides children with a neutral or non-response option... This was just an innocent oversight."

Not according to Concerned Women for America (CWA), a radical right conservative group, who accused Mattel of being guilty of far more - promoting gender confusion among young children. Within days of CWA's launching an attack on Mattel, the online questionnaire was changed so that the third option read "I don't want to say."

Said Wilchins, "That something as innocent as this is being politicized speaks volumes about the tremendous pressure on children to behave, look, and even think in certain ways when it comes to gender."

In early 2006, GenderPAC will launch a new parenting program, Children

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As They Are. The program provides resources and support to parents, educators, and caregivers who want to raise their children free from gender stereotypes that limit the feelings, interests, and behaviors that boys and girls can safely explore.

The Gender Public Advocacy Coalition (GenderPAC) works to end discrimination and violence caused by gender stereotypes. To join today, visit us at www.gpac.org/join.

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