

MEDIA ADVISORY

Los Angeles Affiliate KABC-TV refuses to air ad with gay families during Inauguration: “Too controversial, families will be watching.”

January 21, 2009 (Los Angeles)--Non-profit organization GetToKnowUsFirst.org produced five 30-second commercials featuring gay and lesbian families, with the message “Marriage promotes families. Support marriage equality.” The ads, while not tied to any current election, are the result of California’s passage of Proposition 8 in November. The group aired the spots in 42 of the states’ 58 counties—everywhere the initiative passed by 50% or more—during Tuesday’s coverage of the Presidential Inauguration. KABC is the only station that refused to sell the ad space.

The rejected ad profiles two African American men raising five children ages 6 through 25. Ironically, the family lives in Los Angeles.

The media buy was attempted by the organization’s ad agency, New and Improved Media. Its CEO, Keith Fisher, was surprised that KABC rejected the group’s money. Fisher said, “We usually only see this with risqué content, as in a trailer for a movie. He added, “If KABC thinks they have to protect the public from this family, something’s obviously very wrong over there.”

Chris Yokogawa, the ad agency’s media buyer, worked with the station, attempting to ease any concerns they might have. He said, “We went back and forth a couple of times. I explained that this family is far from controversial. They were firm in their rejection. They said it was too controversial to air during the Inauguration, since ‘many families will be watching.’”

The ad aired across California on Tuesday—before, during and after the Presidential Inauguration on Good Morning America, The Today Show, Despierta America (Univision) and Levantate (Telemundo) broadcasts, as well as on a wide range of regional news stations, CNN and FoxNews during evening coverage of the day’s events.

Project Coordinator John Ireland expressed astonishment at KABC’s rejection. He said, “This ad is about families. I challenge anyone to watch the commercials at www.GetToKnowUsFirst.org and articulate what is inappropriate about airing it at any time of day.”

One week prior, at attorney Gloria Allred's urging, Rev. Rick Warren indicated he would be willing to show the ads to his congregation at Saddleback Church in Orange County. Days before the Presidential Inauguration, he changed his mind, dropping the offer.

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