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SUPER BOWL AD FEATURING GAY FAMILY REJECTED BY KNBC: Broadcaster claims the National Football League (NFL) excluded PSA as “advocacy,” yet other advocacy ads air.

LOS ANGELES, SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2009 –Los Angeles NBC affiliate KNBC refused to air a paid ad produced by GetToKnowUsFirst.org featuring a gay family and supporting marriage equality during Super Bowl programming. KNBC stated that it had shown the ad to the NFL legal department, which rejected it for being “advocacy,” a category they claim to exclude. Despite this policy, however, other advocacy ads aired multiple times throughout the day’s NFL-controlled programming.

The rejected thirty-second public service announcement (PSA) features two married African American men raising five children ages 6 to 25. Among the advocacy ads which did air were PSAs for TobaccoFreeCA.org and DontBeAnAsterisk.org, an anti-steroids advocacy campaign.

John Ireland, GetToKnowUsFirst.org’s Project Organizer was shocked to see the other advocacy ads run during the NFL programming. He said, “We bought ads before, during and after the Super Bowl in ten markets across California. We planned this buy weeks in advance and heard late Friday that the NFL rejected our ads because they violate the NFL’s ‘no advocacy’ policy. I was truly stunned while watching the programming, to see that they had selectively blocked our ads, while allowing other advocacy ads to air.”

Keith Fisher, CEO of New and Improved Media, the ad agency for GetToKnowUsFirst.org, explained the chain of events. He said, “Late Friday afternoon, KNBC told us they had shown it to the NFL Legal Department and that it was rejected because it was ‘advocacy.’ Clearly, the other ads they ran meet anyone’s definition of advocacy.”

“We are disappointed that this ad couldn’t reach an audience with images of our families during one of the most watched programming events of the year,” said Neil G. Giuliano, president of the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation (GLAAD). “GLAAD is calling on KNBC to meet with GLAAD and GetToKnowUsFirst.org to discuss why this message would be rejected and to remedy this situation.”

The PSAs were produced for GetToKnowUsFirst.org by the non-profit organization POWER UP. Gina Levy, who directed the PSAs, expressed her anger that the ad buy was blocked. She said, “Marriage Equality is a civil rights issue. As a straight woman, I know this affects all of us, not just people who happen to be gay. It is important for us all to get to know these families. It’s a shame that’s not going to happen today.”

The rejected ad can be seen at <http://www.GetToKnowUsFirst.org>

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