

Black Activists Criticize NASCAR for Renewed Support of Jesse Jackson

Black conservatives are opposing NASCAR giving Jesse Jackson financial support.

([PRWEB](#)) July 10, 2004 -- A renewed financial relationship between NASCAR and the Reverend Jesse Jackson is drawing a sharp rebuke from members of the African-American leadership network Project 21. Last year, public criticism from Project 21's black activists and the National Legal and Policy Center provoked an outcry among NASCAR fans that led the professional racing organization to discontinue their funding of Jackson's groups. NASCAR recently sponsored a Jackson-affiliated luncheon, with a NASCAR executive explaining, "we would want to be in step with other sports and corporations" in supporting Jackson.

"I think it's a disgrace that NASCAR is once again aligning itself with Jesse Jackson. It's a disgrace to the fans and a disgrace to the sport," said Project 21 member Reginald Jones. "As one of NASCAR's most hardcore fans, I'll personally be out there at the races letting NASCAR officials and fans alike know that the sport should not be falling prey to Jackson's politically correct scams."

CNSNews.com first reported NASCAR's sponsorship of a sport-themed luncheon on June 30 that was part of Jackson's annual Rainbow/PUSH Coalition conference in Chicago. At a similar luncheon last year, Coalition board member Bill Shack called auto racing "the last bastion of white supremacy" in professional sports. NASCAR, which previously donated an estimated \$250,000 to Jackson's groups, reportedly planned no further donations after Project 21, NLPC and NASCAR fans criticized the relationship.

George Pyne, NASCAR's vice president of marketing, however, this week lavished praise on the group whose sports liaison last year called stock car racing "a good ole' boy's southern cracker sport." During the luncheon, Pyne called Jackson and his group "positive catalysts for change" and told CNSNews reporter Marc Morano: "To the extent that Rainbow/PUSH is committed to making NASCAR more diverse, we support them."

Project 21 members believe the quality of auto racing, like any sport, would be hurt by racial quotas. Instead, businesses affiliated with but not governed by NASCAR can help qualified minority drivers succeed through financial sponsorships all drivers need to fund their competition. (A commentary on this topic, "Blacks Need Green to Compete with Whites in NASCAR," can be found at www.nationalcenter.org/NPA502.html)

"Diversity in sports is a sham, and NASCAR officials should know it," adds Jones. "Until the NBA starts recruiting more Hispanics, the nation's largest minority and an underrepresented segment of professional basketball players, I don't think NASCAR should be looking to promote anyone but deserving drivers. If Jackson truly wants to integrate NASCAR, he needs to be out raising money for minority drivers instead of shaking down the front office."

Project 21 has been a leading voice of the African-American community since 1992. For more information, contact David Almasi at (202) 371-1400 x106, Virgil Beato at 202/371-1400 x 101 or Project21@nationalcenter.org or visit Project 21's website at www.nationalcenter.org/P21Index.html



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