



## **The Problem with Fox**

At a time when Americans have legitimate fear and uncertainty about our country's future, we need our media to be honest, insightful, and responsible. Fox News is exactly the opposite. Instead, the channel consistently stokes fear and division using race-baiting, divisive rhetoric, and smear campaigns based in lies and distortions.

Fox has enormous influence on our national debates, so this problem affects all of us -- and it's only getting worse. Every day we are seeing grave warning signs that Fox's inflammatory approach can lead to violence, and in some cases it already has.

Part of the way Fox News disseminates its messages is through TV sets in public places. Without thinking about it, many businesses and other public establishments are providing a vehicle for Fox's attempts to divide America. Below is a summary of why we are asking businesses and other public establishments to refuse to play Fox News Channel.

### **The network divides our country**

Fox News hosts and guests regularly attempt to pit groups of people against one another – white against black, US-born against immigrant, gay against straight, and men against women.

Some of the network's most divisive rhetoric is used on the topic of race. In July 2009, Fox host Glenn Beck called President Obama a "racist" who has "a deep-seated hatred for white people or the white culture" -- a statement that Fox Chairman Rupert Murdoch has since said he agrees with. Frequent Fox guest Jesse Lee Peterson has said that most black people lack moral character, and cited "what they did to the dome" after Hurricane Katrina as evidence. Recently, Fox News contributor John Stossel called for the repeal of a key provision of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that prevents business owners from discriminating based on race. And Fox News hosts Bill O'Reilly and Sean Hannity were the first to air maliciously edited video of Shirley Sherrod's speech to the Georgia NAACP — video that cost Sherrod her job with the USDA. The recent episode involving Sherrod has helped confirm what we have long known — that Fox is a propaganda machine with no regard for the truth.

Glenn Beck calling President Obama a "racist" was the most blatant example of Fox News leading the effort paint the President as someone who harbors and acts upon deeply held prejudice against white people. But the network consistently tries to create the impression that black political and civic leaders want to "get even" with whites by taking their wealth and giving it to blacks.

We've seen the hateful atmosphere that has arisen at Tea Parties because of this false narrative. As the House of Representatives deliberated over health care legislation this

past spring, some Tea Party members gathered outside the Capitol shouted "Ni\*\*er!" at black congressmen. One of the protesters spat on Congressman Emmanuel Cleaver, while another called openly gay Representative Barney Frank a "faggot" as the laughing crowd imitated his lisp. The Tea Party has been uncritically promoted and embraced by Fox News since its inception.

### **It's dangerous**

We already know that Fox's hateful and inflammatory rhetoric can have tragic real world consequences.

Last year, abortion doctor George Tiller was gunned down in his church after being demonized for years by Fox's Bill O'Reilly as "Tiller the Baby Killer." O'Reilly had compared Tiller to the Nazis and to Al-Qaeda. He said that Tiller had "blood on his hands" and that he wouldn't want to be Tiller "if there is a Judgement Day."

In July of this year, a man armed with a rifle, a shotgun and a handgun opened fire on California Highway Patrol officers on an Oakland freeway. After he was apprehended, police determined the shooter was on his way to the American Civil Liberties Union and Tides Foundation offices in San Francisco to kill people. In the aftermath of the tragedy, the shooter's mother said that her son watched a lot of television news and was angry at left-wing politicians and organizations. While many Americans are aware of the ACLU's work, the Tides Foundation is a little-known non-profit organization that most people had never heard of -- until Fox's Glenn Beck started demonizing and spreading false information about the organization. Since Beck's show premiered in January of 2009, he has pushed conspiracy theories involving Tides on nearly 30 episodes. During the same time period, Tides was never mentioned on other cable or network news channels, according to a report by the watchdog group Media Matters.

### **It's not really news**

Fox News insists that they're a legitimate news network. They engage in divisive rhetoric, race-baiting and attempts at character assassinations, but they do it all under the guise of reporting the news. Often the mainstream media eventually takes the bait and runs with Fox News' distortions and smear campaigns. When businesses and public places play Fox News, they become a conduit for its stream of misinformation, and it contributes to the misconception that the network is a credible source for news and information.

## What the Turn Off Fox campaign is not

- **It's not about politics**

We aren't asking people to turn off Fox because of its political orientation. This is not about Democrats and Republicans, or left vs. right. We are concerned about Fox because of the way it uses lies and half truths to divide this country, and the danger that poses. People on all parts of the political spectrum have spoken out about how dangerous and divisive Fox is. We believe that everyone who cares about a political culture rooted in factual information and free from violence and racial animosity, should refuse to be a part of what Fox is doing in any way.

- **It's not an attempt to censor anyone, or a challenge to freedom of speech**

There's no question that Fox News has a right to broadcast what they do. The issue is whether businesses and public places want to be a conduit for Fox's consistently divisive rhetoric, race-baiting and distortions of the truth.

The First Amendment protects us from government efforts to suppress individuals' speech. The government can't, and shouldn't censor Fox -- but consumers, businesses, and other establishments can and should decide whether or not they want to be a part of what Fox is doing.

- **Turn Off Fox is not an effort to attack business**

We believe that small businesses are the heart and soul of this country. They anchor our communities and are America's most important engine of job creation. That's why we think it's so important for them to think about what kind of messages they disseminate, even inadvertently. Our desire is to work in partnership with businesses to help them make responsible decisions about what's on their televisions.

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Thanks for taking the time to read this document. My contact information is below. Please call to let me know if you'd like to discuss further, or to let me know that you've decided to comply with my request. Thank you.

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my name

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my phone number