

Trust Black Women — Take the Billboards Down

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No Comments

Anti-abortion messages in South L.A. seen by some as charging African-American women with genocide.



Billboard featuring an African-American child accompanying a message that says "Black children are an endangered species"

Black Women for Wellness joined with others nationally and locally last week to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., a holiday that marks important milestones in our African-American experience.

While we are encouraged by the strides that have been made to unify and heal our communities, we must point out a racist and divisive campaign that objectifies Black children, charges Black women with genocide, and utilizes Black men as pawns in a political play for power that has been brought to our city by The Radiance Foundation and Issue4life.

Along King Boulevard, where this year's parade was, and where our community — politicians, elected officials, grassroots leadership and everyday folk — gathered to celebrate the life of the Rev. King, were billboards with the message that says Black children are an endangered species, and the face of a beautiful African-American child accompanying this dangerous message.

This message is dangerous because it belies its true purpose: to gather anti-abortion support in the African-American community. Los Angeles is the latest stop in this campaign. Billboards have been posted in Georgia, Wisconsin, Florida and Illinois.

Black children are not comparable to bald eagles, blue whales, California condors and other animals on the endangered species list.

A society that does not value the lives of Black children, women and men is the greatest threat to our community. Substandard housing, some unchecked police power that murders with impunity and jails with gusto, disparities in health care, pay, life expectancy and more. These are the true threats to the survival of healthy, stable Black families and communities.

King believed that health care was a basic human right. The Radiance Foundation, by insinuating that Black women bear the blame for genocide through abortion, makes it plain that their focus is not human rights but the subjugation of Black women's autonomy over their bodies.

It is reprehensible that someone would use Black children as a tool to attack Black women for political purposes.

Black women stand at the intersection of racism and sexism in this country, and we face the pain of living at this crossroads everyday. It is demonstrated by our health status — we suffer from some of the highest health disparities in Los Angeles County.

Rather than allow outside agitators to barge in and try to divide us by scape-goating Black women for political gain, Black women's organizations and our allies must come together to find solutions to ending the health disparities and crises we face.

Trust Black women: If anyone feels the sharp pain of infant and maternal mortality in our community, it's our mothers, grandmothers, aunties and sisters.

Trust Black women: If anyone feels the sharp pain of husbands, sons and brothers lost to gang violence, as well as police brutality and murder in our community, it's our mothers, grandmothers, aunties and sisters.

Trust Black women: If anyone feels the sharp pain of dreams and hopes deferred, dried up and festered because of poverty, miseducation, hopelessness and despair, it is us.

While we bask in the glow of our country celebrating King, and while you still have your favorite Dr. King quote on your Facebook page, please recognize there are organizations and people that would attempt to control women and who would destroy our families in a heartbeat. Organizations that have the audacity to attempt to link their agenda with the philosophy of King by placing billboards along the parade route celebrating him and the movement from which he sprang.

These billboards dehumanize Black children and charge Black women with genocide — something King would never, ever stand for.

I look forward to the Kingdom Day Parade in Los Angeles, the children, high school bands, local personalities and line-dancing seniors; it is a heart-warming and powerful way to convey to our children and to ourselves who the Black community is in L.A. and what we stand for. It is a reminder of how far we have come and that we have not yet arrived. It's a chance for those we share this road with to come together and celebrate the milestones on this journey, and that we are a powerful, visionary people.

"Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable ... It comes only through the tireless efforts and passionate concern of dedicated individuals ... This is no time for apathy nor complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action." — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

What does this moment ask of you, and what does it ask of me?

1. Gather more information; see our website at www.trustblackwomenscalifornia.org.
2. Write something, say something. Blog, tweet, Facebook and put our technology prowess to use.
3. Talk to your friends and neighbors. People might not have noticed yet, or may be understandably confused, and a few words from you can help explain how these billboards got here and the ulterior motives of the sponsoring foundations.

For more information on Trust Black Women, go to www.trustblackwomenscalifornia.org or www.bwwla.com.



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Image from www.trustblackwomencalifornia.org.

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