

Chip, Joanna Gaines Attacked Online for Donation to Sister's School Board Campaign

Home renovation stars Chip and Joanna Gaines have come under fire online for a donation the couple made toward a family member's campaign for a local school board.

Chip donated \$1,000 to his sister, Shannon Braun, to support her run for a spot on the board of the Grapevine-Colleyville Independent School District, per *The Dallas Morning News*.

When media got wind of the gift, critics sounded off against the Christian couple, alleging the monetary donation directly supported Braun's views on critical race theory (the idea that racism is a social construct embedded in systems and policies). In a recent campaign post, Braun condemned the theory, saying the focus will be instead on a return of teaching "academics."

Many news outlets used Braun's condemnation of the hot-button topic in headlines, though her campaign page makes no overt reference to the theory, nor is it a major part of her slogan.

NBC News highlighted the connection, as did commentary site the *Friendly Atheist*, among others.

One social media user pointed out the irony of the *Fixer Upper* stars facing repercussions for supporting their family.

Actual Story: The Gaines, worth millions, donate \$1,000 to HIS SISTER, who's running for school board, and happens to be against CRT, although CRT isn't really being debated in her district.

What an incredible scoop for The Hill. Instant Pulitzer.

– Smatt (@mdrache) May 26, 2021

Another agreed, coming to the Gaineses' defense. "It's his sister," they wrote. "He gave a grand to his sister who is running for school board. Though I can see why those who work at The Hill would be wildly confused about not hating your family."

Others were more critical, with *Dallas Observer* reporter Paige Skinner writing both a condemning article and a social media post calling for fans to stop giving the couple their money.

Stop giving them ur money challenge

– Paige Skinner (@paginaskinner) May 24, 2021

Many followed this advice, tweeting they would be discontinuing their support for the Gaineses' various products, and in some cases, including subscriptions to Discovery+, where the Magnolia Network is hosted.

The couple's past charitable donations have supported many organizations, such as the renovation project to rebuild a new emergency girls shelter that Chip and Joanna supported at the start of 2021.

Both have been outspoken about their faith, which has often brought criticism, like the 2016 BuzzFeed News article chastising their attendance at a church that upholds biblical views of marriage and sexuality.

Like fans and conservatives coming to their defense today, the Gaineses' pastor then lauded their strong faith after 15 years of friendship. "They are tremendous people with tremendous values, and I've known them for many, many years," he said.

He then continued with a poignant admonition for believers to

rally around the Gaineses, echoing the support currently being showed as news about the latest attack against the couple spreads.

“Support one another when people make stands,” he said. “Don’t leave them out there alone. Let’s get behind them and support them and love them and pray for them.” {eoa}

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