

The NBA Is a Spineless Little Bully

When I was a boy in school, I watched as one of the school bullies picked on another kid who was not much of a fighter. Then, after the bully walked away, the kid who had just been bullied turned around and picked on a smaller boy. The bullied boy who wouldn't fight the tough kid was willing to pick on a smaller victim. Shades of the NBA.

Yes, this multi-billion dollar organization, which spans the globe, was happy to bully North Carolina in 2016 when the state had the audacity to declare that men's bathrooms were for men and women's bathrooms were for women. How dare the people of this largely conservative state be so discriminatory!

As a punishment, the NBA pulled its scheduled All-Star game from Charlotte. No way would this highly ethical organization be partner to such unfair treatment of the transgender community. No way would they put money before morality. Not a chance. Not the NBA. Right!

In point of fact, the NBA was simply marching to the beat of American political correctness, a beat to which its biggest corporate sponsors also marched. You had better believe this was about money more than morality, about dollars more than decency.

Back in 2016, when the NBA decided to relocate the 2017 All-Star game, the league put out a statement claiming that the North Carolina law was "discriminatory," running counter to its "guiding principles of equality and mutual respect." (I remind you that the law simply called for people to respect the privacy of men's and women's bathrooms, which is hardly "discriminatory" or unfair.)

But that same NBA has had no problem getting in bed with an oppressive country like China, which imprisons and tortures Christians and Muslims and others who do not toe the party line.

Tens of millions of people experience severe daily restrictions under the tyrannical policies of President Xi, with countless tens of thousands suffering right now in “reeducation camps” and jails.

As I noted in August, one of my friends in China related to me that he has “Chinese colleagues whose family members have received life sentences because of their faith.”

Arrests, brutal interrogations, imprisonments, disruption of meetings, beatings and destroying of “unauthorized” Bible and Christian books are increasingly common. In one instance that was shared with me, those owning non-approved Bibles and other resources were hit with “stiff fines and the books earmarked for destruction. But not before they (the materials) were first dumped in piles on the street before they were carted off ... followed by the pastor who was then sent to prison.”

And we know at least some of what is happening to the Muslim Uighurs in China, with as many as 1 million arrested and detained.

Yet none of this stopped the NBA from bringing its teams to China and working with major Chinese companies for corporate sponsorships. After all, money talks!

And when one NBA team owner, Daryl Morey, had the temerity to post a criticism of China’s treatment of Hong Kong protesters, the league virtually threw him under the bus.

League chairman Adam Silver’s “defense” of this owner was far softer than his apologies, while outspoken NBA coaches, who frequently blast President Trump, were strangely silent. (Morey, for his part, has been publicly penitent, ruing his

foolish tweet.)

Even the socially woke LeBron James claimed that Morey was “misinformed,” leading to his jerseys being burned in effigy in Hong Kong. (A *USA Today* commentator called this the most disgraceful moment of LeBron’s career. Please, LeBron, tell us plainly. Morey was “misinformed” about what?)

No wonder the protesters were indignant. The hypocrisy was beyond glaring—and from the league as a whole, not just LeBron or Silver.

To put things mildly, receiving a life sentence for being a Christian is far more discriminatory than telling a biological male he needs to use the men’s restroom. Confining 1 million Muslims to reeducation camps is a far greater threat to “guiding principles of equality and mutual respect” than saying that bathrooms and changing rooms are not gender neutral.

No wonder former North Carolina governor Pat McCrory said, “I see hypocrisy. They wanted to involve themselves with North Carolina commerce and an election, while not setting the same standard for China.”

He claimed to have called the NBA out on its hypocrisy back in 2016, arguing that this was always about profit more than principle.

“They were losing some sponsorships; they told me that flat-out on the phone. ... They got heavily involved with our community and elections while ignoring China.

“I told the commissioner they’ve got a lot of business in China. But they’ve got a lot of sponsors there, and that would cost them hundreds of millions.”

And heaven forbid that the NBA would lose hundreds of millions of dollars because of petty human rights violations like the

oppression of hundreds of millions of people, including arrest, torture and even execution.

But the NBA is not alone in its hypocrisy. As I noted in 2016, other major corporations, like Starbucks and Apple, “blast Americans who stand for religious liberties and conservative moral values, even threatening states that will protect those liberties and values, claiming this discriminates against gays and lesbians.

“Yet they have stores all over Saudi Arabia, a country where gays can be executed and where Muslims can kill their own family members if they convert to Christianity.” And they do major business with China as well. (Starbucks boasts about this.)

So, to the NBA (and your equally hypocritical cohorts), it’s time to put morality first and money second.

Stand up to the big bullies of this world, the corporate giants like China, and tell them, “As long as you oppress and muzzle your populace, you don’t get our business.”

Then, live with the loss and show some character, and we will applaud your courage.

So far, I’ve seen anything but courage in this hypocritical display. {eoa}