

Pro-Life Groups Defend Tebow Super Bowl Ad

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✖ The American Family Association (AFA) is urging its supporters to send letters to CBS Chairman Les Moonves to urge him not to bow to pressure to pull a pro-life Super Bowl ad featuring college football star Tim Tebow and his mother.

The ad, which has not been seen, is expected to tell the story of Pam Tebow's pregnancy in 1987. After getting sick during a mission trip to the Philippines, she was advised to abort her fifth child because doctors feared the medication she was given had caused irreversible damage. She ignored the recommendation and gave birth to Tim, who went on to win the Heisman Trophy in 2007.

The ad was paid for by Focus on the Family at an estimated cost of \$2.5 million and has a theme of "Celebrate Family, Celebrate Life."

"CBS has come under withering fire from the left for its decision to air this ad," AFA wrote in an e-mail to supporters Wednesday.

"The hypocrisy here is thick," it continued. "Abortion proponents claim to be all about choice, but they are outraged over an ad that features a woman exercising her right to choose life for her baby son."

On Monday, a national coalition of women's groups including the National Organization for Woman (NOW), the Feminist Majority and the Women's Media Center called on CBS to pull the pro-life ad, saying it would be divisive.

“An ad that uses sports to divide rather than to unite has no place in the biggest national sports event of the year—an event designed to bring Americans together,” said Jehmu Greene, president of the New York-based Women’s Media Center, according to the Associated Press (AP).^Â

CBS said Tuesday that it had approved the script and that the 30-second spot will run during the Super Bowl. But the network said it would also consider other “responsibly produced” advocacy ads in its Feb. 7 broadcast, the AP reported.

All the national TV networks have policies governing the broadcast of certain types of controversial advocacy ads. Last year, when NBC broadcast the Super Bowl the network declined to air an ad sponsored by the Catholic watchdog group Fidelis that hailed the success of President Obama and featured the message “Life: Imagine the Potential.”

In 2004, CBS rejected an ad by the United Church of Christ (UCC) highlighting its welcoming stance toward homosexuals. But CBS said this week that its policies toward advocacy spots had evolved in the last several years. Under its new policies, CBS said the UCC ad would have been accepted.

“We have for some time moderated our approach to advocacy submissions after it became apparent that our stance did not reflect public sentiment or industry norms,” spokesman Dana McClintock said, according to CBS News. “In fact, most media outlets have accepted advocacy ads for some time.”

AFA said those “responsibly produced” ads could promote abortion or homosexuality. On Thursday, the organization called on CBS to reject an ad for a gay dating site, which the network reportedly is considering for broadcast during the Super Bowl.

“A message that promotes death or sexual deviancy is not the moral equivalent of a message that celebrates life,” the group wrote, “and CBS must be urged to reject any such advocacy

ads.”

Pro-life groups have been expressing support for the Tebow spot since the women’s group sent their protest letter to CBS on Monday.

Penny Nance, CEO of Concerned Women for America, called NOW hypocritical for opposing the pro-life ad but not in her recollection speaking out against sexually graphic or misogynistic content on CBS.

“I find it laughable that NOW has a problem with Tim Tebow sharing his own story,” Nance said. “If NOW really cared about women they would stop flacking for the abortion industry and start working on behalf of women and resolving our concerns about real problems such as sexually exploitative and violent content on television.”

Jerry Newcombe, co-host of *The Coral Ridge Hour*, Coral Ridge Ministries’ weekly television program, said the flap was an attempt by pro-choice groups to silence their detractors.

“Their opposition fits an all-too familiar pattern in which liberal groups seek to silence or censor a message with which they happen to disagree,” he said.

He said public opinion has shifted toward the pro-life view, pointing to a Marist poll released this week showing 56 percent of all Americans and 58 percent of those ages 18-29 say abortion is “morally wrong.”

“The pro-life position is the one increasingly embraced by Americans—especially younger Americans,” Newcombe said. “This Super Bowl ad that will be seen by some 100 million people is not divisive, as critics claim, but will merely give voice to the growing majority of Americans who cherish and celebrate the gift of life.”

A spokesman for Focus on the Family said his group was “a

little surprised” by the uproar over the ad.

“There’s nothing political and controversial about it,” Focus spokesman Gary Schneeberger told the AP. “When the day arrives, and you sit down to watch the game on TV, those who oppose it will be quite surprised at what the ad is all about.”