

POLITICIZING THE CULTURE

William A Donohue

Politics is everywhere, and it's getting out of control.

We now have the likes of LeBron James and Serena Williams, two talented athletes, publicly taking up the cause of Black Lives Matter, a racist band of activists. We also have the likes of Colin Kaepernick and Joakim Noah, two talentless athletes (Kaepernick's 49ers won two games this past season and Noah is averaging two points a game for the Knicks) protesting the National Anthem and the Army, respectively.

Hollywood has a long history of politicizing the culture. From the Hollywood Ten—all were card-carrying members of the Communist Party—to Meryl Streep and her screed against the president, Tinseltown has been a political circus for decades. Nowadays it is routine for actors, singers, and musicians to offer their wisdom on the latest person or event that bothers them.

The newest entry into the politicization of the culture is corporate America. Led by Goldman Sachs, the big business boys and girls are literally in love with the radical gay movement. Microsoft, Google, and Amazon are politically absorbed on many issues, and standing up right behind them is an array of smaller companies. Macy's and Nordstrom's are hopelessly political, setting an example for small stores.

We couldn't even watch the Super Bowl without being treated to one political ad after another. Subtle statements about how racist and sexist America is were highlighted throughout the game. Even a company that makes lumber couldn't limit itself to selling wood.

There is one thing these individuals and institutions have in common: every one of them promotes the politics of the Left.

Conservative athletes and actors keep their politics to themselves and do what we expect them to do: play and act. Similarly, conservatives in the corporate world keep their distance from politics, sticking to business interests. Not so with their left-wing colleagues.

There is something else that these athletes, actors, and corporate officers have in common: they are all super rich. How does that explain their politics? Just like the intellectuals who spoon-feed them their politics, none of them are forced to live with the consequences of their ideas.

They can complain about stop-and-frisk police policies because they don't live in high crime areas. They can oppose school choice and avoid lousy public schools because they can afford to send their children to private schools. They can promote gun control because their bodyguards are already armed. They can rail about carbon footprints because they can't see theirs from their private plane. They can support a hands-off homeless policy because they don't have to see men defecating in the street on their way to work.

Worse than their hypocrisy is what these elites are doing to our society.

By politicizing the culture, the high flyers are dividing America.

When we go to a ballgame, we expect to witness athletic excellence. We also come together to root for our team, showing the players how much we appreciate their efforts. As fans, we may be of different races, ethnic groups, religions, and classes—and we may have a different set of political beliefs—but what brings us together is the game.

Politics undoes that. When a player refuses to stand during the National Anthem, he sends a divisive political message. The same is true when we go to a concert and have to listen to a singer shout his politics from the microphone. These

celebrities not only abuse their platform—no one came to hear their political inanities—they pit one American against another.

The advent of corporate America entering the political fray is most disturbing. Many people think that because the Republican Party has the reputation of catering to the rich that the financial and corporate sectors are in the pocket of Republicans, promoting their candidates and policies. Not the big ones: in the last election, Wall Street and Madison Avenue put their chips on Hillary Clinton.

The big corporations may tout the virtues of a market economy, but in reality they loathe competition, which is why they favor the regulatory schemes of the Democrats: it keeps new entrepreneurs from competing against them.

It would not help matters if conservative athletes, actors, and corporate officials became more political. The answer is not to even things up by escalating a new wave of politicization; rather, the answer is to depoliticize the culture.

This is not a call for passivity. Letting athletes and actors know how we feel about their abuse of power is critical. We also need to take our business elsewhere when confronted by corporations that get too political. Our side did that well by patronizing Chick-fil-A after left-wing activists sought to crush it because its founder espoused traditional values (he is a practicing Christian).

The elites occupy the command posts but we outnumber them. We need to flex our muscles and tell them to get off their soapbox. Laura Ingraham got it right when she named a book on this subject, *Shut Up and Sing*. We can now add “Shut Up and Play Ball,” and “Shut Up and Sell.”