

ADVOCACY NEWS

ADVOCACY ACTION

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

OAC Members Pressure PETA to Remove Offensive Billboard

By James Zervios, OAC Director of Communications

On August 19, the OAC was alerted that the animal rights group PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) had posted a disturbing billboard touting the benefits of vegetarianism. The billboard, shown above, was an offensive attempt to promote vegetarianism, as claimed by PETA.

Without hesitation, the OAC immediately armed its members and contacted PETA to urge them to remove the billboard. The OAC also issued a national news release.

Within the first 24 hours, OAC members took action. Media interviews reported that Ingrid Newkirk, PETA Founder and President, received thousands of emails expressing outrage and requesting the removal of the advertisement.

Initial responses from PETA were generic - a response that discussed the importance of a vegetarian lifestyle and the effects of consuming vegetables instead of meat. At no point did PETA address the implications of their billboard or sincerely apologize for the damage their message had done.

PETA'S MOVE

On August 24, the OAC was invited to debate the billboard with Ms. Newkirk on a national radio show hosted by Montel Williams. After an interesting debate where Newkirk continued to stress the importance of vegetarianism, OAC President and CEO, Joe Nadglowski, expressed the damaging social and emotional effects of the billboard.

Newkirk then announced that PETA would be replacing the billboard. The billboard was taken down and replaced with a new billboard stating, "Gone - Just like all the pounds lost by people who go vegetarian."



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OAC REACTION TO THE REMOVAL

The OAC considers this a "bittersweet" win. Yes, the billboard was removed, but the damage was already done. Every person that saw the billboard who is affected by obesity likely was been forced to recall a time when they were stigmatized or teased. The point in our actions was to build awareness, not only to PETA, but to the entire nation, that obesity is the last acceptable form of discrimination and stigmatization and the OAC will NOT stand for it.

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

The removal of the billboard would not have been possible without the support and determination of the OAC's members - there truly is power in numbers. OAC members from across the United States joined forces and voiced their opinions, concerns and outrage to PETA - and PETA listened.

The OAC would like to thank the thousands of individuals who contacted PETA. Your voices truly made a difference.

For those of you that are members of the OAC, we hope that this issue reminds you of the importance that your membership plays in the fight against obesity. If you are not yet a member of the OAC, we strongly urge you to join today to help grow our voice as a Coalition. Join now by turning to page 19 or visiting the Membership section on the OAC Web site at www.obesityaction.org.

**TOGETHER,
WE DO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



VIBRANT COMMUNITY



NATIONAL AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS



ANNUAL CONVENTION



ADVOCACY



PUBLIC EDUCATION

LEARN, CONNECT, ENGAGE

The OAC knows that the journey with weight can be challenging but we also know that great things happen when we learn, connect and engage. That is why the OAC Community exists. Our Community is designed to provide quality education, ongoing support programs, an opportunity to connect, and a place to take action on important issues.

Through the OAC Community, you can get access to:

- Weight & Health Education • Community Blogs
 - Community Discussion Forum
 - Ongoing Support • Meaningful Connections
- AND MUCH MORE**



JOIN TODAY: GO TO OBESITYACTION.ORG/JOIN

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