

**CBS plans to put a rural family on display
in new Beverly Hillbillies “reality” show:**

“Imagine the episode where they have to interview maids,” chortled one CBS executive.

How many ways can one TV network get it wrong? No. 1: Pick the group of Americans about whom disparaging stereotypes go almost unchallenged: the people who live in rural America. No. 2: After a “hick hunt,” as one headline put it, relocate an entire “lower middle class” rural family to a Hollywood mansion. No. 3: Revive the *Beverly Hillbillies* label and slap it on a cheap-to-produce reality show for even cheaper laughs. No. 4: Let the real-life humiliation begin.

Watching rural people being ridiculed in front of a national audience may be CBS’s notion of entertainment. But for most of us, mocking a group of rural Americans who have endured, despite hardship and inequity, is more than just offensive. It raises troubling questions about CBS management and the advertisers sponsoring these programs.

There are lots of things CBS could show us about rural America. Some things, like the realities of poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation, are painful to talk about, challenging to hear. Others, because of the grit, courage and faith of rural families and communities, might actually teach a thing or two to privileged entertainment executives who think it droll to “interview maids.”

CBS CEO Les Moonves may fly over rural America in his corporate jet but that doesn’t give him the right to look down on the hard-working people who live there. CBS executives may think humiliating real rural families is just another way to sell ads. Help us prove them wrong. Go to www.ruralstrategies.org. Let’s tell CBS and its advertisers that we’re not buying.



It can't be very reassuring for the shareholders of Viacom – which owns CBS – that CEO Les Moonves thinks network TV is an ethics-free zone where profits come before social responsibility. Does the FCC agree with Moonves? What about CBS affiliates? Go to www.ruralstrategies.org and ask them.

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When asked why he picked the Amish for a new reality TV series, CBS chief Leslie Moonves replied:

“We couldn’t do ‘The Beverly Hillbillies’ ... but the Amish don’t have quite as good a lobbying effort.”

Last year, Leslie Moonves, CEO of Viacom-owned CBS and UPN, thought he had a great idea. Recreate “The Beverly Hillbillies” as a reality TV series with real hillbillies. For Les Moonves, it was another surefire hit. But for 55 million Americans who live in rural areas, it was just another cheap shot by TV executives eager to exploit ugly rural stereotypes. After Viacom and CBS were swept by a firestorm of outrage from rural communities and their allies, the proposed show was quietly shelved.

Now Mr. Moonves thinks he has another great idea. He plans to spotlight the Amish in one of the most offensive reality TV concepts yet. He wants America to peek through the blinds as five Amish youth are exposed to the temptations of big city life in a rite of passage that tests their religious faith.

What kind of person could relish millions of viewers snickering as vulnerable Amish youth are set up by TV producers for a humiliating up-close and personal fall from grace?



The Amish came to America in the 17th century to escape religious persecution. For over 200 years, the Amish have quietly kept their Christian faith and survived numerous threats to their rural way of life. But now they face a new challenge: a reality TV show that mocks their religious heritage. Please go to www.ruralstrategies.org for more information.



When TV critics asked why he picked the Amish for a reality series, Moonves quipped, “We couldn’t do ‘The Beverly Hillbillies’ ... but the Amish don’t have quite as good a lobbying effort.” With your help, we’ll prove Mr. Moonves wrong. Go to www.ruralstrategies.org for more information.

How would Mr. Moonves feel if someone did this to young people in his community? Or mocked their religious beliefs just to sell more TV ads?

Mr. Moonves has forgotten that people who run TV networks aren’t just beholden to media giants like Viacom that own them. They are also legally obligated to the people of this country who have entrusted them with exclusive – and lucrative – free use of the nation’s publicly owned airwaves. It’s time the FCC took a closer look at CBS and UPN stations that are licensed to serve rural communities.

Les Moonves thinks he can get away with humiliating the Amish or other rural Americans. Let’s prove him wrong. Please join us and thousands of others – including over 50 US Senators and Representatives – who are outraged by Mr. Moonves’s idea for a reality show humiliating the Amish. Please go to www.ruralstrategies.org to learn how you can help. Thank you.

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Will the President's Promise of an Ownership Society Include Rural America?

Only if FDIC stops messing with the Community Reinvestment Act

The strong bipartisan support behind the Community Reinvestment Act—remarkable given America's fiercely polarized climate—is powerful evidence of its success helping millions of hard-working people attain their share of the American Dream—at little or no cost to taxpayers.

For 55 million Americans who live in rural America, the Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) has been the driving engine of economic progress. Helping millions buy homes and start small businesses. Working with local communities to build hospitals and clinics. Financing affordable housing for seniors and working families. Providing critical financial services to communities once abandoned by banks as unprofitable and undesirable.

Congress passed the Community Reinvestment Act to guarantee access to banking services for all Americans, including those who are low and moderate income. It's a simple idea. Banks and S&Ls are required to put a little bit back into the communities they serve by providing loans, investments and other financial services that benefit low and moderate income Americans. But this isn't charity or welfare. CRA loans meet tough lending criteria and generally have a lower default rate than regular loans. They also make banks a lot of money. And generate priceless corporate goodwill.

Thanks to CRA, communities across America—once redlined and without access to credit—have received over \$1.5 trillion in direct economic benefit, including millions of new jobs, new businesses, new homes, all adding up to real hope for Americans once left behind.

There must be an unwritten rule in Washington, DC, that says any federal program that works just fine must need fixing.

So despite CRA's huge success and wide political support, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, a federal agency that regulates banks, wants to tinker with it. How? By exempting 891 of the 1,110 banks currently subject to community reinvestment requirements. FDIC calls it a small fix.

But for rural and low-income communities, it's an absolute gutting. With more than two-thirds of all banks—and nearly 90% of banks in rural areas—let off the hook for community reinvestment. There are many who wonder if FDIC's bank-friendly rule change has more to do with election year politics than sound public policy. Already, 33 U.S. Senators are on record opposing FDIC's proposed rule. And it's a safe bet that House members representing rural districts will also tell FDIC officials to stop messing with something that isn't broke.

FDIC wants to hear what people think about their idea to exempt banks with up to \$1 billion in assets from community reinvestment. Please tell them it'll hurt a lot of hard working people who are already struggling. Go to www.RuralStrategies.org to send your comments directly to FDIC.

If FDIC tries to fix the Community Reinvestment Act, the only thing broken will be the Administration's promise of an Ownership Society. And any hope rural Americans have for a decent life.



The Center for

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Strategic communication in support of rural communities

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