



National Anthem Protest Costs Broncos' Brandon Marshall Two Endorsements

Denver Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall is paying a price for his protests during the playing of the National Anthem. Two of his lucrative endorsement contracts have been cancelled as a result of his decision to take a knee during the playing of the “Star-spangled Banner” at recent games.

At the University of Nevada, Marshall was a teammate of Colin Kaepernick, a back-up quarterback for the San Francisco 49ers who touched off controversy when he sat during the playing of the Anthem in a pre-season game. “I am not going to stand up to show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people,” stated Kaepernick.



Since Kaepernick is not even a starter for the 49ers, his protest has not cost him any commercial endorsements. After all, reserve players don't usually land on a Wheaties box.

Though Marshall has been a popular figure in the Mile High City, the controversy over the protest of the flag and the National Anthem has led two different sponsors to cancel deals with him. After Marshall knelt during the “Star-spangled Banner” at a pre-season game against the Carolina Panthers, Air Academy Federal Credit Union was the first sponsor to distance itself from Marshall, stating,

Although we have enjoyed Brandon Marshall as our spokesperson over the past five months, Air Academy Federal Credit Union (AAFCU) has ended our partnership. While we respect Brandon's right of expression, his actions are not a representation of our organization and membership. We wish Brandon well on his future endeavors.

Now, Century Link has also cut its ties to Marshall, who has opted to lodge a protest by refusing to honor the National Anthem of the country. “We completely respect Brandon Marshall's personal decision and right to take an action to support something in which he strongly believes,” the company said in a statement. “While we acknowledge Brandon's right, we also believe that whatever issues we face, we also occasionally must stand together to show our allegiance to our common bond as a nation. In our view, the national anthem is one of those moments. For this reason, while we wish Brandon the best this season, we are politely terminating our agreement with him.”

As Century Link officials stated, Marshall does have a constitutionally protected right — as do Kaepernick and other players who are American citizens — to freely express his political views, whether or not those views are popular. But this protection only prevents the government from imposing civil or criminal penalties against him for these views. It does not protect him from other American citizens — who see the protests during the playing of the National Anthem as unpatriotic — from expressing disagreement with those views.



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And certainly Air Academy Federal Credit Union and Century Link are private entities that have the constitutionally protected right to disassociate their businesses with views they reject, or views that might hurt their businesses.

After *Duck Dynasty* star Phil Robertson colorfully expressed his opinion that he could not understand how someone could prefer homosexual sex over heterosexual sex, Cracker Barrel pulled show-related merchandise from its restaurant stores. Among the items taken off the shelves were mugs, T-shirts, and hats.

But Cracker Barrel did an abrupt about-face when a growing number of customers announced their intention to boycott the restaurant chain. They put the *Duck Dynasty*-related items back out for sale, and issued this apology to its customers: “You flat out told us we were wrong. We listened. Today, we are putting all our *Duck Dynasty* products back in our stores. And, we apologize for offending you.”

What we see here is Robertson expressing his opinion, Cracker Barrel giving its corporate response, and finally, Cracker Barrel’s customers reacting with their views. With the Left, however, certain views are considered less legitimate, and those views (e.g., opposition to same-sex “marriage”) the Left believes should not only be disagreed with, but punished. When a view approved of by the progressive elites is not approved of by an individual, then the elites exact “punishment” on that person. Just ask Brendan Eich, former CEO of Mozilla Firefox, who was swiftly axed simply for giving money to the campaign for Proposition Eight in California, designed to protect traditional marriage.

To paraphrase what the pigs said in George Orwell’s *Animal Farm*, “Some political opinions are more equal than others.”

When Broncos linebacker Marshall began his protest in support of Kaepernick, he said he was “not against the military. I’m not against the police or America. I’m just against social injustice.”

Marshall explained that he knew there would be those who did not like his protest, but, “I believe in what [Kaepernick]’s trying to do. I believe in his actions.”

In response to those who argued that he should have made his opinions known in another way, Marshall responded, “This is our only platform to really be heard. And I feel a lot of times people want us to just shut up and entertain them, shut up and play football. But we have voices as well. We’re actually educated individuals that went to college. So when we have an opinion and we speak it, I feel a lot of people bash us for what we have to say.”

Really? Does Marshall believe that many of the fans (more than a few of whom did not go to college because they were not good enough athletes, for example, to afford it) are less capable of expressing an opinion than he is, or that their opinions just should not carry the same weight?

Apparently. Marshall dismissed those who have offered strong opposition to his kneeling during the National Anthem, declaring: “It’s an evil world. It’s a hateful world. I’m not here to spread hate. I’m not here to respond to the hate. I’m here to spread love and positivity.”

One man burned an orange T-shirt with Marshall’s name outside the Broncos’ Dove Valley facility Monday morning.

Perhaps Marshall does not understand the meaning that the flag has to many Americans. He certainly believes that those who disagree with his actions lack understanding.

“I feel there’s a lot of oppression still,” he asserted. “People don’t really realize it because people that aren’t minorities, they don’t know what it’s like to be a minority in this country. I’m not saying it’s



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terrible. I love this country. We have great opportunities, but at the same time, [unless] you're a minority you don't understand."

There certainly seems to be a lot that Marshall's former teammate Colin Kaepernick does not understand. Kaepernick has taken to wearing a T-shirt with the image of Cuba's communist dictator Fidel Castro on the front. Literally thousands of Cubans, including those of black African ancestry, have been either imprisoned, tortured, or killed by the Castro regime since the Castro brothers seized power in 1959. This led to hundreds of thousands of Cubans escaping the country ruled by the man Kaepernick apparently thinks is someone to admire. And most fled to the United States, the country that Kaepernick thinks is the oppressive nation.

Maybe they did not teach this history of communist tyranny in Cuba at the University of Nevada, where Marshall and Kaepernick were teammates, getting their education paid for and being "oppressed."



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