



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on May 18, 2017

## ABC Faces Backlash for Cancelling Conservative Family Comedy Despite Its Good Ratings

It goes without saying that most television networks are interested in making money. That is why television shows that do not garner enough viewership are cancelled. Presumably then, if a television show did, in fact, achieve good ratings, it would be considered an asset by the network and renewed season after season. Such was not the case with Tim Allen's television sitcom *Last Man Standing*, a show that features a conservative, Christian father with traditional family values who has no qualms about expressing his discontent with the Left. It is for this reason that ABC's recent cancellation of this popular sitcom is considered to be political and has provoked petitions and boycotts against the network.



*Last Man Standing* was seemingly set up for failure by ABC by being scheduled for Friday nights, but despite this disadvantage, the sitcom had what [Deadline.com](#), a Hollywood breaking news site, [described](#) as “very respectable” ratings “for any night and especially Friday.” In six seasons, the show continued to draw in approximately eight million viewers notes AOL Entertainment News, and while most returning shows were down year-to-year 20 to 30 percent, according to [Deadline.com](#), *Last Man Standing* was down just five percent in total viewers.

Furthermore, *Last Man Standing* was considered to be ABC's Friday anchor, which meant that it compelled viewers to stay tuned to whatever shows came on after the sitcom ended. In other words, it had a valuable function besides just being a hit in and of itself.

And even more than that, [Deadline.com](#) notes that *Last Man Standing* was also a syndication hit, which is often enough to prompt networks to renew it even in the event that ratings have dropped.

So given the success of *Last Man Standing*, one has to ask what would compel ABC to abruptly and unexpectedly cancel it. Even Allen was taken by surprise, tweeting that he was “stunned and blindsided” by the network's decision, as were his fans.

ABC claims the cancellation was because of cost, as 20th Century Fox TV was preparing to license the sitcom to ABC for broadcast for the first time. In fact, ABC explicitly stated that Tim Allen's high salary was a factor in the network's decision to cancel the popular sitcom.

But critics are not buying that story. [Deadline.com](#) notes that ABC never even bothered to negotiate the fees 20th Century Fox had set for licensing, or Allen's salary for that matter. After all, within hours of canceling *Last Man Standing*, a [Deadline.com](#) report [announced](#) that another, more left-leaning sitcom, *Modern Family* — behind which *Last Man Standing* ranked only second — had been renewed after tough negotiations with ABC. And yet despite the difficulties, ABC persevered until a deal was reached,



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according to [Deadline.com](#):

Reaching both agreements, especially a new license-fee pact with ABC, was not easy. Talks between the network and 20th TV started awhile ago. The studio originally sought a two-season renewal, which was met with resistance by the network at first until the two sides finally came to a deal. It followed an agreement in principle ABC and 20th TV reached at the end of February, which outlined what the license-fee structure should look like predicated on making new salary agreements with the actors.

[Deadline.com](#) notes that in order to reach a deal to renew *Modern Family*, the network had to agree to “significant salary increases” for the show’s six main stars. And yet Allen’s salary is touted as an alleged factor in the network’s decision to cancel the sitcom. Sure it was.

So despite claims that ABC canceled *Last Man Standing* because of cost, critics contend that the show was canceled for political reasons. Allen’s character on the sitcom is a blue-collar family man whose views appeal to those in the American Heartland. He often mocks the Left, especially the Clintons and President Obama, and the absurdity of political correctness, all of which are not likely to be appreciated by a network owned by Disney, a company known for its left-wing leanings.

The Daily Wire [writes](#),

The ABC television network is owned by Disney, a rabidly left-wing company run by Bob Iger, who, for years, has been a huge supporter of both Bill and Hillary Clinton. In order to protect the Clintons, Iger has gone so far as to eat \$40 million. The Path to 9/11 was a popular 2006 miniseries that offered only light criticism of Bill Clinton’s handling of Osama bin Laden. Although the original idea was to rerun the program every September 11, Iger has not only refused to rerun it even once (losing all that advertising revenue), he won’t even release it on home video.

It is not just conservatives that are crying politics at the sitcom’s cancellation either.

[Vox](#), considered to be a left-leaning media source, even noted, “It’s not often a network cancels its second most-watched comedy in a sudden, surprising move.... Any time the only show of one type or another, even if it’s ‘the only sitcom headlined by a major Trump supporter,’ leaves the air, it’s hard not to wonder.”

It seems Tim Allen may have broken several cardinal rules, the first of which is never to make fun of President Obama or Hillary Clinton, even in character. But despite these jabs at the Left, the sitcom did not make it a point to impose conservative ideals, as Allen’s character was balanced by liberal characters on the show as well, making for interesting dialogue and debate. In fact, politics was only in the backdrop of the comedy, with family values being at the show’s core. And at the end of each episode, the characters got along despite their differences and respected one another’s viewpoints without the need for empathy tents and safe spaces. Perhaps that was part of the problem.

Another no-no that Allen violated was daring to accuse Hollywood of hypocrisy for calling Donald Trump a bully during several interviews. Appearing on Fox News in November (another no-no!), Allen, an outspoken Republican, said that Hollywood was in no position to call anyone a bully when it’s notorious for bullying anyone who is even slightly to the right of center.

“What I find odd in Hollywood is that they didn’t like Trump because he was a bully,” Allen [told](#) FOX News’ Megyn Kelly. “But if you had any kind of inkling that you were for Trump, you got bullied for doing that. And it gets a little bit hypocritical to me.”



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And as recently as March, Allen [discussed](#) his attendance at Trump's inauguration with liberal late-night host Jimmy Kimmel. He compared Hollywood's reaction to conservatives to "'30s Germany," explaining, "You've gotta be real careful around here. You get beat up if you don't believe what everybody believes."

In truth, it seemed like only a matter of time before ABC had enough of its conservative star, but what the network likely did not expect was the backlash that has resulted since announcing this decision, as multiple petitions and boycotts have been launched against the network.

One of [four](#) different Change.org petitions to save the show threatens to boycott ABC if it does not bring it back. It reads, "*Last Man Standing* is one of the only shows on broadcast television, and the only sitcom, that is not constantly shoving liberal ideals down the throats of the viewers. And sadly, that is likely the reason the show has been cancelled." That petition currently has over 300,000 signatures. Other similar petitions on Change.org have over 10,000 signatures each.

"With a plethora of ultra-liberal shows available on television, this show stood out from the rest and motivated conservatives who voted for President Trump. Please demand that Congress investigate whether LMS was cancelled for political reasons," said another on PetitionCongress.org, according to the [Washington Examiner](#).

Whether these petitions and boycotts influence ABC is anyone's guess, but given the political climate and the Left's influence on the media, it does not seem likely.

Image: Screenshot of ad for *Last Man Standing* [via Wikipedia](#)



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