

Companies pull ads from Muslim reality TV show

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(RNS) Lowe's, the national hardware chain, has pulled commercials from future episodes of "All-American Muslim," a TLC reality-TV show, after protests by Christian groups.

The Florida Family Association, a Tampa Bay group, has led a campaign urging companies to pull ads on "All-American Muslim." The FFA contends that 65 of 67 companies it has targeted have pulled their ads, including Bank of America, the Campbell Soup Co., Dell, Estee Lauder, General Motors, Goodyear, Green Mountain Coffee, McDonalds, Sears, and Wal-Mart.

"'All-American Muslim' is propaganda clearly designed to counter legitimate and present-day concerns about many Muslims who are advancing Islamic fundamentalism and Sharia law," the Florida group asserts in a letter it asks members to send to TLC advertisers.

"The show profiles only Muslims that appear to be ordinary folks while excluding many Islamic believers whose agenda poses a clear and present danger to the liberties and traditional values that the majority of Americans cherish," the FFA's letter continues.

It was not clear whether the companies cited by the Florida Family Association, which has also targeted shows like MTV's "Degrassi," stopped advertising on "All-American Muslim" because of pressure or for other reasons.

Emails from Home Depot and Sweet'N Low posted on the Florida Family Association's website suggest the companies had simply bought one commercial spot, and didn't cancel any commercials.

A spokeswoman for Amway, also cited by the Florida group, denied the company pulled advertising from "All-American Muslim," and said those reports were "misleading" and "falsely named" Amway.

Lowe's acknowledged pulling commercials from "All-American Muslim" following consumer complaints, but denied they came from one group.

"We understand the program raised concerns, complaints, or issues from multiple sides of the viewer spectrum, which we found after doing research of news articles and blogs covering the show," said Katie Cody, a Lowe's spokeswoman.

Cody declined to specify whether the complaints were anti-Muslim, and whether Lowe's advertises on shows with Christian, Jewish, or other religious characters or themes. "It is certainly never Lowe's intent to alienate anyone," Cody said.

"Shame on Lowe's, and shame on every one of these companies if they really did cave in to such bigotry and hatred," wrote Sheila Musaji, who blogs at theamericanmuslim.org. If the Florida Family Association and other reports are misrepresenting these companies, she added, "then they need to speak up."

The first of eight weekly episodes of "All-American Muslim," which follows five Lebanese families in Dearborn, Mich., premiered on Nov. 13.

A TLC spokeswoman, Laurie Goldberg, said the network could not comment about the alleged advertising defections, but that the show maintained "strong" advertising. "There are no plans to pull the show. The show is going to continue as

planned," said Goldberg.