

October 27, 2009

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Vivian Schiller
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Public Radio
635 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Ms. Schiller:

The National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) is saddened to learn that National Public Radio has fired one of its few remaining black managers. Greg Peppers served NPR for more than two decades, rising through the ranks to become the Executive Producer of the newscast unit. His employment was terminated on October 16 – just one day after NABJ hosted a successful book signing at your Washington D.C. headquarters.

NPR claims to be committed to diversity. The following statement appears on your website:

“Diversity is a fundamental part of everything we do at NPR, and of our ability to offer relevant news, culture, and entertainment programming to an increasingly diverse public. Diversity is a cornerstone of our recruitment, programming, and talent development initiatives.”

Mr. Peppers' firing comes 10 months after NPR dismissed Next Generation Radio creator Doug Mitchell, who has trained scores of young journalists, including many African Americans, for jobs in the broadcasting industry.

Who are the managers of color at NPR? What is NPR doing to recruit and groom African Americans for positions in management? Of the 68 members on your corporate team and behind-the-scenes staff, only eight are people of color:

- 4 African Americans,
- 2 Hispanic Americans,
- 1 Iranian American
- 1 American from South Asia.

That translates to about 12 percent. Your organization benefits from listener support, corporate donations and tax dollars from the Corporation of Public Broadcasting and should reflect the diversity of the community you serve. The minority population of the United States is approximately 32 percent.

You told the National Press Club that NPR doesn't need programming for communities of color but diversity needs “to be represented in the fabric of everything that we do.”

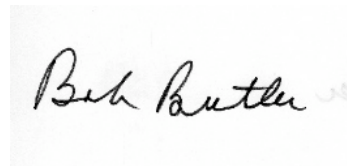
It is NABJ's belief that actions speak much louder than your words. It is not enough to provide internships for young people or hire them into entry-level positions. Diversity must also be reflected among the managers who decide what news gets covered and who gets to cover it.

Please consider NABJ as a resource when you are looking to fill positions at NPR, especially those in management. NABJ Vice President for Broadcast, Bob Butler and I have built a rapport with various television networks to bolster the number of African Americans advancing as senior managers in their corporations. We welcome the opportunity to have the same rapport with NPR and would like to schedule a time to speak with you at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



Kathy Y. Times
President



Bob Butler
Vice President- Broadcast

CC: National Public Radio Board of Directors
UNITY: Journalists of Color, Inc.
National Association of Hispanic Journalists
Asian American Journalists Association
Native American Journalists Association
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
National Urban League