

EDITORIAL

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REVEREND JESSE JACKSON TO VISIT TALLAHASSEE CHURCH

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Human rights leader will call for an end to violence and for racial healing in wake of two recent Florida A&M University bombings

The Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., president of the Rainbow/PUSH Coalition, today called on law enforcement officials in Florida to conduct a thorough and vigorous investigation into the alleged racially motivated bombing incidents on the campus of Florida A&M University in Tallahassee (FAMU).

Jackson also urged "people of good will"—blacks, whites, Hispanics, Native Americans and Asians—to come together in an effort to stem the tide of violence and hate crimes, which are on the rise in America. In recent

weeks, violence has erupted at a daycare center in Los Angeles, inside a church in Fort Worth and on a college campus of the University of Indiana.

"Whether it is Oklahoma City or FAMU, none of us are safe until all of us are safe," Jackson said. "We must come together to protect our children and to stop the senseless violence. The message must be loud and clear—there is no room for racial strife in Tallahassee, Florida."

The human rights leader made the comments after speaking with FAMU president Dr. Frederick F. Humphries, Thursday morning, who appealed to Jackson to make an emergency visit to the city to assist in a call for racial healing and peace.

On Sunday, September, 26 and at the invitation of Rev. R. B. Holmes, Jackson will participate in a statewide prayer vigil at Bethel M.B. Church.

"These bombings have caused a lot of anxiety on the campus," Jackson said. "Students and faculty are attending school in fear, when they should be able to pursue their dreams and prepare to lead our nation forward. We must go forward by hopes and dreams and not backwards by memories and fear. The nation must come together to stop these cowardly acts of domestic terrorism."

Within the past month, two bombs have exploded on the predominantly black campus of

about 12,000 students. The latest explosion occurred on Wednesday on the first floor of the Perry Paige building, where classes in agriculture are conducted.

Although there were people in the building, university officials say no one was seriously injured, but the building did suffer some damage.

Hours after the explosion, a staffer at WTXL-TV received a call from a male who made threatening and racially offensive remarks. "This is just the beginning, brother," the caller said. "The only thing n— know how to fix is turnip greens. Why the f— do they need a school of agriculture at FAMU."

An official at the station said this was the third time in recent weeks that a call has been received at the station from a male who has made racially offensive remarks in connection to the bombings or has threatened to do harm to African Americans in the city.

"We should take these bombings as a serious wake up call," Jackson said. "Several years ago there was an attack on black churches, we must act now to prevent an assault on this institution—historically Black colleges. Justice must have a face in Tallahassee. We appeal for the bombings to end, for peace to return to FAMU and for the city to put this ugly incident firmly in its history books."

Letters to the Editor

DEAR DR. CANADA:

I am writing this letter for two reasons. One is to address your lack of commitment to Jefferson High School and the other is to ask what you are going to do to change that perception.

First, I want to tell you a little bit about my husband and myself. We have a junior and senior at Jefferson, and they love Jefferson almost more than life and, we as parents do too. We are active parents, I sit on Jefferson's Site Council, and I am a member of the PTSA (Parent, Teachers, and Students Association, and the Booster Club. We both volunteer at Jefferson on a weekly basis.

I watched and listened, as the start of the school year grew closer about your commitment to visiting various schools throughout the district. I thought, "what a great idea." I asked my students if you had visited Jefferson, and the response back to me, by only two students, but all of their friends as well was, "who is Dr. Canada?"

I understand that the reconstruction of Jefferson was in place when you accepted your job, but I don't understand how you can effectively lead a district without visiting the very school that was in the headlines during your entire interview process, and after you arrived in Portland. I don't claim to make nearly as much money as you, nor do I want the

stress that I'm sure that paychecks involves, but I think you have a huge responsibility to Jefferson, don't you?

I also watched and listened as you and the school board claim to want to see Jefferson be successful, but again this year, just like the many years before, you allow an enormous amount of the Jefferson attendance area students to transfer to other schools. If Jefferson is to be successful we need OUR students from OUR own attendance area to stay at their neighborhood school. The change is the transfer policy and our not having a freshman class where 50% or more at the ninth grade level instead of the fourth grade level would allow everyone to know the great Jefferson High School I and other parents, students, and community member know.

Last year a student from Jefferson was allowed to transfer the first quarter to Lincoln, but this year I witnessed a family that wanted to transfer from Franklin to Jefferson hire an attorney because they couldn't get a full release for their son to attend Jefferson. Why is it so easy for students to transfer from Jefferson and so difficult for them to transfer in? Is this a practice that you and the school board will continue until we have so few students at Jefferson that you say it is no longer cost efficient for the district to keep Jefferson open? Where is your commitment?

For example, I visited Grant High

School a couple of weeks ago and a staff member there told me the Grant enrollment topped 2,000 this year, and that most classes have 40-50 students. How can our numbers be so low and there's so high when the Jefferson's attendance area has the largest number of students. I would like to know how many of those Grant students live in the Jefferson attendance area.

What are your plans for Jefferson? I have students on a daily basis ask me if Jefferson is going to be closed. I always tell them that if you keep fighting you'll be able to keep this school open. I have told them that you are committed to its success, but your actions indicate otherwise. Watching you and the school board I can tell I am giving them false hope.

Our low attendance, thanks to your transfer policy, my cost us 3 FTE this school year. If Jefferson is expected to be successful taking away FTE is not solution, it's a problem. If we are expected to increase academic achievement we need to keep more of our students and all of our FTE, as they are both an important part of Jefferson's puzzle and ultimately its success.

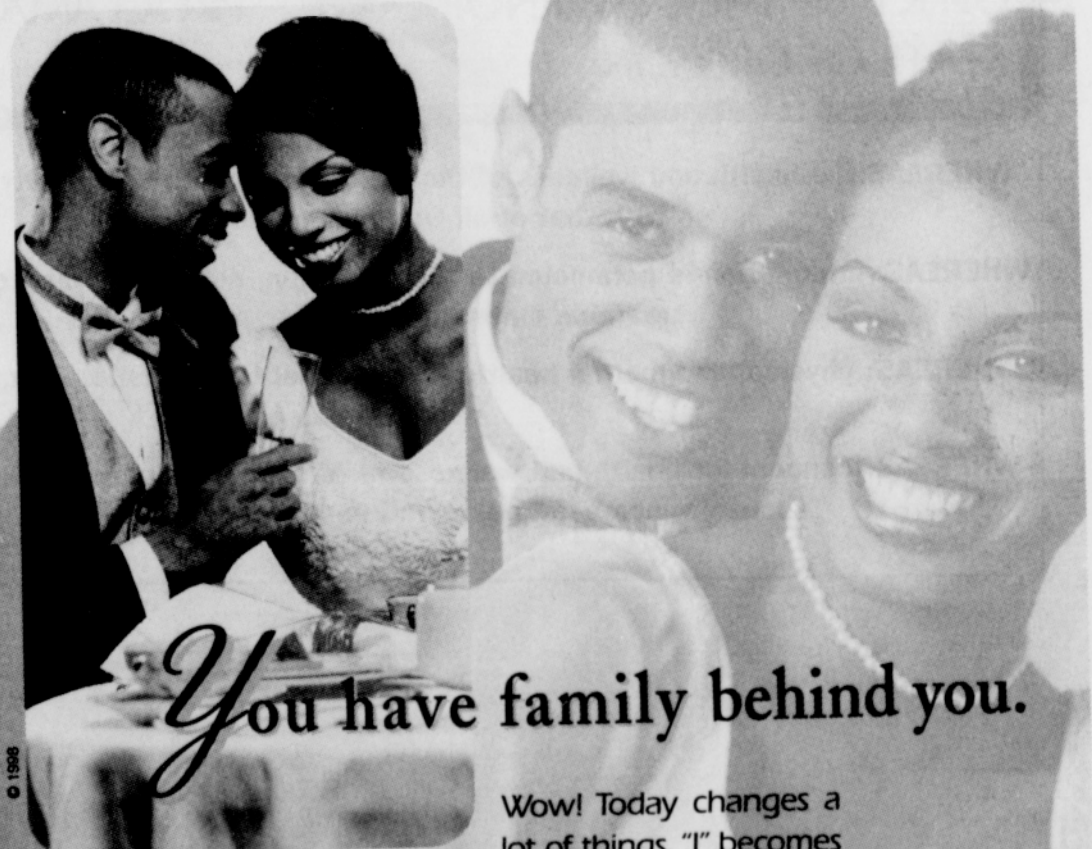
The tone of this letter is severely harsh because this situation is very serious and we don't have time to wait. I have written you in the past of some of these very same issues, and I don't ask for a written response, but I did ask that you let your actions speak for you. To date, your actions have been the same, and that action has been nothing for Jefferson. I am

now asking you and the school board to show your commitment by changing the transfer policy, and if anything increasing our FTE not decreasing it. I would also like a written response to this letter outlining your specific plans and time lines for Jefferson.

I sincerely hope you respond in a timely manner, and that you and the school board doesn't continue their current practice of letting the students, staff, parents, and community of Jefferson down.

Sincerely,

Judy Brown



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