

## Jesse Jackson Expands Silicon Valley Initiative

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. [NNPA] – After he completes his campaign for more diversity in Silicon Valley, Jesse Jackson plans to expand the pressure on technology companies in other regions of the country and then go after other sectors of private industry, including financial services, banking and advertising.

In an interview after speaking at the annual convention of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) here, the Atlanta-based civil rights organization co-founded by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. that gave birth to Jackson's Operation PUSH and Rainbow PUSH, the civil rights leader was already eyeing other targets.

to deal with that because they have 2 percent or 3 percent minority employment across the board," Jackson told the NNPA News Service.

When Jackson first announced his Silicon Valley initiative at his Wall Street Project in New York, it was not known if he would follow through, as he has done in other campaigns in the past, or move on to other issues, which he has also done with equal frequency.

He lamented on the lack of Black board representation at Google or Facebook and said he would challenge the absence of people of color.

"One of the myths is that it's [technology] is so sophisticated that we can't do it," Jackson said. "First of all, 70 percent of all of

sadly, patterns of exclusion remains the order of the day. When it comes to African Americans on Boards – ZERO. C-suites, ZERO. Minority firms in IPOs and financial transactions, advertising and professional services – ZERO. These ZEROES are contrary to the enlightened values exposed by the industry. Rainbow PUSH is seeking meetings with tech leaders to address these ZEROES head on."

When Jackson met with companies, most initially resisted disclosing their employment data.

"Those companies all filed a lawsuit in court and won – they won the right not to expose their EEO records," he said. "Their rationale was that if they tell their numbers, they would be giving up propriety information."

Before going on attack, Jackson did what he always does when he targets a company – he purchased stock so that he could take his case to shareholders at their annual meeting. Then, one by one, the companies began disclosing employment data.

- eBay (61 percent White; 24 percent Asian; 5 percent Latino; 2 percent Black)
- Google (61 percent White; 30 percent Asian; 3 percent Hispanic and 2 percent Black)
- Facebook (57 percent White; 34 percent Asian; 4 percent Hispanic and 2 percent Black)

Twitter resisted until Jackson used Twitter and ColorofChange.org to launch an on-line petition drive demanding that Twitter reveal its employment data. Ironically, Blacks over index on Twitter (26 percent), according to a Pew Research Center study, followed by Hispanics (19 percent) and Whites (14 percent).

Twitter finally disclosed



Jesse Jackson at SCLC 2014 convention in Birmingham, Ala.

its data on July 23, showing: 59 percent of its staff in the U.S. is made up of Whites; 29 percent Asian; 3 percent Hispanic and 2 percent Black.

On the day Jackson addressed SCLC, Apple released its employment data showing 54 percent of its jobs were held by Whites, 23 percent by Asian, 11 percent Hispanic

and 7 percent Black. Its employment of people of color appears to be highest among high tech companies.

"We have not demanded two-way trade and our government has not volunteered to initiate it," Jackson said. "By now, the EEOC should be holding hearings. It's so public that they are violating equal employment

standards."

He continued, "We feel diminished by corporate power. If we could fight the government, surely we can fight a corporation. This is just the first step with Silicon Valley. The next steps are for ad agencies, marketing, NNPA, Black lawyers – the whole range of things we do."

'Technology is supposed to be about inclusion, but sadly, patterns of exclusion remains the order of the day'

"As I looked at everybody's fight for who can make the smallest government, I thought about our being basically a government-created middle class – policemen, firemen, teachers. As you cut down on the civil service jobs, those jobs disappear. Where are the growth industries? Silicon Valley for starters, the automotive industry next, banking next – the whole private sector. You fish where the fish are."

Jackson said getting high tech companies to disclose their employment data, EEO-1 forms that large companies must file with the federal government, was a major victory.

"We asked for their EEO-1 reports, but most of the big companies didn't want

the jobs in Silicon Valley do not require high tech skills – lawyers, ad agencies, marketing, social services or engineering, though we can do that, too."

He added, "When you look at Facebook's board, the only engineer on its board is Mark Zuckerberg, its founder. Don Graham [former publisher of the Washington Post] is not an engineer. [Former White House chief of staff] Erskine Bowles is not an engineer yet he sits on the board. It's just a tight, White circle."

In March, Jackson sent a letter to 20 companies, including Apple, Twitter, Facebook, Hewlett Packard, Google, and eBay saying, "Technology is supposed to be about inclusion, but

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