Subject: Dixie Chicks Censored In Houston
Posted by FredT on Wed, 16 Aug 2006 11:56:44 GMT
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I'm so glad that Houston's top country music stations have forced the Dixie Chicks to cancel their plans for a Houston concert so Houstonians won't be exposed to their anti-American views. Chick fans will have to drive to Austin, that hotbed of liberalism, to hear them. So how did two or three radio stations manage to do this? Simple, they refused to accept the promoter's money for concert advertising. The reason given is that they don't promote artists whose songs aren't played on their stations, and needless to say they don't play the Dixie Chicks' songs on their stations.On the surface this shouldn't come as a surprise or be found objectionable by anybody who understands the country music radio audience. Based on reactions to their famous statement about the president I would expect that country music fans wouldn't want to hear them anyway, and I wouldn't expect a radio station to lose listeners (and revenue) by playing music or promoting a concert by a group their listeners find objectionable. Regardless of whether I like country music radio, I have to admit that country music radio execs are very effective at promoting their stations and avoiding mistakes that might cause them problems down the road.But let's go below the surface for a moment and explore what the real issues behind this decision might be. Of course the trouble started in 2003 when the group's music was banned from several country music stations' playlists. Subsequently, Edison Media Research did a national survey of 12 radio stations' listeners across the nation, including Houston's megastation KILT, which revealed that only 19% of listeners think radio should avoid the Chicks altogether. 51% took offense at the famous comment but thought the Chicks should still be on radio, 15% agreed with the statement (was Manualblock included in this survey?:), and 15% were undecided.The real underlying issue here isn't the actual refusal to accept ad money. It's the fact that a handful of public radio stations, which are many Americans' only source of news and opinions, have the power to block a group from even playing in America's 4th largest city, even though only 15% of their audience would support the decision. These stations, of course, are controlled by media giants with names like CBS, Clearaudio, etc. Scary!Of course a political/economic conservative would respond that CBS and Clearaudio are private corporations, and they have to right to control their own programming and advertising. I agree, but only to a point. I can see where a media source would be justified in not accepting ad money for an event that most of their audience would find objectionable, such as a liberal station not running ads for a KKK rally. But it's differnt when a media source abuses their subatantial power by blocking the free speech of others in venues that are not owned by their stations. Whether you have the conservative or liberal brand on your forehead I hope you can see this is potentially as much a threat to you as it is to the other side.Eliza, are you listening? Good topic for a new song!