

Dear LeBron James,

You have an unprecedented opportunity to make an enormous difference in the lives of our children. We, the undersigned organizations, health professionals, researchers, advocates and community leaders call on you today to stand with us and end your affiliation with McDonald's. McDonald's exploits sponsorship of athletes and role models like you to target children. Millions of children look up to you as their hero. By dropping McDonald's, you will stand up for their health -- and the health of our communities.

Your involvement with McDonald's increases marketing to children, particularly in communities hardest hit by diet-related disease. We know you are deeply concerned about this dire health crisis: your partnership with [Michelle Obama's Let's Move! campaign](#) and [your public statements](#) make it clear that you want our children to grow up healthy and strong like you.

Unfortunately, your association with McDonald's directly contradicts these sentiments.

The junk food industry makes sure children are deluged by a constant stream of marketing: on television, online and in schools and hospitals. This marketing plays a significant role in driving today's epidemic of diet-related disease. And as the largest global fast food chain and the most prolific marketer to children, no brand has played a more visible role in this epidemic than McDonald's.

It is no accident that the epidemic of diet-related disease sweeping this country is concentrated in communities of color and disproportionately affects children, especially black and Latino children who experience significantly higher rates of diet-related disease than white children do. What's worse, McDonald's has no qualms about exploiting black culture to sell fast food, giving children of color a double dose of this deadly marketing. They are exposed to predatory and aggressive kid-targeted marketing through Ronald McDonald, Happy Meal toys and online advertisements designed to look like games. Furthermore, McDonald's deliberately saturates communities of color through strategically-placed stores, websites like 365black.com, liberal use of hip-hop culture, and sponsorships like yours that co-brand our heroes and role models.

Make no mistake, this is a decades-long push by McDonald's to create customers for life in communities of color. McDonald's has long realized that having role models from communities of color, particularly athletes, market its products is a winning strategy. From Michael Jordan to Charles Barkley and now you, the corporation aligns itself with athletes who represent success and athleticism.

As a world-class athlete, NBA champion and Olympian, you have vast influence with millions of youth. They admire your achievements and want to strive for greatness because of your example. But by promoting McDonald's through social media, television commercials and the All-American Game, you are being used by this corporation to hook children on a lifetime of junk food and diet-related disease.

Mr. James, will you stand with us as a true champion for children's health and end your association with McDonald's? Our children's well-being depends on it.

Sincerely,
The Undersigned

(See next page for list of names)



Signatories

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*The following organizations are also signed on in support.



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