



J.C. Watts: Black News Channel Going Beyond Stereotypes of Black Criminals, Entertainers, Athletes

- by [Carrie Sheffield](#)
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J.C. Watts, chairman of the soon-to-launched Black News Channel (BNC), said his television network will help show how the African-American community is far more than criminals, entertainers or athletes so often portrayed in the mainstream media.

Watts said BNC will cover topics like politics, economics, culture, faith and wellness, “for, by and about the African-American community.”

Watts discussed the challenges BNC has had since 2004, “trying to get to the point that we can get distribution, we can line up investments.” Black News Channel will launch in November of this year. Watts said the network will be in at least 33 million households at launch.

“We will be a 24/7 news program that informs and educates and inspires the African-American community,” Watts said in an interview. He told Bold TV that BNC will fulfill a need that the current market doesn’t provide, pointing to other prominent black networks — like BET — that focus on entertainment instead of news.

Watts said for most of his life, the media has portrayed “one view or one perspective or one picture of the African American community ... We want to give African-Americans a picture, a truer picture of ourselves.”

For example, Watts said the blood disorder sickle-cell anemia, which disproportionately affects the black community, will be covered under health and wellness while these issues are often overlooked by MSNBC, Fox News or CNN.

[“Ninety-five percent of the people impacted by sickle-cell, they’re African Americans](#) so you don’t hear networks talking about that,” Watts said.

Watts, a former Republican congressman from Oklahoma, responded to critics — including some of his fellow conservatives — who would criticize BNC for focusing on a specific race and say that it is practicing a divisive form of “identity politics.” Watts said sometimes politicians who say they “don’t practice identity politics” can end up using identity politics to ignore entire groups of people.

“I just think it’s crazy that that Republicans would say, ‘Let’s ignore who God made us the way he made us,’” Watts said. “You had no say in your gender, I had no say in my in my skin color. And when people say, ‘Well, you know, we don’t practice identity politics’ — when you ignore the female vote, that’s identity politics. You can practice identity politics by ignoring people when you say that ‘We have no interest in reaching out to the black community.’ That’s identity politics because you’re ignoring a demographic.”