

Don't Count Us Out Counts Nielsen Back In, New Anti-Nielsen Front Opens Up by Joe Mandese, Wednesday, Nov 8, 2006 8:00 AM ET **IN ITS FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT** since it went dormant a year ago, News Corp.-backed anti-Nielsen pressure group Don't Count Us Out Tuesday inexplicably issued a press release applauding the new eight-year ratings deal announced recently by Nielsen and News Corp. The statement appears to be a final affirmation that Nielsen and News Corp. have officially buried a hatchet that began flailing two years ago when the two companies split over Nielsen's plans to rollout local people meters. Don't Count Us Out, a coalition of minority leaders, community groups, producers, directors, and actors, was the main public face for News Corp.'s assault on Nielsen, which aggressively played the race card on the basis that Nielsen's methods allegedly undercounted minority viewers.

As part of its resolution, Nielsen has pledged to invest \$50 million to improve its representation of minority viewers, and recently created an African American Advisory Council consisting of 12 industry, community, and business leaders. The members will advise Nielsen on a range of issues involving sampling of African Americans for TV audience measurement in the U.S. They will also help the ratings giant reach out to African American communities and those within the industry.

But even as Nielsen appears to be closing down one source of minority opposition, a new one is opening up. A new coalition of Hispanic broadcasters today will hold a press conference to announce an initiative to change Nielsen's TV ratings sample to better represent Latino viewers. The group, organized by AIM-Tell-a-Vision Group, producer of nationally syndicated English language television shows for Latino American audiences, and backed by local stations carrying those shows, has even created a new pressure group evoking the style of News Corp.'s Don't Count Us Out. The Latino group, dubbed Change The Sample, makes its case on www.changethesample.com.

Joe Mandese is Editor of MediaPost.