

## Never Enough Beauty, Never Enough Truth

### **Philanthropists should do what they love, not surrender to identity politics.**

By Heather MacDonald

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American philanthropy is the envy of the world. Since colonial times, when Benjamin Franklin's Junto Society, a proto-think tank of public-minded Philadelphia citizens, developed volunteer fire departments and a lending library, Americans have evolved a unique civic culture of giving and entrepreneurial problem solving. From 1995 to 2002, charitable donations as a percentage of GDP were nearly six times higher in the United States than in France and 14 times higher than in Germany. In 2007, America's charitable giving amounted to \$306 billion. No wonder that European universities and arts organizations look first to their American alumni and patrons for support when their government funding dries up.

Yet American generosity is under fire. A growing number of activists and politicians argue that foundations should meet diversity targets in their giving and on their staffs. If foundations fail to diversify "voluntarily," threaten the race, ethnicity, and gender enforcers, they risk legislation requiring them to do so. In other words, the diversity police, having helped bring on the subprime meltdown through mortgage-lending quotas, now want to fix philanthropy. And instead of rebuffing this power grab, the leaders in the field have rolled over and played dead.

### **... What Helps Fight Poverty?**

Showing the usual market instinct of advocates and politicians, the quota cops seek to force charitable dollars into the least effective form of philanthropy. When not promoting a racial spoils system, the Greenlining Institute and ideological allies such as the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy browbeat donors about their alleged failure to give money to the poor. Conventional antipoverty work is underfunded, they say. To the contrary, almost a third of all charitable donations go to traditional antipoverty groups. The problem lies not in the input, but rather the output: few, if any, of those organizations have shown results. This May, for example, the United Way's president acknowledged that its social-services programs had produced no measurable positive impact, despite millions in investments.

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