We commend Clear Channel for “doing the right thing” while balancing the right of free speech.

Clear Channel Outdoor will remove 30 billboards across the city that drew complaints of racism and intimidation with a message that said “Voter fraud is a felony.”

Let’s be clear up front.

Clear Channel Outdoor merely sold outdoor billboard space to a customer who asked to remain anonymous. There is also a matter of free speech that we cannot ignore.

After such an uproar in our community, and lead by Cleveland City Councilwoman Phyllis Cleveland, the signs are not only coming down, but Clear Channel is donating 30 outdoor billboards that say “Voting is a right.”

This is the right thing to do on the part of Clear Channel who could have taken the money and run. This indicates to us a commitment by the company to be sensitive to all who view their billboards and can be influenced by them, whether it is for gambling locales or auto body repair shops.

To date, the “anonymous donors” who paid for the ad remain anonymous.

And that’s OK with us.

As long as the billboards have be taken down and replaced with a message to “go out and vote and don’t be intimidated,” we are satisfied.

We commend Clear Channel for “doing the right thing” while balancing the right of free speech.

It was the right move and the right calls.