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THE CALIFORNIA PROGRESSIVE REPUBLICAN CLUB  
COMPTON, CALIFORNIA

POLITICAL EQUALITY

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Thank you very much. That wonderful introduction reminds me of another occasion on which a chairman introduced me.

This particular chairman was most inexperienced, and he said that never having undertaken such a task before, he had gone to a veteran toastmaster and asked him what the rule of introductions was, the veteran told him that it was a very simple rule: "If the man is a big-shot and really amounts to something, simply state: 'We have with us today' and say no more. But if he is small potatoes and does not amount to much, say just as much as you can about him." This young fellow then started with my birth and moved on down for the next fifteen minutes.

You know someone once said that the three hardest things in the world to do are to climb a fence leaning toward you, to kiss a pretty girl leaning away from you and to acknowledge with proper humility a flattering introduction. In spite of many failures, I've



had come success with the first two, but the last one has me licked.

First of all I would like to thank you for the invitation to address your group.

I must admit that despite a hectic travel schedule I still feel somewhat nervous when appearing before groups around the country.

I didn't realize just how nervous I was until this woman came up to me at the Hotel and asked me "why I was pacing up and down in this particular room?" I told her I was going to deliver a speech shortly to a college group. She asked me if I usually get very nervous before addressing large audiences? I told her no -- no I never get nervous. "In that case, " demanded the woman, "what are you doing in the Ladies Room?"

This will be a rather brief speech -- and you can thank three people for it. My speech writer who took a one-hour talk



and cut it down to 30 minutes; my wife who took the 30 minutes and cut it down to 15; and my secretary who took the 15 minute version -- and lost it!

Nearly one-hundred and ten years ago the Black people of this country were deemed free.

Examining the word, free, in the literal sense, meant that we were entitled to the same rights and protection under the law, as were all the peoples of this nation.

From the moment we were freed from our bondage - we were protected by the Constitution; by the Bill of Rights; we were entitled to political equality - the right to vote - the right to choose.

Let us go back in history for a moment. Following the Civil War, we were freed from our bondage, but let me suggest to you, that there was by no means a recognition of political equality - and let me further suggest that we have yet to become politically equal.





A good historical example of this can be illustrated by what occurred following the election of 1868. General Ulysses S. Grant, the newly elected President, pushed for the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment which denied the right of any state to disfranchise the Black. It took two years to ratify that amendment.

It is interesting to note that while Grant is generally credited with the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment - if we look at what was written in the party platform just prior to the election - we glean something different.

Listen! "The guaranty by Congress of equal suffrage to all loyal men at the South was demanded by every consideration of public safety, of gratitude, and of justice, and must be maintained; while the question of suffrage in all loyal (non-Southern) states properly belongs to the people of those states."



What I am saying, ladies, is simply this. Prior to the election of 1868, while we had the franchise in the South, the party, including candidate Grant felt it necessary to promise the people of the North the freedom "to keep the Negro disfranchised in their own states."

It was only after Grant was elected and sitting in the White House, that he felt politically safe to push for the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment.

We were freed from our bondage - but not political equality!

We have come a long way since 1868. The road has been tough. It took us over one-hundred years to get the Voting Rights Act. In 1964 there were only 1,480,720 black voters registered in the eleven Southern States. Following the enactment of the Voting Rights Act, that figure increased significantly to nearly three million.

As each year goes by, we can see the evidence of the Voting Rights Act.



In Georgia, for example, 167,000 Blacks were registered to vote prior to the passage of the Voting Rights Act. In 1970, that figure changed to 332,000. If we view this in percentages - in 1965, 27.4 percent were registered to vote - in 1970, 52.6 percent.

No matter which way you cut it - the vote has doubled. Comparative figures in many other states show the same dramatic increase.

Based on the figures which I just mentioned - the effort to get Blacks registered is showing dramatic results.

As I stated before it took us over one-hundred years to achieve the Voting Rights Act - so for God's sake let us encourage the use of the rights which it gave us.

It has always been my personal conviction that with every right must also go responsibilities. And one of the responsibilities which I have as a voter is to look at both sides of the political picture -- then make my choice.





Several weeks ago I attended a small cocktail party. A man came up to me and began to chat. As the conversation progressed he asked me what I thought of Ed Muskie. When I answered him - he had this rather puzzled look on his face. He finally spoke up and said "you mean to tell me you are a Republican?"



This brought home a point. Most Americans identify the Black voter with the Democrats. And further there is no reason to assume otherwise.

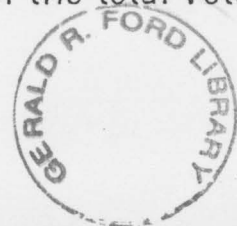
A Gallup poll taken in September, 1971, showed that Blacks consider themselves Democrats by a margin of 72 percent to 9 percent.

In 1868, we were freed from our bondage but there is still no political equality.

Webster's defines equal as being "free from extremes." You would have to agree that 72 to 9 is pretty extreme.

This country was built on the two-party system. Yet, for the blacks, the figures seem to indicate the extreme - the extreme being only a one - party affiliation.

In 1968 in the city of Atlanta, 98 percent of the Black votes went to Hubert Humphrey - while less than 2 percent went to Richard Nixon. It is generally accepted that any candidate in a two-way race who receives 55 percent or more of the total vote - is



considered to have won by a landslide. To quote Paul Jones, "that's not a landslide, it's more like an avalanche. And just as people get lost in snow avalanches and tend never to be heard from again, the Black voter is getting lost in this electoral avalanche. And he's never heard from again - at least not until the next election."

When I look at the figures -- I find myself thinking the Democrats don't need to worry about the Black vote -- with 72 percent of the Blacks claiming Democrat party affiliation -- why should they.

On the other hand, the Republicans, far too often, feel that they shouldn't waste their time developing programs for the Blacks -- because no matter what they do they won't get the vote.

Why is it that Blacks consistently vote for the Democrat?  
For most of us that is easy to answer.

The general assumption is that the Democrats do everything for us as a people. I think this is a blatant misconception, and as is often the case with misconceptions -- the only way they can



be dispelled is by pointing out a few facts.

The fact is, that the record for the last three-and-a-half years has been rather remarkable when you consider that Richard Nixon didn't exactly owe his election victory in 1968 to the Black vote.

These are some of the facts:

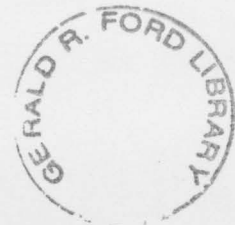
This Administration has appointed more minorities to top level jobs than any prior President. President Nixon appointed the first black ever as a judge on the U. S. Military Court of Appeals, the nation's highest military tribunal. This President... Richard Nixon... appointed the first black ever as an Admiral. I am sure you have heard the standard joke that used to make the rounds in Washington.

That being the two blacks of General rank prior to the Nixon Administration. This President has appointed... during his three and one-half years in office... eight blacks to General rank. In his first three-and-one-half years in office, President Nixon has appointed 15 minority federal judges. The same number appointed by the prior Administration in a four year period. But, in my view, the real test of commitment





came when President Nixon initiated the Department of Commerce's Minority Business Enterprise program back in 1969. Since that time this Administration has pumped more than \$500 million in grants and loans to minority business. I call this real progress, not rhetoric, not a lot of words, but solid progress. The President also took a look at the nation's minority banking institutions and found them in trouble. What did he do about it? He launched a \$100 million program to inject new life into these lending institutions and when one year had passed, the one million dollar commitment had been met ... meaning that the lending capacity of these banks had been greatly increased to provide direct service to the minority community. I call this progress, not rhetoric. When President Nixon came into office some three-million Americans were being provided food stamps. That figure has now reached eleven million. Many of our so-called liberal Senators went into the deep South and viewed the situation ... taking time to be photographed with





black and Spanish-speaking civil rights leaders...while at the same time enjoying front-page press play around the country.

But, it was not until President Nixon came into office that meaningful progress was made. We can also look into the area of black colleges. This Administration in this fiscal year has authorized \$225 million for black colleges, with more than \$300 million ear-marked for next year. The record for the prior Administration was never more than \$100 million in any given year. This, to me, represents progress ... not rhetoric. These are some of the facts. I would be the first to say that this is not enough. It will never be enough until we reach parity across the board. But this is progress and does show a real commitment.

These are some of the facts -- and the black press must encourage the community to look at both sides. It is only in this way that we are going to achieve the political leverage -- to force both major parties to go after our vote. It is only in this way that we



are going to be assured that our vote counts for something.

I have been speaking to you in very partisan terms. Not because I want you to become Republicans; not because I want you to register voters so they can vote Republican; but because I feel that there are two major political parties in this country -- each with something to offer. And thus far we in the Black community -- as the figures show -- are only looking at one party.

There is no doubt that you must work to register our brothers and sisters -- but more importantly, you must work to educate them.

It is not going to be an easy job because as I travel around the country I have noticed a tremendous amount of apathy.

Anthony Lewis stated in Portrait of a Decade, "The experience under the 1957 act has shown that the most persevering federal government effort, even though it finally overcomes legal booby traps, cannot actually add large numbers of Negroes to the voting rolls unless another ingredient is present. That is the will in the



in the local Negro community to obtain the franchise."

Those of you sitting here today have a responsibility not only to register voters -- but to give them reason to register.

Our people must begin to realize that their vote must count -- our people must rise up and say to the Democrats -- for too long you have had our vote. Far too often you have not kept your promises in return for that vote.

Further, our people must rise up and say, the Republicans have a responsibility to seek our vote -- to include us as they do the other segments of the population -- not to write us off as a lost vote.

In other words, what I am talking about is what has been described by some as political sophistication with the vote as the chief instrument. For instance, when hundreds of black people assembled in Gary, Indiana, recently to map political strategy in this election year, were they talking about a strategy involving a



united black front -- a strategy that signals leverage ..... a political sophistication that should, in my view, include a posture of independence. It would have been my hope that the delegates somewhere along the way would have avowed to a standard of 25 percent Democrat, 25 percent Republican and 50 percent Independent, a flexibility that would provide real black power at the voting booth.

I, frankly am partisan. I come here as a member of President Nixon's White House staff. I have an axe to grind.

But, let us stay with the facts....not rhetoric....the accomplishments of the Nixon Administration.

There are now seven blacks on the White House staff. In the past, there was only one black at the door. Today, we are involved in all levels of the White House process. In government, a Sam Jackson -- handles millions of dollars that flows into new towns....at the State Department -- a Beverly Carter -- is the ranking black and is responsible for





much of our foreign policy.

At the Treasury Department, Sam Pierce, a former New York Judge, is General Counsel, the lawyer for the agency responsible for our monetary system.... At Transportation, General B. O. Davis, Jr., is the architect for the nation's transportation safety and cargo security policies... I could go on -- however, I recited the figures.

What I am saying to you is -- that not only has President Nixon kept a campaign pledge to pour more dollars into black enterprise, but he has appointed qualified blacks to policy-making positions in the mainstream of federal government.

The time for rhetoric is over. We can't live on emotional pleas. Promises and excuses are not the order of the day. For years that is all that the Democrats have been giving us.

While the Black Caucus berates the President, its members -- all Democrats -- most of whom were elected despite

