

Politics, Politicians and AUSA

by

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“They had for more than a century before been regarded as beings of an inferior order, and altogether unfit to associate with the white race, either in social or political relations; and so far inferior, that they had no rights which the white man was bound to respect; and that the negro might justly and lawfully be reduced to slavery for his benefit”

Roger B. Taney, Chief Justice, Supreme Court, March 1857

“Well, the concern is misplaced, because if you look at the statistics, African-American voters are voting in just as high a percentage as Americans.”

Minority Senate Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY), January, 2022

Politics is not something that I consider myself to be as well versed on as I should be. But there are some thoughts and questions that I'd like to share. My mother and grandmother would often quote proverbs (biblical, Afrikan or even Shakespeare) and say, “food for thought”. I am sharing my thoughts on politicians and politics as “food” to stimulate thought. Obviously, everyone has (or should have) their own opinion, which should be respected (if it is thoughtful, logical and not foolish).

One of the scholars who I have learned much from, personally and from reading his work, Dr. Jacob Carruthers, once said that in ancient Afrika (Ancient Egypt) during a period of civil strife that Egyptologists call the first intermediate period, to be convicted of being a politician was grounds for the death penalty. Although this seems extreme, it seems that what many politicians do is frequently compromise what they believe and know to be right, just and correct in order to achieve another goal (the so-called “greater good”?). In other words, they compromise their stated principles. This was seen as self-betrayal and made the person a lying failure inherently.

The quotes at the beginning of this article demonstrate that in the view of the politicians governing this country, nothing basically has changed for the last 165 years for AUSA (Afrikans from the United States of America). You might say that having black representatives in Congress is a sign of improvement. I will concede to this point just a little. I'd like to think that our representatives usually do their best to adequately represent

us. That is unless they are for sale (see Eddie Murphy's movie, *Distinguished Gentleman*). We also have black politicians who have openly allied themselves with the forces that are doing all in their power to negate and destroy us. Dr. Carruthers called them "black supporters of white supremacy". These people are opportunists and many describe them as traitors to their own people.

It is difficult for me to understand how a black man can actually say that America is not a racist country when subtle ("dog whistle") racism as well as blatant in-your-face racism abounds not only in politics but in every area of America; healthcare, economics, law, criminal justice and the list goes on and on.

But let's consider the politicians. Nationally, most people in the United States Congress are extremely wealthy. I've always asked the question, "why would someone spend millions of dollars to be elected to a job that pays less than \$200,000 yearly?" What are the benefits and perks? Is it true that Senators and Congresspersons leave office much richer than they were when they were first elected? If the answer to the last question is "yes", what's up with that?

It's interesting how blatantly racist some political parties are without using the usual racist language. We can attribute that to a strategy that Republicans have used for more than forty years. It is/was called the "Southern Strategy". This "Southern Strategy" was a maneuver by Barry Goldwater in the early 1960's in which the Republican party maneuvered to increase white voters by subtly appealing to racism against AUSA. Remember, the Democratic party was the party of open racism from before the Civil War until the Republicans claimed that dubious honor in the mid 20th century. The "Southern Strategy" was first publicly discussed by South Carolinian, Lee Atwater in 1981 as an appeal to those racist whites who opposed civil rights. It was used effectively by Richard Nixon, Barry Goldwater, Ronald Reagan and most recently by the 45th president. It was so successful that it contributed to millions of white conservative voters switching from the Democratic to the Republican Party. As was explained by Atwater, they didn't have to use the "n" word but could cloak their racism in dog-whistle terms like "states' rights", "welfare state and welfare queens" (even though most people on welfare were and are white), "racial quotas", "affirmative action" and now "Critical Race Therapy".

I personally know some politicians who I greatly respect and feel that they are sincere in wanting to successfully represent and advocate for their

constituents. Unfortunately, I'm afraid that they are the exception to the rule.

Most politicians have the "gift of gab" and are really good at "speechifying" What we should do for all politicians who want us to vote for them is to pay more attention to what they do than to what they say. This, to me, is easy if we start locally and end up nationally. What do members of the local school board say and what do they do? (We can actually go to school board meetings and speak). What do the mayors, city councilors and county councilors say and what do they do? What do state representatives and state senators say and what do they do? What do our representatives to the United States Congress (Senators and Representatives) say and what do they do? When we vote for any of these people, we should hold them accountable to deserve our votes.

Although we should do this for all our representatives, we should especially do it for those AUSA politicians who want our votes and support.

Two of the highest profile AUSA politicians in South Carolina are Representative James E. Clyburn and Senator Tim Scott.

Rep. Clyburn is an old Civil Rights warrior who has done a lot of good for his constituents. I've heard many people criticize his methods and state that he moves too slowly but most will admit that he has been a force for good for all people and especially AUSA people, not only in his district but throughout the country.

On the other hand, Sen. Scott seems to be doing more good for his non-AUSA constituents. It is hard to find his positions because he frequently speaks and acts in a paradox. He championed legislation for police accountability with his Walter Scott Notification Act but ended up voting against it after it was renamed. What's up wid dat? To me, the most informative and entertaining articles about him were written by my "homeboy" from Hartsville, SC, Michael Harriot in *The Root*. I encourage all these readers to look up (Google) these articles in *The Root*. They are "Was Tim Scott Right When He Said 'America Is Not a Racist Country'? An Investigation" which appeared on 4/29/2021 and "In Loving Memory of Tim Scott" which appeared on 9/30/2021.

Finally, I frequently hear people say that we have to save our democracy. I ask, do we really live in a democracy? The late Lani Guinier once defined democracy as the tyranny of the majority over the minority. Is America a Republic or a Democracy?

I will end with that thought and as my mother and grandmother would say, "Food for thought".