

## The business of politics

Written by William Reed  
Monday, 25 June 2012 15:34

---

*-No permanent friends, no permanent enemies, just permanent interests.*

What do you call yourself – Democrat, Republican, community or gay activist, Libertarian or Green Party member? And, how has your affiliation benefited you in terms of political favors?

The modern political party system in the United States is dominated by the Democratic and Republican parties. It's important that Black Americans recognize that neither of these parties have helped us to gain political equity. Supposedly the purpose of political parties is to bring people together who hold similar points of view about government. These groups influence government. Over the years, Blacks and their political participation has been far more symbolic than substantive. Blacks' political highlights date back to February 1989 when Ronald Harmon Brown was elected chairman of the Democratic National Committee. As president, Barack Obama is the titular head of the Democratic Party. And, Michael Stephen Steele served from January 2009 until January 2011 as the first African-American chairman of the Republican National Committee, but in the final analysis, neither of these political office holders did anything distinctive other than being "the first Black" in their position.

Isn't it time Black Americans of all political stripes recognize that we're never treated equally and that politicians spend their time and resources on attracting white swing voters. The truth is that both major parties seek to attract white swing voters by distancing themselves from Blacks. When you see Black "consultants" on news shows, these party "operatives" never discuss political issues germane to Blacks and are willing pawns who continue to perpetuate the institutional racism that restricts political opportunities of African-American voters.

So, when will we distance ourselves from America's traditional political plantations? Does the answer for Blacks' political empowerment lie with the Republicans or the Democrats? When will significant numbers of us move off the political plantation system that is prevalent in America in order to make the political policies and platforms necessary for elevating ourselves and the passage of our own issues? The venerable Malcolm X offers substantive political advice: "We need a Black political party so we can have our own voting bloc and can go to either party and cut deals that you will only receive our votes if we receive what we demand ... when we have a voting bloc we are no longer asking or begging for things."

## The business of politics

Written by William Reed  
Monday, 25 June 2012 15:34

---

The lack of a Black political movement also feeds into the mindset that we live in a post-racial society. But a post-racial order is an illusion. Racial inequality remains a brutal fact of life in America. The interracial political unity that is supposed to herald a truly post-racial society does not exist. The reality is that Blacks and whites remain bitterly divided in their political beliefs.

As “the first Black president” makes unflinching commitments to gay and Jewish groups, are you satisfied with his administration and its lack of commitment to Black issues and legislation? We need to make it our business to reconstruct Black politics and build political structures and alliances based on our concerns. We need to move away from “mainstream policies” that only mean us harm and fragmentation of our interests. More of us need to understand that the quests for racial and economic justice are intertwined with uncompromising spirit and building a better society. It’s in our own hands – “Black politics,” and the ability to influence policy, demand accountability, participate in American political discourse, and offer alternatives to the status quo is in each of our control.

There is a major disconnect between Blacks’ politics and economic empowerment. The Black society that supported activism in the past is weaker today than at any other time during the 20th century. Will Blacks stop accepting what “mainstream society” doles out to us, and instead take necessary steps to put our issues at the top of the nation’s agenda? Why can’t our economic woes and potential solutions be right up there with aid to and Israel and same-sex marriage policies?

(William Reed is available for speaking/seminar projects via the [Bailey Group.org](http://Bailey Group.org) )