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Database

Opinion/Editorial

Behind The Wheel

Special Report

Financial

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Subscription
Information
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Press Release
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POLITICS

3-13-2006

Why do blacks continue to support Democrats?

By Adele Ferguson

One of these days before I die, I hope to see a shift in the attitudes of so many of my black brothers and sisters in this great country we share, from perpetual victimhood, to pride in their achievements on the road from slave to American citizen.

Remember Ronald Reagan's story about the kid who had to shovel a huge pile of manure? He went about it with such joy he was asked why and said, "With all that manure, there's got to be a pony in there somewhere."



The pony hidden in slavery is the fact that it was the ticket to America for black people. I have long urged blacks to consider their presence here as the work of God, who wanted to bring them to this raw, new country and used slavery to achieve it. A harsh life, to be sure, but many immigrants suffered hardships and indignations as indentured servants. Their descendants rose above it. You don't hear them bemoaning their forebears' life the way some blacks can't rise above the fact theirs were slaves.

Besides freedom, a job and a roof over their heads, they all sought respect. But even after all these years, too many have yet to realize that to get respect, you have to give it.

The treatment given President Bush at Coretta King's funeral was shameful. And these weren't poor, uneducated black people who "dissed" him. They were among the country's top-drawer blacks, there to bury black royalty. While Bush got the cold shoulder, former President Clinton was welcomed as if he still held the office.

It mystifies me why the black population remains in thrall to the Democratic party. Black parents want a good education for their children yet they are consistently denied two opportunities that have proven enormously helpful in the few places where they are allowed because the D's oppose them. School vouchers and charter schools.

The teacher unions, among top contributors to the Democratic party, oppose them for fear of losing control of the public schools which continue to turn out kids who have to be slipped through graduation by finding alternatives to standard requirements for learning, and where black kids fall behind whites. And what the teacher unions are against, the Democrats are against. Many a school board member is a Democratic activist there to be on the ground floor against vouchers and charter schools.

In the few places where vouchers to attend private schools and innovative charter schools are allowed, the unions file lawsuits claiming damage to the public schools by diverting the voucher money to poor families and limiting as much as possible the number of students who can attend the charters. They won one in Florida last month.

Sure, the ultimate solution is to jack up the performance of the public schools, but so long as the unions are running the show, that isn't going to happen. The unions

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don't care if you're a good teacher, just that you're a member and pay your dues. It is nearly impossible to get rid of an incompetent teacher. Their interest is themselves, not the kids, and their answer to the poor performance of the schools is more money.

Black students regularly trail white students because they get the more inexperienced and less qualified teachers and are plagued by low expectations. Results of the use of vouchers and charter schools have been outstanding, yet the Democrats say no, so why do black parents support them? Why do they act the victim?

Blacks have no Cesar Chavez. Jesse Jackson isn't going to buck the Democratic Party. Neither is the NAACP. Black parents should confront Democratic leaders at all levels and demand these tools of learning be made available or expanded or don't count on our vote for your candidates. You've let the unions keep your kids down too long already.

(Adele Ferguson can be reached at P.O. Box 69, Hansville, Wa., 98340.)



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