

THE NAACP AND YOU!



Rev. Jesse D. Scott
President
Las Vegas, NAACP



An Emergency Action Alert

Today the NAACP has an emergency and it needs some letter writing action from you!

First read the article below from Dr. Benjamin Hooks, the Executive Director of the NAACP to all Branch Presidents, then write a letter and have your family members and friends to write a letter to the President of the United States, U.S. Senators and Congressmen asking them to approve and support the 1965 Executive Order outlawing Employment discrimination in America.

Either send the NAACP a copy of your letter or call and say that you have sent such a letter to President Ronald Reagan, Senators Paul Laxalt and Chic Hecht and

Congressmen Harry Reid and Barbara Vucanovich. The NAACP mailing address is P.O. Box 4887, or call 646-1662.

Dear Branch President:
A crisis of historic proportions confronts the civil rights movement at this very moment. President Reagan has before him a proposal to negate one of the most important civil rights measures enacted since the Emancipation Proclamation. I am referring to the Executive Order signed by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965 which mandated that federal contractors promote the hiring and advancement of blacks, Hispanics and women in reasonable proportion to their numbers in each local labor market.

For twenty years, each successive Administration, under Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter, has carried out that policy with significant results — results that have enabled hundreds of thousands of minorities and women to enter the labor market and move up the ladder.

Now the right-wing Neanderthals led by Attorney General Meese and his cohort, Brad Reynolds, and buttressed by such arch conservatives as Pat Buchanan and Clarence Pendleton, are pressuring the President to sign a new order which would reverse those two decades of progress in the workplace. Standing against these latter-day Bilbos and Eastlands are a number of decent Republicans, including Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole, Labor Secretary Bill Brock, and House Republicans Leader Robert Michel, as well as many other leaders and Congressmen from both parties. Many national business associations, including the National Association of Manufacturers, are also

opposed to this retrogressive proposal which seeks to wipe out affirmative action "once and for all times."

The two premises of the Meese-Reynolds-Pendleton axis are that racial and sexual discrimination no longer exist in America and that the intent of the Founding Fathers was that the Constitution be color-blind. In respect to the latter, those "super-patriots" appear to be totally ignorant of our own history. The Constitution was never color-blind: indeed, it legitimized slavery in half the nation and counted each black slave as only three-fifths of a human being for census purposes. Many of the framers of the Constitution were themselves slave holders. It was not until 1980, with the ratification of the 13th, 14th and 15th Amendments, that the historic oppression and injustice of slavery was reversed in principle by the Constitution. The 14th Amendment, rather than ignoring race, set out to rectify the wrongs of the past in order to benefit black Americans. Except for the brief period of Reconstruction, all informed Americans know that blacks suffered for the next hundred years as second-class citizens, deprived of most rights and subject to lynchings, beatings and constant fear. We all know too that real change began to take effect only twenty years ago — too short a time period to undo three centuries of slavery and segregation.

This brings us to the other "Big Lie" being foisted upon us by the right-wing clique pressing the President to sign the new order: that America is "now free from racial discrimination." One need only look around to perceive the total absurdity of this premise. More than half of black Americans endure lives of desparation and deprivation. Doors only

recently opened are being slammed shut by these newly-empowered bigots who desire to "return to the good old days" when society was totally run by and for white males at the expense of everyone else. When were the "good old days?" Why, when slavery ruled, labor was cheap, blacks and women knew their "place," and the only voters enfranchised by the Constitution were white male property holders over the age of 21. Such a return would, of course, deprive the right to vote to perhaps two-thirds of the present electorate, if not more.

No, Mr. Meese, the Constitution is not and never was color-blind. The real blindness is that exhibited by you and your cohorts, who insist that race is not a decisive force in American life.

As you will see from the enclosed articles in *The New York Times*, the President has postponed his decision on this crucial policy decision until after the Summit Meeting with the Soviet leaders. We have about three weeks to marshal the forces of decency and fairness in America to persuade the President that he should not — indeed must not — agree to this proposed new policy which would turn the clock back and cause grave suffering for millions of Americans already handicapped by so many decades of bigotry and injustice.

I implore you to write to the President at the White House today and let him know your feelings on this urgent matter. If you are a member of his party or supported him in the recent election, let him know that too. I also ask you to write to your Congressman and U.S. Senators, as well as to Senator Robert Dole, in opposition to the proposal to change the policy on affirmative action in respect

to Government contractors. Finally, if you have the time, I ask you to contact your local elected leaders to make their voices heard on this crucial issue. Local expressions of support for the NAACP's position and opposition to the proposed change — including letters to the editor, public rallies, and editorial statements — will all help to convince the President that the proposal before him is morally and politically wrong.

We need your help today, at the very moment when NAACP representatives are scouring the offices and halls of Congress to mobilize opposition to the proposal before the President. My hope is that we can generate ten thousand letters in the weeks ahead to the White House alone, backed by similar appeals to Congress. Together we can protect the gains won at the cost of so much "blood, sweat and tears." Together, white and black, we can help to save America's soul. Please act today.

Sincerely,
Benjamin L. Hooks
Executive Director

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perceived him as friendly to their aspirations and felt his Administration was concerned with black communities.

The New Jersey and Cleveland votes indicate that popular local figures who manage to keep their distance from an unpopular national Administration can do well — very well — among black voters, especially if they have a track record of sharing black concerns and working to make black neighborhoods better places.

Their success suggests that a Republican national ticket led by candidates with strong track records of support for civil rights and humane social policies can get its fair share of the black vote.

Both Democrats and Republicans need to shake off the myths about the black vote. November's election results strongly suggest both that black state-wide candidates can win, and that black voters are sophisticated enough to vote for their friends, no matter what party label they wear.

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