



False Promises

HOW THE RIGHT DEPLOYS HOMOPHOBIA
TO WIN SUPPORT FROM AFRICAN-AMERICANS

by **Nicholas Ray**

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Executive summary

I'd be excited to see the GOP finally making a serious push for black voters—if the party was offering fresh ideas on police profiling, housing discrimination, unemployment and other issues of importance to black folks. But the focus of the meeting wasn't on any of that. Rather it was on the gosh-darned 'homosexual agenda.' It would be the height of stupidity for African-Americans to align themselves with those whose philosophical forefathers maintained the machinery of our subjugation. It would be the height of hypocrisy to do so in an effort to deny someone else their civil rights.¹

—Leonard Pitts Jr.,
African-American author,
discussing a GOP meeting between 70 African-American
clergy and leaders of the Republican National Committee

INTRODUCTION

African-Americans have been one of the Democratic Party's most dependable voting blocks. In fact, in the last seven presidential elections the Republican candidate has received no more than 11 percent of the black vote.² However, the period since the 2004 presidential election has been marked by the evolution of a politically savvy strategy aimed, according to Republican National Committee (RNC) Chairman Ken Mehlman, at welcoming African-Americans “back home” to the Republican Party.³ The RNC's key strategy is the use of “moral values” issues to siphon off African-American voters from the Democratic voting block. In fact, as this report details, the supposed threat of same-sex marriage is often cited as a central reason for African-Americans to vote for Republican candidates. For example, in an important speech addressing African-American leaders before the National Urban League conference, President Bush cited his efforts to prevent same-sex marriage as one of the major reasons why hesitant black voters should consider climbing onboard the Republican train. “If you believe the institutions

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1. Leonard Pitts Jr. is a respected African-American columnist for *The Miami Herald*. Source: Pitts, L. Jr. (2005, February 7). Beware GOP's move to build a black alliance. *The Miami Herald*. Retrieved April 15, 2005, from http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/living/columnists/leonard_pitts/10834892.htm
 2. Hamburger, T., & Wallsten, P. (2005, February 1). GOP sees a future in black churches. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved February 1, 2005, from http://latimes.com/la-na-pastors1feb01_0,1673639.story?coll=1
 3. Republican National Committee. (2005, March 31). Chairman Ken Mehlman's “conversations with the community” at Howard University. Author. Retrieved March 31, 2005, from <http://www.rnc.org/News/Read.aspx?ID=5331>



of marriage and family are worth defending and need defending today,” declared Bush, “take a look at my agenda.”⁴

Among other efforts aimed either explicitly or implicitly at the African-American community, the White House announced a “healthy marriage initiative” as part of the administration’s faith-based programming.⁵ The program in part is aimed at persuading poorer single people of the benefits of getting married and staying married, providing information on practical topics from conflict resolution to financial management, and funded largely with dollars funneled through religious organizations.⁶ The fact that federal funds are available attracts the interest of many churches, including African-American institutions, and as one White House aide commented, “The president loves to do that sort of thing in the inner city with black churches, and he’s very good at it.”⁷

Within the context of this strategy to attract black voters, we tested the RNC assertion that the Republican Party is “home” to African-Americans through an analysis of the voting behavior of key conservative members of Congress. We also analyzed the history of, and statements made by, several key conservative political and religious leaders who are on the frontlines of this strategy, to see whether their support for African-Americans is genuine, or simply rhetoric. We conclude with a similar analysis of key African-American political and religious leaders, including Coretta Scott King, Rep. John Lewis, and Rev. Joseph Lowery, who have called for African-Americans to support full legal and social equality for lesbian and gay Americans and oppose the federal marriage amendment.

METHODOLOGY

What would it mean for African-Americans to “come home” to the Republican Party, as Ken Mehlman desires? Does the Republican leadership in Congress support the interests of African-Americans, or do its members promote their own ideologically based goals at the expense of the very community from which they now seek political support?

To answer these questions, we first analyzed opinion poll data from African-American respondents, which was collected by Black America’s Political Action Committee (BAMPAC),⁸ a conservative organization opposed to abortion and in favor of Social Security reform and small business tax cuts,⁹ and by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (JCPES),¹⁰ a progressive think tank that produces research, policy analysis and information to encourage public policy that will help black Americans.¹¹ To

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4. The White House. (2004, July 23) President emphasizes minority entrepreneurship at Urban League. Remarks by the president to the 2004 National Urban League Conference. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved November 10, 2005, from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/07/20040723-8.html>
 5. Pear, R. & Kirkpatrick, D. D. (2004, January 14). Bush plans \$1.5 billion drive for promotion of marriage. *The New York Times*. p.A1.
 6. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (n.d.). The healthy marriage initiative: Faith-based marriage promotion and education. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 27, 2006, from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/healthymarriage/about/factsheets_faithbased.html
 7. Pear, R. & Kirkpatrick, D. D. (2004, January 14).
 8. BAMPAC. (2004). 2004 National Survey of African American Registered Voters. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved October 10, 2005, from http://www.bampac.org/word/BAMPAC_2005_National_Opinion_Poll.doc
 9. BAMPAC (n.d.). *About BAMPAC*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 23, 2006, from <http://www.bampac.org/default.asp>
 10. Bositis, David A. (2004) Politics and the 2004 Election. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. Retrieved October 10, 2005, from <http://www.jointcenter.org/publications1/publication-PDFs/NOP-pdfs/nop-Politics.pdf>
 11. Joint Center for Political & Economic Studies (2004). About us Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 23, 2006, from <http://www.jointcenter.org/aboutus/index.php>



underscore the legitimacy of the poll findings, we then examined social science data that supports why African-American respondents identified particular concerns in these polls.

Next, we used the American Conservative Union’s (ACU) analysis of votes during the 108th Congress to identify a subset of conservative politicians in the House and Senate, using the equivalent of an academic grade of “A” (90 percent or higher) to qualify them as true conservatives.¹² The resulting group of 125 representatives was 100 percent Republican. Of the 34 senators who met this strict criterion, all but one were Republicans. The lone exception was Sen. Zell Miller of Georgia, a Democrat who endorsed President George W. Bush for re-election in 2004 and spoke passionately against the Democratic Party at the Republican Party convention in New York. For consistency’s sake, we include Miller in the analysis in this report, but the analysis is really of conservative Republican members of Congress.

More crucially for the purposes of this analysis, a majority of all Republicans in both the House and the Senate fell within this narrow range of scores on the ACU index, scoring between 90 and 100 percent—the most conservative rating possible. And the leadership of the Republican Party in both chambers reflects this reality. Moderate Republicans have been banished to virtual outsider status by a leadership whose average score across both chambers is 95.6 percent on the ACU index.

We conducted statistical analyses to compare the ACU scores of these conservative members of Congress with congressional voting indices created by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR), which include votes on legislation directly related to issues identified in both polls.¹³ We also analyzed the scores for two progressive organizations, Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) and the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), and two conservative organizations, the social issue-focused Family Research Council (FRC) and the more fiscally oriented National Taxpayers Union (NTU). We concluded our analysis by considering the records of well-known conservative politicians and their evangelical Christian right-wing allies.

FINDINGS

As summarized in Table 1, the results of the BAMPAC and JCPES polls are very similar. Clearly, very few differences in priorities were identified between respondents to the conservative versus progressive organization’s questions. To support our case that the issues prioritized in these polls are important African-American concerns

Table 1: Issues identified as most important when choosing a candidate (BAMPAC) or as the most important facing the country (JCPES)

Issue	BAMPAC	JCPES
Economy and Jobs	34	31*
Health care/ Prescription drugs	19	20
Education	11	7
Social Security	7	1

* This issue was called “Employment/Economy (jobs, poverty, homelessness, hunger)” in the JCPES poll.

12. We did not simply examine directly the NAACP or LCCR indices for exceptionally low scorers because it is views on African-American concerns that we seek to discuss. Had we selected simply those legislators who we knew had scored zero on those indices, we would have been introducing selection bias into the study, a statistical problem we wanted to avoid.

13. In the case of the NAACP, votes included in its calculation covered Head Start expenditures, minority health care funding, vocational training, protecting overtime pay, overhaul of Medicare, and federal funds for child care to help working families. The LCCR index included votes on fully funding elementary and secondary education programs, hate crimes legislation, increasing Pell grants to low income poorer college students, workplace investment, an expansion of the child tax credit to poor workers, and funding targeted at aiding minority rural farmers.



upon which Republicans should focus, we examined demographic data related to each issue to confirm why it is important to the African-American community.

EVIDENCE UNDERLYING THE POLL FINDINGS

When it comes to measures of health care and economic and educational opportunity and outcomes, the average African-American is considerably worse off than his or her white American counterpart, and the following represent just some of the data that support the priorities reflected in the BAMPAC and JCPES polls.¹⁴

ECONOMIC STATUS

- African-American men and women earn only 70 cents and 83 cents respectively for each dollar earned by their white American counterparts.¹⁵
- Almost three times as many African-Americans as white Americans live below the poverty line (24.7 percent versus 8.6 percent).¹⁶
- Since George W. Bush took office in 2001, the number of African-Americans living in poverty has risen by more than 850,000.¹⁷

EDUCATION

Educational opportunity and attainment are inextricably linked with economic prospects, but "...education policy has not addressed the neighborhood poverty that surrounds and invades urban schools with low expectations and cynicism."¹⁸ Especially hard hit are the youngest Americans:

- Head Start serves only 50 percent of eligible children.¹⁹
- Not one of President Bush's first four budgets fully funded his much trumpeted No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.²⁰
- African-American students on average score 214 points lower than white students and 227 less than Asian-Americans on the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).²¹

14. The National Urban League and Global Insight, Inc. (2005). National Urban League 2005 Equality Index. In L.A. Daniels (Ed.) *The state of Black America 2005*. Washington: Library of Congress.

15. Ibid. p 18.

16. US Census Bureau. (2005, August 30). Income stable, poverty rate increases, percentage of Americans without health insurance unchanged. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved October 18, 2005, from http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/005647.html

17. According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics, the number of African-Americans living in poverty climbed from 8,136,000 in 2001 to 9,000,000 in 2004. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2005, August 31). Historical poverty tables. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 31, 2006, from <http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/histpov/hstpov24.html>

18. Anyon, J. (2005, April 1). "What 'counts' as educational policy? Notes toward a new paradigm." *Harvard Educational Review*, 75(1).

19. Every Child Matters Education Fund. (2003, December). How federal budget priorities and tax breaks are harming America's children. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 13, 2006, from http://www.everychildmatters.org/site/DocServer/Federal_Tax_Cut_Report_December.pdf?docID=705

20. Toppo, G. (2005, April 20) NEA, school districts sue over "No Child" Law. USA Today. Retrieved December 14, 2005, from http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2005-04-20-nochild-suit_x.htm

21. College Board. (2005). 2005 College-bound seniors: total group profile report. Author. Available at http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/about/news_info/cbsenior/yr2005/2005-college-bound-seniors.pdf



HEALTH CARE

Given the importance of good health to optimal learning and earning, it is no surprise that African-American survey respondents cited health care as a critical concern.

- In 2002, one in five African-Americans had no health insurance at all versus one in seven white Americans.²²
- African-American women are three times more likely to die during child birth than white women.²³
- Diabetes, homicide and HIV-related deaths are respectively two, five and 10 times more likely among African-Americans than white Americans.²⁴

Given the efforts of Republican leaders to use their opposition to same-sex marriage as a recruiting tool with African-American voters, it is not unreasonable to assume that “moral values” issues would have been cited in these polls, but this was not the case. In the JCPES poll, the percentage of respondents claiming that “morals/moral crisis” was the single most important issue facing the country was less than 1 percent.²⁵ BAMPAC’s poll did not offer any similar alternative option. However, both polls did ask specific follow-up questions about same-sex marriage and/or civil unions.

According to the JCPES poll, 47 percent of African-American respondents believed same-sex couples should be allowed to marry or form civil unions (23 percent and 24 percent respectively),²⁶ and 24 percent of BAMPAC poll respondents supported legal same-sex marriage.²⁷ This poll did not ask about civil unions. Like Americans as a whole, African-Americans are split on the issue of same-sex marriage and partner recognition. Blacks are slightly more conservative than American voters in general on same-sex marriage: In 2004, 25 percent of all voters supported marriage equality, and 35 percent supported civil unions.²⁸

WHO ARE THE CONSERVATIVE LEGISLATORS AND HOW WELL DO THEY SCORE ON ISSUES OF CONCERN TO AFRICAN-AMERICANS?

Using the ACU voting index to identify the most conservative members of Congress provided a total of 34 senators and 125 representatives with scores of at least 90.²⁹ Figures 1 and 2 demonstrate the opposition to African-American interests among representatives and senators respectively. Across the three conservative measures, the 125 representatives scored on average of 86.2 percent, while on the NAACP index they averaged less than 30 percent. Scores dropped to an average of only 3.5 percent from ADA, and 1 percent from HRC, on whose index only eight of 125 conservative

22. The National Urban League and Global Insight, Inc. (2005). p. 165.

23. Ibid. p. 166.

24. Ibid. p. 162-163.

25. Bositis, D. (2004).

26. Ibid.

27. BAMPAC. (2004).

28. Sherrill, K. (2004). *Same-sex marriage, civil unions, and the 2004 presidential election*. Washington, DC: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. Available at <http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/MarriageCUSherrill2004.pdf>

29. We selected our pool of senators using a threshold ACU score of 90, which is the equivalent of a grade of “A” on a traditional academic scale.



Figure 1: Average scores for selected conservative representatives

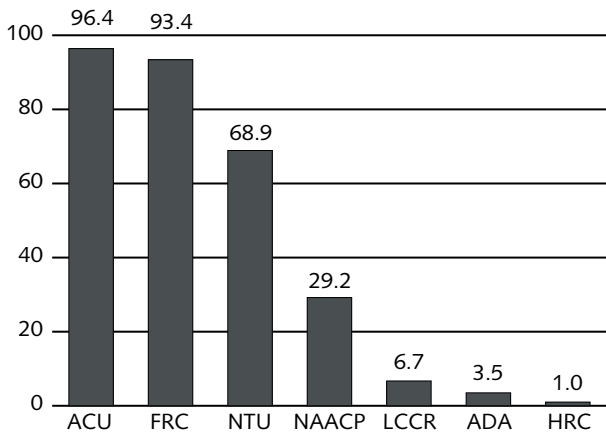
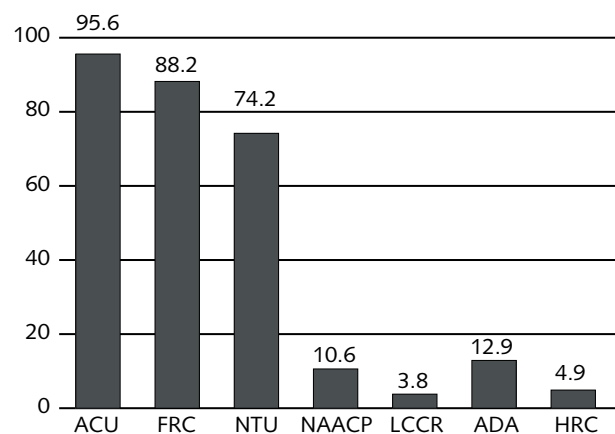


Figure 2: Average scores for selected conservative senators



Republican representatives scored anything at all. In the U.S. Senate, the picture was even starker. Only five conservative Republican senators scored even 15 percent on the NAACP voting index, while again almost half scored 100 percent from the Family Research Council.

We also conducted statistical analysis of the members’ voting index scores as calculated by the NAACP, ACU, FRC, HRC, ADA, NTU and LCCR, to demonstrate the degree to which a member’s votes on one set of issues are related to those they cast on another issue. This statistical analysis produces what are known as correlation coefficients, scores ranging between 1 and -1 that represent the strength and direction of a relationship between two sets of data, in this case organizational voting indices. A coefficient of positive 1 would mean that the scores are perfectly positively correlated; that is, that one can predict with certainty that as member’s scores on index A increase, so too would their scores on index B. Conversely, a coefficient of -1 would mean that as the scores on index A increase, the same member’s scores on index B would decrease.

Table 2 shows statistically significant negative correlation coefficients for both the NAACP and LCCR when compared with the ACU, FRC and NTU voting indices; as member’s scores increase on the two progressive groups’ indices, they decline on those of the more conservative groups. When the LCCR and NAACP indices are correlated with the progressive

Table 2: Correlation coefficients* of NAACP and LCCR voting indices with those of conservative and progressive organizations³⁰

Organizations	NAACP Correlation Coefficient**	LCCR Correlation Coefficient**
Conservative:		
ACU	-.955	-.979
NTU	-.942	-.948
FRC	-.851	-.872
Progressive:		
ADA	.925	.971
HRC	.867	.841

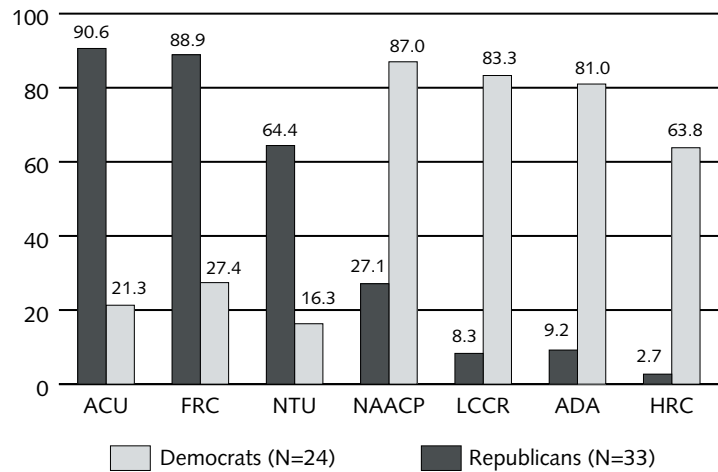
* 2-tailed Pearson correlations were used to arrive at correlation coefficients.

** All correlations were significant at the 0.01 level.

30. A coefficient of positive 1 would mean that the scores are perfectly positively correlated; that is that one can predict with certainty that as Member’s scores on index A increase, so too would their scores on index B. Conversely, a coefficient of -1 would mean that as the scores on index A increased, the same member’s scores on index B would decrease.

ADA and HRC indices, however, the correlations are positive and very close to one, meaning that as members of Congress became more likely to receive a high rating from NAACP or LCCR, that is to promote the interests of African-Americans, they also became more likely to receive high ratings from these two progressive organizations.³¹ So, despite conservative organizations that oppose equality asserting that they have the best interests of African-Americans at heart, it is actually legislators who support groups that advocate for same-sex marriage and LGBT equality, such as HRC, that simultaneously demonstrate greater support for the priorities of the LCCR and NAACP.

Figure 3: Average scores for members of Congress from AL, GA, LA, MD, MS, and SC



We also examined in detail the voting index scores of members of Congress from the six states with the highest proportion of African-American residents—Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi and South Carolina.^{32,33} Figure 3 demonstrates that Republicans from these states consistently score high on conservative measures, low on indices addressing African-American concerns, and near zero on HRC’s measure of support for LGBT equality. Conversely, while some Democrats manage to score moderately well with conservative groups, they simultaneously score much higher on issues of significance to African-Americans, the poor, and the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community. In summary, there are three key points to be made:

- Remarkably few conservative Republican legislators in states with significant African-American populations score even moderately well on measures of African-American interests.
- In contrast, Democrats from these states score far better on conservative measures than their Republican colleagues do on progressive measures. Democrats simultaneously score very well on issues prioritized by African-American organizations.
- These same Democrats from these states additionally score far better on HRC’s measure of support for LGBT equality than do the Republicans. Indeed, contrary to Republican Party leaders’ protestations, support for African-American interests appears to go hand-in-hand with support for LGBT equality.

This analysis of votes certainly illuminates the reality of what the Republican leadership

31. These correlation coefficients were close to 1.0, which indicates that as the value of one variable increases the value of the other variable increases at the same rate.

32. The percentages of African-Americans in these states respectively are: 26.0 percent, 28.7 percent, 32.5 percent, 27.9 percent, 36.3 percent, and 29.5 percent. Washington, DC, has an African-American population of 60 percent, but we only included states in this analysis. Source: McKinnon. (2001, August). *The black population: 2000*. Washington, DC: US Census Bureau. Retrieved January 31, 2006, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-5.pdf>

33. As of July 1, 2003, African-Americans made up 13.3 percent of the total U.S. population. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2005, February). Facts for features. Retrieved July 13, 2005, from http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/003721.html



is trying to do, but to strengthen our case we also looked at the backgrounds and broad philosophies of some of the conservative Republican leaders, as well as the evangelical Christian right-wing ministers and leaders they have recruited to promote their message.

REPUBLICAN CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS

Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, who has played a prominent role in trying to extend his party's reach into the African-American community:

- Scored six out of 100 on the NAACP's voting index and zero on LCCR's index.
- Scored a perfect 100 on the Family Research Council index and 96 on the American Conservative Union measure.
- Voted 17 times against raising the minimum wage,³⁴ but enjoys an income of \$162,100, which he claims leaves his family living "...paycheck to paycheck."³⁵

Rep. Tom DeLay of Texas, until recently majority leader in the House of Representatives, who believes that moving to a culture of self reliance is the key to helping African-Americans climb the ladder of economic opportunity:³⁶

- Opposed reauthorization of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and portions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 requiring bilingual voting assistance.
- Opposed the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 that allowed individuals to register to vote while applying for a driver's license. Of African-American registrants since January 1, 1995, approximately 32 percent registered when they applied for a driver's license.³⁷
- He has also opposed the Americans with Disabilities Act³⁸ and opposes affirmative action for racial minorities and women.³⁹

Sen. Trent Lott of Mississippi is another conservative Republican congressional leader with a poor record of advocating for African-Americans. Lott:

- Was forced to resign as Senate majority leader in 2002 after he honored Strom Thurmond by saying that the country would have been better off had Thurmond won the presidency in 1948 when he ran as an ardent segregationist.
- Has long been associated with the segregationist Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), an organization that believes "The word racism was concocted by a communist ideologue in the 1920's,"⁴⁰ and whose statement of principles includes

34. AFL-CIO. (2005, March 8). Republicans offer sham minimum wage bill. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved April 27, 2006, from <http://www.aflcio.org/yourjobeconomy/minimumwage/ns03082005.cfm?RenderForPrint=1>

35. Sokolove, M. (2005, May 22). The believer. *The New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved May 25, 2003, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/22/magazine/22SANTORUM.html?pagewanted=print>

36. Williams, A. (2003, July 30). House Majority Leader Tom DeLay talks race. *Townhall.com*. Retrieved July 27, 2005, from <http://www.townhall.com/columnists/ArmstrongWilliams/aw20030730.shtml>

37. U.S. Census Bureau. (2000, July 19). Table 14: *Method of registration among those who registered after January 1, 1995, by selected characteristics: November 1998*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.jointcenter.org/DB/table/databank/voting/1998/method_of_registration.txt

38. Associated Press. (1990, May 23). How they voted on bill for disabled. *The New York Times*. p.A18.

39. Project Vote Smart. Retrieved August 13, 2004, from <http://www.vote-smart.org>

40. Council of Conservative Citizens. (2005). What is the Council of Conservative Citizens? Author. Retrieved June 13, 2005, from <http://www.cofcc.org/info/faq.htm>



opposition to, "...all efforts to mix the races of mankind, to promote non-white races over the European-American people through so-called 'affirmative action' and similar measures..."⁴¹

RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Many national right-wing Christian groups are engaged in the pursuit of a broad anti-civil rights agenda. These groups cloak themselves in the mantle of mainstream conservatism to mask their true agenda of opposition to affirmative action, "big government," gun control, increased immigration and, of course, fair and equal treatment of LGBT Americans. Since the late 1980s, at least, anti-gay groups have actively tried to drive a wedge between the gay community and people of color, by portraying gay rights as "special rights" that threaten the civil rights of "legitimate minorities."⁴²

"You want to know what the single biggest problem facing inner-city black neighborhoods is? Homosexuality."
—Rev. Louis Sheldon,
chairman and founder
of the Traditional
Values Coalition

Among the better known is the Rev. Louis P. Sheldon, whose Traditional Values Coalition claims to "...bridge racial and socio-economic barriers."⁴³ However, it is clear that Sheldon is seriously out of touch with the problems facing African-Americans living in poor inner cities. In an interview with conservative columnist Tucker Carlson, Sheldon stated, "You want to know what the single biggest problem facing inner-city black neighborhoods is? Homosexuality."⁴⁴ Sheldon also described African-Americans pursuing reparations as "...black shakedown artists" who are "...taking money away from hard working Americans."⁴⁵

Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council (FRC) professes to be concerned with "...public policy that values human life and upholds the institutions of marriage and the family,"⁴⁶ but analysis of his organization's Web site shows more than 400 references to the word "homosexual" compared with comparatively very few references to issues of demonstrable concern to African-American families such as divorce, poverty, domestic violence, health insurance and child support.⁴⁷ As campaign manager for a conservative Republican Senate candidate, Perkins personally authorized the purchase of former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke's mailing list for \$82,500.⁴⁸ He later denied

41. Council of Conservative Citizens. (2005). A statement of the principles of the Council of Conservative Citizens. Author. Retrieved June 13, 2005, from <http://www.cofcc.org/manifest.htm>

42. Whittle, J. (2003, May). All in the family. Americans United for the Separation of Church and State. Retrieved July 16, 2004, from <http://www.au.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5580&abbr=cs>; Focus on the Family. (Updated 2004, March 4). Focus on social issues: Redefining marriage is not a civil right. Retrieved July 27, 2004, from <http://www.family.org/cforum/fosi/marriage/nac/a0031029.cfm>

43. Traditional Values Coalition. (2005). Empowering people of faith with truth. Retrieved June 1, 2005, from www.traditionalvalues.org/about.php

44. Carlson, T. (2006, January 4). What really smells about the Abramoff scandal. Msnbc.com Retrieved January 13, 2005, from <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/10A693414/>

45. Sheldon, L. (2005). African AIDS pandemic now added to the reparations scam. Washington: Traditional Values Coalition. Retrieved September 28, 2004, from <http://www.traditionalvalues.org/print.php?sid=1008>

46. Family Research Council. (2005). Over 20 years defending family, faith, and freedom. Author. Retrieved July 8, 2005 from http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?c=HISTORY_ABOUT

47. On January 27, 2006, we conducted a Web site search using the FRC's search engine, and searched the 6 terms detailed in Figure 7, including current and archived items in our counts. This search can be replicated at www.frc.org

48. Blumenthal, M. (2005, April 26). Justice Sunday Preachers. *The Nation*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml%3Fi=20050509&s=blumenthal>



knowing anything about the purchase despite the fact that his signature was on the pertinent paperwork. The Federal Election Commission fined the campaign \$3,000 for trying to hide the payment.⁴⁹

Last but not least, Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family has been accused of using "...false, irresponsible, and inflammatory rhetoric...in anti-gay radio and print materials."⁵⁰ In 1996, Dobson endorsed the U.S. Taxpayer's Party nominee for president, Howard Phillips, who among other things was a vocal defender of South Africa's apartheid regime.⁵¹

BLACK LEADERS WHO SUPPORT EQUALITY

Conservative forces seeking to use wedge issues like same-sex marriage do not acknowledge the existence of pro-equality African-American leaders. Many of these leaders are opposed to a conservative agenda, and have openly supported full equality for LGBT Americans.

As Coretta Scott King, late widow of the slain civil rights leader, noted, "...Gays and lesbians stood up for civil rights in Montgomery, Selma, in Albany, GA. And St. Augustine, FL.,...fighting for my freedom at a time when they could find few voices for their own, and I salute their contributions."⁵² The NAACP's Julian Bond admitted discomfort recently with "...the argument that there are no parallels between discrimination against gays and lesbians and against blacks, and that the former are seeking 'special rights'...There are no 'special rights' in America...our rights are not color-coded; they are available to all."⁵³

"There are no 'special rights' in America...our rights are not color-coded; they are available to all."
—Julian Bond,
Chairman of the NAACP

Another leader of the civil rights movement, and co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Rev. Joseph Lowery spoke on the topic of gay and lesbian rights recently at the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis, MN. He cautioned black Christians not to "...ever let the Constitution be used to take away rights. You can't say you're for equal rights and then make an exception."⁵⁴

Other African-American religious leaders have been even more specific supporters of LGBT Americans' rights. The Rev. William G. Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, commented on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decision to grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples:

...today's ruling is a significant step forward in guaranteeing that the rights enjoyed by heterosexual couples in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are also available to its bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender citizens...and we again dedicate

49. Ibid.

50. Foster, D. (1997, August 16). Former 'Focus' member blasts head of 'Family.' Book details counselor's passion for power, greed. *Rocky Mountain News*. p.6A

51. Southern Poverty Law Center. (2001, Summer). False patriots: Profiles of 40 antigovernment leaders. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.splcenter.org/intel/intelreport/article.jsp?aid=196>

52. Lutes, J. (2004). *A false focus on my family*. Soulforce. p. 13.

53. Bond, J. (2004, March 8). Letter to the Honorable Robert Travaglini [Massachusetts Senate President]. Baltimore, MD: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

54. Miller, P. (2006, January 16). Martin Luther King Jr. Day; Lowery urges more than lip service to King. *Star Tribune*. p. 1B



ourselves to work for justice, grounded in faith, which calls us to support everyone's full humanity...⁵⁵

African-American politicians have also declared unequivocally that lesbian and gay equality is not a distraction from civil rights, but a part thereof. Democratic U.S. Rep. John Lewis of Georgia stated:

It is time to say forthrightly that government's exclusion of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters from civil marriage officially degrades them and their families... this discrimination is wrong...I've heard the reasons for opposing civil marriage for same-sex couples. Cut through the distractions, and they stink of the same fear, hatred, and intolerance I have known in racism and bigotry.⁵⁶

This list of leaders serves to demonstrate that Republicans misrepresent reality when they suggest that the African-American community ought to vote Republican because of that party's stance on LGBT rights. In fact, there are plenty of black politicians, civil rights activists and common citizens willing to stand up and speak up for the equal rights of all Americans.

CONCLUSION

"In 2004, the religious right was concerned about re-electing George W. Bush. They couldn't come to black churches to talk about the war, about health care, about poverty. So they did what they always do and reached for the bigotry against gay and lesbian people."⁵⁷

The Rev. Al Sharpton, quoted above from a January 2006 appearance before the National Black Justice Coalition, has taken a leading role in drawing the African-American community's attention to the fact that Republican Party leaders are not seriously focused on issues of concern to black Americans. Instead, they and their evangelical Christian right-wing allies have used same-sex marriage as a wedge issue in an attempt to persuade African-Americans that their "natural political home" is in the Republican Party.

This paper quantitatively demonstrates the hypocrisy of the Republican and evangelical Christian right-wing strategy to persuade African-American voters to "come home." While the economy, health care provision and education are of demonstrable concern to the majority of African-Americans, Republican legislators who currently control the U.S. Congress have frequently voted against legislation to address these issues. Specifically, our analysis of 125 conservative representatives and 34 conservative senators demonstrates that these leaders score miserably on voting indices created by civil rights groups and other progressive advocacy groups, including the NAACP, LCCR and HRC.

Contrary to Bishop Henry Jackson's conviction that rights and righteousness are mutually exclusive, voting on the "side of rights" is a perfect example of "voting on the side of righteousness."

55. Sinkford, W. (2003, November 18). UUA president issues statement in Massachusetts court decision in support of same-sex marriage. Unitarian Universalists Association. Retrieved January 13, 2004, from <http://www.uua.org/news/2003/03118.html>

56. National Black Justice Coalition. (2004, February 2). News release: Marriage equality supporters. Author. Retrieved September 21, 2004, from <http://www.nbjcoalition.org/about/supporters.html>

57. Banerjee, N. (2006, January 21). Black churches' attitudes toward gay parishioners is discussed at conference. *The New York Times*. Retrieved January 21, 2006, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/21/national/21church.html>



Conversely, Democrats have much better records when it comes to supporting African-American priorities and at the same time also support broader progressive organization's goals. In other words, legislators who support groups that advocate for full LGBT equality, such as HRC, vote far more often in support of stances taken by the LCCR and NAACP than do conservative legislators who pronounce themselves friends of the African-American community in part because of their stance against LGBT equality. Despite this evidence, Bishop Harry Jackson, the man behind the "Black Contract with America," appears convinced that "rights" and "righteousness" are mutually exclusive, and that African-American voters should focus more on voting in a righteous fashion than in pursuit of civil rights. However, we would argue that voting in a way that increases the likelihood of equal rights is a perfect example of "voting on the side of righteousness."

Standing alongside elected officials and religious leaders who believe in improving access to good public schools or increasing healthcare provision for the uninsured is not selfish, and might well be argued to be righteous. Taking such a stand provides each individual with the power to improve the educational and economic opportunities and healthcare provision of everyone, including African-Americans. And if, as our analysis suggests, taking such a principled stand simultaneously helps LGBT Americans see an improvement in their civil rights, then surely this is further evidence of the "rightness" of casting such a vote.

Using uncertainty or fear about the notion of equality for LGBT Americans as a recruiting tool to support a policy agenda that is harmful to African-Americans is immoral. Standing firm in the face of such efforts, and consciously labeling them as bigoted and divisive is accurate, justified, and in the end, the only way to educate all Americans about the harmful reality of the political and religious conservative agenda and voting record.

It is immoral to use uncertainty or fear about equality for LGBT Americans as a recruiting tool to support a policy agenda that is harmful to African-Americans.



Introduction

*I'd be excited to see the GOP finally making a serious push for black voters—if the party was offering fresh ideas on police profiling, housing discrimination, unemployment and other issues of importance to black folks. But the focus of the meeting wasn't on any of that. Rather it was on the gosh-darned 'homosexual agenda.' It would be the height of stupidity for African-Americans to align themselves with those whose philosophical forefathers maintained the machinery of our subjugation. It would be the height of hypocrisy to do so in an effort to deny someone else their civil rights.*⁵⁸

—Leonard Pitts Jr., African-American columnist for *The Miami Herald*, discussing a GOP meeting between 70 African-American clergy and leaders of the Republican National Committee

African-Americans have been one of the Democratic Party's most dependable voting blocks. In fact, African-American support for Republican presidential candidates over the past 30 years has been so low, that in the last seven presidential elections the Republican candidate has received no more than 11 percent of the black vote.⁵⁹ David Bositis, a political analyst at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (JCPES), explained this lack of support from African-Americans by stating that “Republicans...are a group who opposed the civil rights movement and who African-Americans trust least.”⁶⁰

However, the period since the 2004 presidential election has been marked by the evolution of a politically savvy strategy aimed, according to Republican National Committee (RNC) Chairman Ken Mehlman, at welcoming African-Americans “back home” to the Republican Party.⁶¹ The RNC's key strategy is the use of “moral values” issues to siphon off African-American voters from the Democratic voting block. Given that the majority of African-Americans cite health care, education, the economy and jobs and Social Security as their issues of greatest concern in public opinion polls, one would think that the RNC intends to address these issues.^{62,63} Instead, as this report

58. Leonard Pitts Jr. is a respected African-American columnist for the *Miami Herald*. Source: Pitts, L. Jr. (2005, February 7). Beware GOP's move to build a black alliance. *The Miami Herald*. Retrieved April 15, 2005, from http://www.miami.com/mld/miamiherald/living/columnists/leonard_pitts/10834892.htm

59. Hamburger, T., & Wallsten, P. (2005, February 1). GOP sees a future in black churches. *Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved February 1, 2005, from <http://latimes.com/la-na-pastors1feb01,0,1673639.story?coll=1>

60. Gilgoff, D. (2005, March 21). A courtship worth watching: Conservatives come calling, and Blacks may be listening this time. *U.S. News and World Report*. Retrieved May 2, 2005, from www.usnews.com/usnews/news/articles/050321/Blacks.htm

61. Republican National Committee. (2005, March 31). Chairman Ken Mehlman's “conversations with the community” at Howard University. Author. Retrieved March 31, 2005, from <http://www.rnc.org/News/Read.aspx?ID=5331>

62. BAMPAC. (2004). *2004 national survey of African American registered voters*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved October 10, 2005, from http://www.bampac.org/word/BAMPAC_2005_National_Opinion_Poll.doc

63. Bositis, David A. (2004) *Politics and the 2004 Election*. Washington, DC: Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. Retrieved October 10, 2005, from <http://www.jointcenter.org/publications1/publication-PDFs/NOP-pdfs/nop-Politics.pdf>



details, the supposed threat of same-sex marriage has been cited as a central reason for African-Americans to vote for candidates who have historically been the least likely to support the policy priorities of the black community. There is some evidence that this GOP strategy has been successful.

After the 2004 election, a number of pundits and politicians cited the overwhelming success of anti-same-sex marriage ballot measures in 11 states on Election Day as the reason George W. Bush defeated John Kerry.⁶⁴ While a number of political scientists quantitatively demonstrated that those measures did not play a major role in Bush's victory, there is evidence that sentiment against same-sex marriage may have played a critical role in two states: Ohio and Arkansas.⁶⁵ In fact, David Domke of the University of Washington suggests that the disproportionate increase in share of the African-American vote that Bush received in Ohio may have been the reason that the state went Republican, ensuring that Bush had enough Electoral College votes to win the election.⁶⁶

The use of anti-gay sentiment to attract black voters to the polls was not just limited to Republican support for anti-same-sex ballot measures. For example, in predominantly black voting districts in Michigan, automated telephone calls were placed to many residents encouraging them to "...stand up for gay marriage by supporting John Kerry,"⁶⁷ despite the fact that Kerry repeatedly stated his opposition to same-sex marriage during the campaign.⁶⁸ Additionally, in the critical battleground state of Florida, Bush supporters purportedly stood outside the Broward County African-American Research Library and Cultural Center holding Kerry-Edwards signs reading "Support Gay Adoption."⁶⁹ They further misrepresented their purpose by telling the press that they were members of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP).

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While the complex combination of factors that led to Bush's victory is likely to remain a hot topic in academia, it is clear that the leadership of the Republican Party and its allies in the evangelical Christian right intend to strengthen their attempts to attract black voters in order to achieve Mehlman's goal of winning 30 percent of the African-American electorate in the 2008 election.⁷⁰ Anti-LGBT politics, including sentiment against same-sex marriage, continues to be the keystone of the bridge Republican leaders are using to reach out to African-American voters. For example, in an important speech before the Urban League in which he addressed key African-American leaders, President Bush cited his efforts to prevent same-sex

64. Dao, J. (2004, November 4). Same-sex marriage issue key to some GOP races. *The New York Times*. p.A4. See also Manley, H. (2004 (November 4). In the end, it was the Bible, stupid. *Boston Herald*. p.55

65. Donovan, T. et al. (2005). Did gay marriage elect George W. Bush? p.24. Unpublished paper prepared for the 2005 State Politics Conference, East Lansing, MI. May 14-15, 2005. See also Sherill, k. (2004). *Moral values and the 2004 election*. Washington, DC: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. Available at <http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/MoralIssues2004.pdf>

66. McGough, M. (2004, November 4). Analysis: Election shows voters split on cultural lines. *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*. Retrieved January 24, 2006, from <http://www.post.gazette.com/pg/04309/406488.stm>

67. Hoffman, K. (2004, November 1). Voters complain about misleading calls. *Associated Press*. Retrieved January 18, 2006, from <http://www.suntimes.com/output/elect/01call.html>

68. MSNBC. (2004, September, 22). Bush vs. Kerry at a glance. Author. Retrieved July 11, 2005, from <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/4448630/>

69. Bearman, J. (2004, October 31). How they do, part III. *LA Weekly*. Retrieved July 12, 2005, from http://laweekly.blogs.com/joshuah_bearman/2004/10/how_they_do_par_1.html

70. The Advocate. (2003, February 3). Black pastors hold "protection of marriage" summit. Author. Retrieved February 2, 2005, from http://www.advocate.com/news_detail.asp?id=03083



marriage as one of three major reasons why black voters should consider climbing on board the Republican train. “If you believe the institutions of marriage and family are worth defending and need defending today,” declared Bush to great applause, “take a look at my agenda.”⁷¹

Within the context of this Republican strategy to attract black voters, this publication tests the RNC assertion that the Republican Party is “home” to African-Americans through an analysis of the voting behavior of conservative members of Congress. We also analyze the history of several key conservative political and religious leaders who are on the frontlines of this strategy in order to see whether their renewed support for African-Americans is genuine or simply a politically convenient change in tactics. We conclude with a similar analysis of key African-American political and religious leaders, including Coretta Scott King and Rep. John Lewis, who have, like Leonard Pitts, called for African-Americans to support full legal and social equality for lesbian and gay Americans.

Before describing our methodology and the findings of our analyses, we first briefly review the history of the nation’s two major political parties and the African-American community. Contrary to current public sentiments, there was a time when to support African-Americans inevitably meant identifying as a Republican.

This publication tests the RNC assertion that the Republican Party is “home” to African-Americans by analyzing the voting behavior of conservative members of Congress.

71. The White House. (2004, July 23). President emphasizes minority entrepreneurship at Urban League. Remarks by the president to the 2004 National Urban League Conference. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved November 10, 2005, from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/07/20040723-8.html>



History and context

An understanding of the historical development of both political parties and their relationships with the African-American community provides some useful context for the analysis detailed later in this publication. The Democratic Party traces its origins to 1792, but in 1828 it split in two, creating a new National Republican Party that later become the Whig Party. In 1854, some “Whigs” and northern Democrats opposed to the spread of slavery into the Western territories formed the Republican Party. Slavery became a particularly controversial issue for the Northern Democrats (and former Whigs) as more territories joined the union. In the past, Northern Democrats reconciled any unease they had for slavery by framing the debate as a matter of “states’ rights,” but using this justification became less tenable.

Subsequently, the Democratic Party split into Northern and Southern factions, each nominating its own presidential candidates. This divide paved the way for the Republican Party to elect its first president, Abraham Lincoln, in 1860. Lincoln’s opposition to the expansion of slavery into the western territories eventually led 11 states to secede from the Union, starting the American Civil War. Lincoln’s leadership was not restricted to opposing slavery. He led the push for many government-sponsored public works and infrastructure projects, including the transcontinental railroad, the Homestead Act, and a variety of education programs. This aggressive investment in the nation’s future paid off, and the US experienced unprecedented economic growth.

While the Republicans continued to receive support, tension in the party soon developed. Businesses had become so powerful that many who had once advocated for government support of “big business” now believed that government was instead needed to protect people from it. By the time the Great Depression hit, both the Republican and Democratic parties had virtually reinvented themselves.⁷² The Democrats, under Franklin D. Roosevelt, were able to reunite southern and northern Democrats against big business. Roosevelt, through a series of legislative initiatives collectively called the New Deal, guaranteed people’s right to unionize and created unemployment insurance, worker’s compensation and Social Security, among many other programs. Northern blacks, largely able to vote unlike most blacks in the South who were victims of Jim Crow-era laws and intimidation, switched their voting allegiance from the “party of Lincoln” and started voting for Democrats,⁷³ in part because their economic interests were addressed by New Deal initiatives. They were more likely than whites to be poor and in need of protections like Social Security and unemployment insurance.

72. Von Drehle, D. (2004, July 25). Origin of the Species: Up from the ooze, into the mud—a brief history of American political evolution. *Washington Post Magazine*. p.W12

73. Nuechterlein, J. (2000). Whistling Dixie *First things: A monthly journal of religion and public life*. October, p.15-16.



Meanwhile, Southern Democrats were becoming uneasy with the New Deal's "vast expansion of federal power," creating fear the federal government would intervene in the South's segregation policies.⁷⁴

At the 1948 Democratic Convention, race once again became a dividing issue between Northern and Southern Democrats when incumbent President Truman announced his support for passage of civil rights laws. White Southern Democrats, who staunchly supported segregation, walked out of the convention and formed the States' Rights Party, better known as the Dixiecrats. They elected their own presidential nominee, splitting the Democratic Party once again. However, Truman won re-election despite losing four southern states, a first for a Democratic presidential nominee.

Over the next 20 years, millions of white southerners left the Democratic Party and eventually joined the Republican Party.⁷⁵ After Republican Sen. Barry Goldwater voted against the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and became the Republican Party's presidential nominee, more white Southerners, angered by the Northern Democrats' support for the 1964 legislation, joined the Republican Party. Goldwater, who had a pro-civil rights record, carried five states in the Deep South, losing every other state except his home state of Arizona.⁷⁶ Despite leading the effort to desegregate his own state's National Guard, and having supported earlier civil rights legislation, he felt the 1964 Act was an unconstitutional attempt to legislate morality and restrict employers' rights.⁷⁷ However, the 1964 Act allowed a substantial number of southern African-Americans to vote for the first time—and they voted almost unanimously for Democrats.⁷⁸

The Republican Party's difficult balance between harkening back to the days of Lincoln and exploiting anti-minority sentiment for political advantage has played out in subsequent decades.

This difficult balance for the Republican Party, between harkening back to the days of Lincoln and utilizing anti-minority sentiment for political advantage, has played out in subsequent decades. In 1968, Richard Nixon adopted a plan to win the White House that entailed tapping into southern Dixiecrats' fears about desegregation and affirmative action. This "Southern strategy" focused on blue-collar workers in the south and included allusion to the breakdown of "traditional morality," a phrase we see utilized by the modern Republican Party with regard to same-sex marriage and other contentious social issues.⁷⁹ Ronald Reagan successfully expanded this effort into the industrial Northern and Midwestern United States in the 1980s. During his first campaign for the presidency he promised to reduce welfare expenditures dramatically, citing an apparent example of extreme welfare fraud to justify his intentions. According to the *Washington Post*, Reagan often told the story of a "... 'welfare queen' in Chicago who drove a Cadillac and had ripped off \$150,000 from the government using 80 aliases, 30 addresses, a dozen Social Security cards, and four fictional dead husbands." No amount of journalistic research turned up such a person, but the stereotype of an African-American woman allegedly driving a

74. Ibid.

75. Von Drehle, D. (2004, July 25).

76. Wikipedia. (n.d.) U.S. Presidential Election, 1964. Author. Retrieved January 18, 2006, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/U.S._presidential_election,_1964

77. Wikipedia. (n.d.) Barry Goldwater. Author. Retrieved January 12, 2005, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barry_Goldwater

78. Von Drehle, D. (2004, July 25).

79. *The Economist*. (2004, October 9). The politics of values. Author. Retrieved January 18, 2006, from http://economist.com/PrinterFriendly.cfm?Story_ID=3258082



Cadillac, vacationing in Acapulco and buying beer with food stamps⁸⁰ was effective.

In 1988, President George H. W. Bush produced a campaign ad that claimed his challenger, Democratic Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis, was soft on crime because he had released on weekend furlough a convicted felon, Willie Horton, who subsequently committed a rape while out of state custody. The use of a photograph of Willie Horton, an African-American, and images of black and Latino prisoners walking through a revolving door, were not accidental. The ad tapped directly into white Americans' fears about crime,⁸¹ and the producer described the intentional subtext as "every suburban mother's greatest fear."⁸² In 1994, California Gov. Pete Wilson was a vocal proponent of controversial Proposition 187 that sought to restrict immigrants' rights. The proposition again tapped into race- and ethnicity-based discrimination and passed comfortably, but led to a strong backlash from the Latino community against the Republican Party and the governor.⁸³

INCREASE IN SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

Despite the contentious history between the Republican Party and African-Americans, the 2004 election between George Bush and John Kerry saw the Republicans' share of the black vote hit that peak of 11 percent,⁸⁴ an important increase from the 9 percent who voted for the then-governor of Texas in 2000.⁸⁵ This trend is mirrored by increases in the percentage of African-Americans who actually identify as Republican, from 6 percent⁸⁶ in 2000 to 10 percent in 2004.^{87,88} The Republican Party has also been successful in gaining support from African-American voters in key states. From 2000 to 2004, President Bush nearly doubled his support from African-American voters in Ohio, from 9 percent to 16 percent, and in Florida from 7 percent to 13 percent, crucial states without which he could not have won.⁸⁹

This increase in support in 2004 was the first fruit borne of the Republican strategy to siphon off African-American support from the Democratic Party. As stated earlier, top Republicans have a goal of winning 30 percent of the African-American vote in 2008.⁹⁰ Along with current and former leaders of the party, RNC Chairman Ken Mehlman has been working tirelessly on a number of fronts to gain this support, including forming an African American Advisory Committee, which brings together African-American members of business, faith and grassroots sectors to meet regularly with RNC leaders.⁹¹

80. Merida, K. & Fletcher, M. A. (2005, September 22). For the poor, sudden celebrity. *Washington Post*. September 22, 2005. p.A1. See also Roberts, C. & Roberts, S. V. (1995, March 16). The argument: Welfare queens vs. starving kids. *The Baltimore Sun*. p.17A.

81. Vennochi, J. (2005, July 19). Can GOP 'unplay' the race card? *The Boston Globe*. p.A15.

82. Shapiro, W. (2004, October 29). Campaign's mudslinging not as dirty as 1884, or even 1988. *USA Today*. p.5A.

83. Barabak, M. Z. (2005, September 15). Latinos souring on Gov. and his party. *Los Angeles Times*. p. B1.

84. CNN. (2004). U.S. President national exit poll. Author. Retrieved January 18, 2006, from <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2004/pages/results/states/US/P/00/epolls.0.html>

85. CNN. (2000). U.S. President national exit poll. Author. Retrieved January 18, 2006, from <http://www.cnn.com/ELECTION/2000/epolls/US/P000.html>

86. Bositis, D. (2004).

87. BAMPAC. (2004). JCPES did not conduct a poll asking this question in 2004, and BAMPAC does not make available specific question responses going back as far as 2000.

88. This is despite the Pew Research Center finding no change in African Americans who identify as Republicans from 1997-2000 (7 percent).

89. Gilgoff, D. (2005).

90. *The Advocate*. (2005, February 3).

91. Republican National Committee (2005, March 31).



Mehlman's determination to meet this goal is clear. He has been personally active in trying to gain support among African-Americans by hosting town hall meetings around the country, appearing on television with African-American talk-show host Tavis Smiley, and traveling to Atlanta's Martin Luther King Jr. Center.⁹² The RNC chairman's conviction that he must present his party as deserving of, indeed requiring, African-American votes in the 2008 election is reflected in his comments to Howard University students in March 2005.

...I'm someone who believes that no matter how well we do in elections, no matter how successful we are, no matter how many seats we have in the Congress, we can win the White House all we want, if the party of Lincoln does not have more African-Americans come back home, than we can't call ourselves a real majority.⁹³

While the party's electoral fortunes appear to reflect an upswing in support, a recent Pew Research Center poll conducted after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans (a predominantly black city) demonstrates the challenge facing the Republican Party. President Bush's approval rating among blacks stood at just 12 percent, leading one pollster to comment, "The actions in and around Katrina persuaded African-Americans that this was a president who was totally insensitive to their concerns and their needs."⁹⁴

MAKING THE CONNECTION: THE REPUBLICAN PARTY, THE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN RIGHT AND AFRICAN-AMERICANS

In discussing the way in which the right wing of the Republican Party and the evangelical Christian right have been working to increase African-American support for Republican priorities, it is important to appreciate that, historically, their roles and tactics have been somewhat different. However, both have at different times utilized an anti-LGBT message to achieve their goals. As the previous discussion of political party history demonstrates, the Republican Party per se has not been overtly courting the African-American community for much of the past 40 years. Conversely, since the late 1980s at least, the evangelical Christian right has regularly targeted its campaigns in and at the African-American community, hoping to spread a conservative social message that might appeal to at least some African-Americans opposed to sexual orientation nondiscrimination legislation.

For example, the California-based Traditional Values Coalition (TVC) produced a video in 1993 titled *Gay Rights, Special Rights: Inside the homosexual agenda*. This film, for the first time, utilized predominantly African-American commentators and was widely distributed to Hispanic and African-American churches. The film purposely presents the struggle for equality by lesbians and gay men as a threat to the civil rights of African-Americans and Hispanics. Using selectively edited excerpts from footage of the 1993 March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bi Equal Rights and Liberation, the film's producers clearly intended to be shocking in their presentation, with drag queens and men dressed in leather prominently featured.

92. Gilgoff, D. (2005).

93. Republican National Committee (2005, March 31).

94. Fromkin, D. (2005, October 13). A polling free-fall among blacks. *Washingtonpost.com*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/blog/2005/10/13/BL2005101300885.html>



Longtime activist Larry Kramer was shown paraphrasing one of Martin Luther King Jr.'s most famous lines from his 1963 address, dreaming that one day "people will not be judged by their sexual orientation but by the content of their character." The response to this comment came in the form of an accusation by a black minister that Kramer was attempting to "...undermine and belittle the civil rights movement." In a further effort to drive home the message that lesbians and gay men wanted to take rights away from African-Americans, one black female commentator noted that gay rights, "...which they already have...under the first amendment...would completely neutralize the Civil Rights Act of 1964."⁹⁵ While this claim is clearly false, the potential power of sending such a message was not lost on the TVC.

TVC recruited three Republican politicians, all with terrible records on supporting minority rights, to appear in the film and defend "black civil rights." The first, former Reagan administration Attorney General Edwin Meese, had previously labeled the NAACP a "pernicious lobby," supported keeping African-Americans off juries in certain types of prosecutions, and worked to diminish the efficacy of fair employment provisions of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. William Bennett, former education secretary in the Reagan administration, ignored charges of racial discrimination in his own department that led ultimately to a lawsuit filed by black employees, and over the course of his career he opposed affirmative action and multicultural and bilingual education programs. More recently, Bennett evoked outrage when he suggested that aborting all black babies would reduce the crime rate.⁹⁶ Finally, Sen. Trent Lott of Mississippi, who we discuss in greater detail later in this report, earned a mere 6 percent rating on civil rights issues from the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) over the first 15 years he served in Congress. In 1982, Lott opposed the extension of the Voting Rights Act; he also opposed the Civil Rights Act of 1990.⁹⁷

As exemplified by the TVC video, the evangelical Christian right has a history of using an anti-gay message targeted specifically at African-Americans. While they might formally be separate entities, there was and continues to be close collaboration with leaders of the Republican Party's right wing, which has quickly learned how it too might benefit from similar tactics. Mehlman is working through members of the RNC's African American Advisory Committee with their own constituencies and, in particular, with communities of faith. The RNC has determined that "moral values" are something it shares with the African-American community, and in particular that African-Americans are opposed to same-sex marriage and more broadly what Leonard Pitts identifies as a "homosexual agenda," and that focusing on the issue could serve as a rallying cry to increase the party's share of the African-American vote. Many African-Americans attend church on a regular basis, and their pastors hold great sway in their lives. Many belong to evangelical churches where denouncing homosexuality is a popular topic, so recruiting these community leaders to preach from their pulpits might help the Republican Party make a link between support for moral values and support for the Republican Party.

As mentioned earlier, in his speech before the National Urban League, President Bush cited his support for "traditional marriage" as a specific reason why African-Americans ought

95. Cahill, S. (1998). Language struggles in gay rights controversies: How anti-gay discourse shapes contemporary politics. Unpublished dissertation. University of Michigan. Citing: Traditional Values Coalition. (1993). "Gay Rights, Special Rights: Inside the Homosexual Agenda." Video. Anaheim, Calif.

96. Sorkin, B. (2005, October 3). Bill Bennett's abortion fantasies. *The Nation*. Retrieved February 7, 2006, from <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20051017/sorkin>

97. Galst, L. (1993). Reel hate: A new video tries to drive a wedge between blacks and gays. *One in Ten*. A monthly gay supplement to the Boston Phoenix. October. pp.10-11.



to consider voting for him.⁹⁸ Perhaps because appearing too anti-gay is not as socially acceptable as it once was, the president also came out somewhat unexpectedly in favor of civil unions during the 2004 campaign,⁹⁹ a stand he had never publicly taken before and about which the LGBT community has heard nothing since. In contrast, Vice President Dick Cheney, who has a lesbian daughter and who during the 2000 election appeared to argue that the issue of same-sex marriage should be left to the states, came out during the 2004 campaign as supporting the president's call for a federal marriage amendment.¹⁰⁰ It appears that each man was sending a message to a particular part of the party base that needed to hear a strong message, but did not necessarily want to seem intolerant.

The Republican Party has connected effectively with its evangelical Christian right wing allies, and the importance of the use of African-American churches in spreading this particular message cannot be overstated. A recent poll conducted by the Black American Political Action Committee (BAMPAC) confirmed that, after parents (27 percent) and music artists (18 percent), African-American respondents cited clergy and ministers (17 percent) as the most influential members of the African-American community.¹⁰¹ These figures are buttressed by results of a 2004 Gallup poll that confirmed clergy as respected community leaders and identified 84 percent of African-American respondents as viewing religion as "very important."¹⁰² Republicans, it might be argued, have been able to successfully appeal to a view of "...morality, which includes emphasizing certain family values, in particular the opposition to same-sex marriage."¹⁰³

THE "SPECIAL RIGHTS" ARGUMENT

LGBT people have been the target of choice for many politicians and evangelical right-wing groups, and attacks against this community are a tool co-opted by Republican politicians and their supporters as part of a strategy to divide and conquer minority groups. According to People for the American Way,

'The Big Lie' of the campaign against equality for gay and lesbian Americans is the assertion that seeking protection from discrimination is the equivalent of demanding 'special rights' or 'special privileges' unavailable to other Americans.¹⁰⁴

This "special rights" message is intentionally divisive. It is designed to overcome Americans' overwhelming support for equal rights for LGBT people¹⁰⁵ and replace

98. The White House. (2004, July 23).

99. Bumiller, E. (2004, October 25). Bush says his party is wrong to oppose gay civil unions. *The New York Times*. p.A21.

100. Excerpts from the debate between the Vice-Presidential candidates in Cleveland. (2004, October 6). *The New York Times*. p.A24.

101. BAMPAC. (2004).

102. This can be compared to 61 percent of the sample total who reported that religion was very important in their lives. Source: Newport, F. (2003). A look at Americans and religion today. *The Gallup Poll*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://speakingoffaith.publicradio.org/programs/2005/01/27_godsofbusiness/galluppoll.shtml

103. Gilgoff, D. (2005)

104. People for the American Way. (1998). Reports: Anti-gay politics and the religious right: The big lie – "special rights." Washington: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.pfaw.org/pfaw/general/default.aspx?oid=2043>.

105. In May 2005, 90 percent of Americans polled by the Gallup Organization believed that gay men and lesbians should have equal rights in terms of job opportunities. Source: The Gallup Organization. (2005). Homosexual relations. Author. Retrieved January 16, 2005, from, <http://brain.gallup.com/search/results.aspx?SearchTypeAll=job%20opportunities&SearchConType=1>. See also: Human Rights Campaign. (2002, September 30). HRC releases ground-breaking public opinion research on transgender issues: Public is broadly aware of transgender Americans, but much more education is needed, says HRC. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved February 8, 2006, from <http://www.tgcrossroads.org/news/archive.asp?aid=386> and Yang, A. (2001). *The 2000 national election study and gay and lesbian rights: Support for equality grows*. Washington, DC: National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute. Available at <http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/NES2000.pdf>



it with fear and hostility toward them.¹⁰⁶

Gay rights are portrayed as a threat to the civil rights of “legitimate minorities,” such as African-Americans and other racial and ethnic minorities. Civil rights struggles are falsely portrayed as a zero-sum game between racial minorities (presumed to be heterosexual) and gay people (presumed to be white), such that sexual orientation nondiscrimination laws are portrayed as a threat to the civil rights of African-Americans.¹⁰⁷ This “special rights” message was at the core of efforts, for example, to overturn President Clinton’s executive order banning sexual orientation discrimination in the federal workplace. Carmen Pate of the conservative Concerned Women for America lamented that the order was “not about equality under the law, but about special privileges.”¹⁰⁸

Evangelical Christian groups deliberately mischaracterize sexual orientation nondiscrimination laws as “special rights,” even though that concept is legally meaningless.¹⁰⁹ By pursuing this tactic, these groups reinforce misconceptions about civil rights and nondiscrimination laws generally.

Scott Nakagawa notes that anti-gay groups contend that gays are not eligible for “minority status and all the privileges thereof.”

This promotes another right wing myth that being a member of a racial minority group provides one with privileges.¹¹⁰ In fact, racial, gender, religions and sexual orientation nondiscrimination laws protect everyone against discrimination on the basis of their race, sex, religion, or sexual orientation, not just members of demographic minorities or women. In the process of allegedly protecting (presumably all straight) people of color against the alleged threat posed by (presumably all white) gay people, anti-gay activists reinforce misconceptions about nondiscrimination laws, affirmative action, and minority status that, in fact, hurt people of color. Sexual orientation nondiscrimination laws do not promote affirmative action or hiring quotas for gay people.¹¹¹

Civil rights struggles are falsely portrayed as a zero-sum game between racial minorities (presumed to be heterosexual) and gay people (presumed to be white), such that civil rights gains by gay people diminish those rights for African-Americans.

RECRUITING AFRICAN-AMERICAN LEADERS TO THEIR CAUSE

During a February 2005 summit at the 27,000-member Crenshaw Christian Center in Los Angeles, African-American pastors from across California were urged to join white evangelicals in the fight against same-sex marriage. At the summit, the previously discussed *Gay Rights, Special Rights* video was played and used to explore alleged

106. In December 2003, 79 percent of Americans polled by the Gallup Organization stated that they think that homosexuals should be allowed to serve in the U.S. military. Source: The Gallup Organization. (2005). Military and national defense. Author. Retrieved June 11, 2005, from, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/content/?ci=1666&pg=1>

107. Cahill, S. (2004). *Same-sex marriage in the United States: Focus on the facts*. Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, p. 70-71.

108. Concerned Women for America. (1998, June 1). Press releases. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved September 7, 2004, from <http://www.cwfa.org/articledisplay.asp?id=999&department=CWA&categoryid=family>

109. Goldberg, S. (1995). Civil rights, special rights and our rights. In Berlet, C. (ed.). *Eyes right! Challenging the right wing backlash*. Boston: South End Press. p.111.

110. Nakagawa, S. (1995). Race, religion, and the right. In Berlet, C. (ed.). *Eyes right! Challenging the right wing backlash*. Boston, MA: South End Press. p.281.

111. Ibid. pp.280-281



tensions between African-Americans and lesbians and gays, and to attack Democrats for supporting the “gay agenda.”¹¹² The narrator of the video accused lesbian and gay activists of “hijacking” the traditional civil rights movement for an unholy cause while at the same time graphically demonstrating the economic disparities between lesbians and African-Americans, declaring that gay men and lesbians have higher incomes, hold more management positions, and frequently travel overseas. The video also included a recent interview with Sen. Lott, who called same-sex marriage a “moral degradation of our great country.”¹¹³

Although this summit was the most direct effort since the 2004 election to use the same-sex marriage issue as a wedge to mobilize African-American clergy and gain their support for the Republican Party, other events with the same goal have tried to focus African-Americans on “moral values” issues. During the recent Justice Sunday II¹¹⁴ telecast that lasted almost two hours, and during which all of the “big names” in evangelical conservative Christian America spoke, one African-American minister was allotted approximately two minutes of airtime. This minister, Bishop Harry Jackson of Hope Christian Church in College Park, Md., was the man behind the recently published *Black Contract with America*. This document spoke very little to issues African-Americans have themselves identified as critical, but a great deal to the apparent threat to civilization posed by same-sex marriage and other social changes. Jackson seemed dismissive of the importance of rights, admonishing African-Americans for being more concerned with rights than righteousness: “...African-American churches are too concerned with justice.”¹¹⁵ As the *New York Times* noted, Jackson’s attitude demonstrates that,

...at the heart of the debate is whether church leaders stay focused primarily on issues like job creation, education, affirmative action, prison reform, and health care (which have historically drawn blacks closer to the Democratic Party) or whether to put more of an emphasis on issues of personal morality, such as abortion and same-sex marriage (which would draw blacks to the Republican Party).¹¹⁶

At a subsequent Justice Sunday event, Republican Senate conference chair Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania spoke in a predominantly African-American church of the need for Judge Samuel Alito’s nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court to be approved by the Senate. “Extreme liberal judges,” Santorum argued, “...[are] destroying traditional morality and creating a new moral code.”¹¹⁷ He might not have used the phrase same-sex marriage, but this kind of coded language has become increasingly common from the Republican leadership.

A further example of the effort to recruit black religious leaders is the *Mayflower Compact*

112. Traditional Values Coalition. (n.d.). *Gay rights, special rights: Inside the homosexual agenda*. Video. Anaheim, CA.

113. Ibid. It is noteworthy that this is the same Sen. Trent Lott who at the late Sen. Strom Thurmond’s 100th birthday celebrations declared that America would have been better off had Thurmond been elected President in 1948 when he ran as an avowed segregationist and fiercely opposed the civil rights movement. Following this event, Lott received support from many of his colleagues but was ultimately forced to resign his position as Senate majority leader.

114. Justice Sunday II was a nationwide telecast on August 14, 2005, portrayed by its sponsors as a response to Democratic Senators filibustering “people of faith” who had been nominated by President Bush to fill federal judicial vacancies. The stated intent was to motivate religious Americans to contact their senators to urge that they allow a vote on all of Bush’s judicial nominees.

115. Blumenthal, M. (2005, April 26). Justice Sunday Preachers. *The Nation*. Retrieved April 28, 2005, from www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20050509&s=blumenthal

116. Banerjee, N. (2005, March 6). Black churches struggle over their role in politics. *The New York Times*. s1 p.23.

117. Reston, M. (2006, January 9). Conservatives, Santorum rally for court reform. *Pittsburgh Post Gazette*. Retrieved January 25, 2006, from <http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/06009/634986.stm>



for *Black America*, which promotes similar conservative Christian “values” and whose organizers plan to be active in key states ahead of the 2006 and 2008 elections. This compact, launched in the spring of 2005, offers a nine-point agenda to improve the lives of black Americans. However, improved economic and educational opportunities and health care provision were not even in the top three. Instead, the number one focus is “strengthening the family and protecting our youth,” ostensibly through support for “traditional marriage” and “family.”¹¹⁸

In 2005, the Heritage Foundation cosponsored a gathering of African-American conservatives in Washington, which was designed to counter the dominance of the “America-hating black liberal leadership” and to focus black voters on moral issues.¹¹⁹ These events are being closely monitored by GOP strategists and have the full support of the Republican Party and its allies in the philanthropic and religious worlds.¹²⁰ They have the goal of “foster(ing) a political realignment that, if successful, would challenge the Democrats’ decades-long lock on the loyalty of black voters.”¹²¹

The Heritage Foundation cosponsored a gathering of African American conservatives in Washington, which was designed to counter dominance of the “America-hating black liberal leadership” and to focus African-American voters on moral issues.

OPPOSITION AMONG AFRICAN-AMERICAN LEADERS: IT’S NOT JUST A ONE-WAY STREET

Despite the Republican Party’s gains in support from the African-American community, liberal and progressive black leaders have been vocal in their opposition to efforts to portray the Republican Party as a friend of the African-American community, and especially of the use of black churches to spread that message. Such opposition has come from both political and religious figures. For example, Rep. Major R. Owens, a New York Democrat and member of the Congressional Black Caucus, commented, “I am frightened by what is happening...Our party is in grave danger. This Republican movement is going to expand exponentially unless we do something.”¹²²

In January 2005, at a gathering of African-American Baptists in Nashville, the Rev. Jesse Jackson warned delegates of the tactics of the GOP and urged the African-American community to define new priorities, such as health care, education, new jobs and voting rights.¹²³ Should Jesse Jackson’s opinion count, or be expected to count, among the African-American community? In the 2004 poll conducted by BAMPAC, 27 percent of respondents labeled him the most influential African-American political figure, second only

Leaders within the African-American community have been vocal in their opposition to Republican efforts to portray that party as the friend of the African-American community.

118. The Mayflower Compact Coalition. (2005). 21st century mayflower compact: A solemn promise to strengthen the health and well-being of black America. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from www.themayflowercompact.org

119. Hamburger, T., & Wallsten, P. (2005, February 1).

120. Ibid.

121. Ibid.

122. Hamburger, T., & Wallsten, P. (2005, February 1).

123. Brachear, M. A. (2005, January 28). Black Baptists forge agenda; Focus on schools, jobs, healthcare. *Chicago Tribune*. p.C1.



to General Colin Powell (38 percent),¹²⁴ while the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that 58 percent of respondents had a favorable opinion of Jackson.¹²⁵

The Rev. Al Sharpton also noted that in the 2004 election the Republican Party used the controversy over same-sex marriage to draw attention away from other serious issues, such as the war in Iraq and domestic issues,¹²⁶ even though same-sex marriage barely registered on lists of critical concerns prior to the election.¹²⁷

Drew Smith, a Baptist minister and director of the Public Influences of African American Churches project at Morehouse College in Atlanta, added that:

While African-Americans have expressed certain sentiments that reflect opposition to an expansion of the gay homosexual agenda, there is still much more concern about bread and butter issues in terms of the public agenda that they would like to see their churches pursue.¹²⁸

Smith's comments are echoed by Gilbert Caldwell, a former Methodist pastor in Denver, Colo., who cut right to the chase in declaring that:

The religious right is playing a game with African-American churches. They've played the black community; they've got folks voting against their own economic issues in favor of issues [such as] same-sex marriage and abortion. They tossed it out there, and a lot of preachers took the bait.¹²⁹

One such preacher who took the bait and ran with it was a Chicago black minister, the Rev. Gregory Daniels, who reacted to Colorado Republican Marilyn Musgrave's introduction of the discriminatory Federal Marriage Amendment by declaring, "If the KKK opposes gay marriage, I would ride with them."¹³⁰ It is neither necessary nor practical to respond to this kind of extreme rhetoric, but such language provides a harsh example of the extremism to which the Republican leadership is appealing when it goes shopping for votes in black churches with promises of an anti-gay agenda. It also shows how crucial it is that black leaders have stepped up to the plate to challenge such attitudes.

Many black leaders have ignored the invitation to join the Republican Party in using LGBT Americans as a collective punching bag. Instead, they have emphasized the linkage between civil rights for African-Americans and the pursuit of LGBT equality. They have eloquently argued that opposition to same-sex marriage should not to be a priority for the African-American community, and come out forcefully in favor of full equality for LGBT

"The religious right... [has] played the black community; they've got folks voting against their own economic issues in favor of issues [such as] same-sex marriage and abortion.... A lot of preachers took the bait."
—Gilbert Caldwell,
Denver

"If the KKK opposes gay marriage, I would ride with them."
—Rev. Gregory Daniels,
black minister in Chicago

124. BAMPAC. (2004).

125. Bositis, D. (2004).

126. Plummer, D. (2005, January 10). Sharpton knocks Bush: Gays were used to duck real issues, he says here. *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. Retrieved January 12, 2005, from http://www.ajc.com/metro/content/metro/atlanta/0105/10sharpton.html?COXnetJSessionIDbuild114=DHD02Jyr4XHDXYIUsS1qXBGNsM28rHZSauD1XDcL9S6PTIXdPDjz1530723082&UrAuth='N'NUObNWUbTTUWUXUWUZTZU\UWU_UJUZU\UcUcTYWVVZV&urem=y

127. Bositis, D. (2004).

128. Brachear, M. A. (2005, January 28).

129. Bond, L. (2005, April 14).

130. Bond, L. (2005, April 14). A house divided: When Reverend Benjamin Reynolds opened his church to gays, some called it a sin. He calls it a mission from God. *Denver Westword*.



Americans. This effort included a meeting of Asian-American and African-American ministers in California,¹³¹ and a letter to the *Atlanta Daily World* from 50 clergy and theologians in the greater Atlanta area “...calling on African-American churches to be more sympathetic to the political and spiritual struggles faced by gay men and lesbians.”¹³² Dianne Stewart, an assistant professor in the Religion and African American Studies Departments at Emory University, stated that she signed the letter because she wanted to be part of, “a message that seeks to show how a Christian agenda for justice would be one that seeks to challenge systems and structures that enforce homophobia, heterosexism, and sexism.”¹³³

While attempts by the Republican Party leadership to attract a greater share of the African-American vote are perfectly legitimate and politically savvy, it is important to remember that they are basing their approach not on an understanding of black America’s priorities, but rather by focusing on the red herring of a “threat” posed by same-sex marriage and other forms of legal equality for LGBT Americans. This report demonstrates that there are plenty of issues of greater concern to African-Americans than same-sex marriage for the Republican Party and their evangelical Christian allies to be working on.

131. Ma, K. (2004, October 11) Black, Asian clerics unite to support gay marriage. North Gate News Online. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://journalism.berkeley.edu/ngno/stories/003300_print.html

132. Lee, R. (2005, February 04). Black clergy unite to publicly support gay rights. Southern Voice Online. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.sovo.com/print.cfm?content_id=3288

133. Ibid.



Methodology

Given the long and tortured history of the Republican Party and civil rights, what would it mean for African-Americans to “come home” to the Republican Party as Ken Mehlman suggests? Does the Republican leadership in Congress support the interests of African-Americans, or do its members promote their own ideologically based goals at the expense of the very community from which they now seek political support?

To answer these questions, we first identified a subset of conservative politicians in the House and Senate, identifying the most conservative members based on the American Conservative Union’s (ACU) analysis of votes that they considered important during the 108th Congress.¹³⁴ The ACU is the country’s oldest conservative lobbying group, and focuses on issues related to its “...support of capitalism, belief in the doctrine of original intent of the framers of the Constitution, confidence in traditional moral values, and commitment to a strong national defense.”¹³⁵ To score highly on the ACU voting index, members of Congress would have to vote the “right” way on certain issues.

For example, voting against extending unemployment benefits, against extending the assault weapons ban, against increasing cigarette taxes for additional health care funding, against expanding hate crimes legislation to cover sexual orientation, gender and disability, and *for* tax cuts for the wealthiest Americans, would help a senator score well with the ACU. In the House of Representatives, members could earn the organization’s plaudits by voting to limit medical malpractice awards, to open the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve to oil exploration, voting against additional funding for renewable energy sources, against strengthening the SEC’s ability to investigate corporate wrongdoing, and in favor of loosening gun sales restrictions in Washington, DC We used the ACU voting index because it is the archetypal measure of conservative behavior in the US Congress, and included all senators and representatives who received a score of 90 or higher as this equates to a grade of “A” on a traditional academic scale.

We then utilized existing congressional voting indices created by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) as proxy measures of congressional responsiveness

Does the Republican leadership in Congress support the interests of African-Americans, or does it promote its own goals at the expense of the very community from which they now seek political support?

134. We did not simply examine directly the NAACP or LCCR indices for exceptionally low scorers because it is views on African-American concerns that we seek to discuss. Had we selected simply those legislators who we knew had scored zero on those indices, then we would have been introducing selection bias into the study, a statistical problem we wanted to avoid.

135. American Conservative Union (2005). About us. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 23, 2006, from <http://www.conservative.org/about/default.asp>



to the key issues identified by African-American poll respondents. In the case of the NAACP, votes included in its calculation covered Head Start expenditures, minority health care funding, vocational training, protecting overtime pay, overhauling Medicare and federal funds for child care to help working families. The LCCR index included votes on fully funding elementary and secondary education programs, hate crimes legislation, increasing Pell grants to especially help poorer college students, workplace investment, an expansion of the child tax credit to poor workers, and funding targeted at aiding minority rural farmers.

To provide greater ideological balance to our analysis we also reviewed two additional conservative measures and two from progressive organizations. On the conservative side we used scores calculated by the National Taxpayers Union (NTU) and the Family Research Council (FRC). The first of these has a decidedly fiscal focus, and was founded in 1969 "...to educate taxpayers, the media, and elected officials on a non-partisan basis on the merits of limited government and low taxes."¹³⁶ FRC's focus is somewhat different, though it still adopts a decidedly conservative tack. Its Web site describes the organization as promoting "...marriage and family as the foundation of civilization, the seedbed of virtue, and the wellspring of society. FRC...upholds the institutions of marriage and the family."¹³⁷

We also included the scores calculated by Americans for Democratic Action (ADA) and the Human Rights Campaign (HRC). The ADA is the nation's oldest independent liberal lobbying organization; its mission states that: "...in the spirit of the New Deal...we lobby through coalition partnerships, through direct advocacy, and through the media... to push for democratic and progressive values and ideals in American policy."¹³⁸ HRC "...strives to end discrimination against GLBT citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all." It does this primarily by lobbying at the state and local level for passage of LGBT-friendly and inclusive legislation.

Having laid out the approach we took to examining the relationship between the Republican Party leadership and the African-American community, we turn now to a more focused discussion of what any political party ought to be concerned about if they want to support the priorities of black America. This analysis is based on two public opinion polls of African-Americans. After presenting these polling data, we present economic and social statistics from government and other sources that indicate why these policy issues are of such concern to African-Americans.

136. National Taxpayer's Union. (2005) Our mission. Washington: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.ntu.org/main/misc.php?MiscID=3>

137. Family Research Council. (2005). About FRC. Washington: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?c=ABOUT_FRC

138. Americans for Democratic Action. (n.d.). About ADA. Retrieved January 27, 2005, from <http://www.adaction.org/about.htm>



African-American priorities: What the polls show

In order to determine whether Republicans and Christian conservatives are genuinely representing African-American interests in the public policy arena, we analyzed poll data from two organizations that sought to quantify African-American public opinion prior to the 2004 general election. Black America’s Political Action Committee (BAMPAC)¹³⁹ is an organization for conservative black Americans and stands opposed to abortion and stem cell research, and in support of school vouchers, Social Security reform and small business tax cuts.¹⁴⁰ BAMPAC’s president, Alvin Williams, worked on George H.W. Bush’s 1988 campaign and subsequently served on his transition team. In contrast, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies (JCPES)¹⁴¹ is a progressive think tank that provides research, policy analysis, and information to encourage public policy that will help black Americans.¹⁴² Both organizations conducted polls within six months of the 2004 election. The results, summarized in Table 1,¹⁴³ show that regardless of the ideological foundations of the organization commissioning the polls, African-American respondents concerns remained the same.

In the BAMPAC poll, respondents cited the economy and jobs (34 percent), health care and prescription drugs (19 percent combined), education (11 percent) and Social Security (7 percent) as important issues.¹⁴⁴ In the JCPES poll, respondents identified similar issue areas as likely to impact their vote: the economy and jobs (31 percent), health care and prescription drugs (20 percent combined) and education (7 percent).¹⁴⁵ Clearly, very few differences in priorities were identified

Table 1: Issues identified as most important when choosing a candidate (BAMPAC) or as the most important facing the country (JCPES)

Issue	BAMPAC	JCPES
Economy and Jobs*	34	31
Health care/ Prescription drugs	19	20
Education	11	7
Social Security	7	1

* This issue was called “Employment/Economy (jobs, poverty, homelessness, hunger)” in the JCPES poll.

139. BAMPAC. (2004).

140. BAMPAC. (n.d.). About BAMPAC. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.bampac.org/default.asp>

141. Bositis, D. (2004).

142. Joint Center for Political & Economic Studies. (n.d.). About us. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.jointcenter.org/aboutus/index.php>

143. Other issues raised included crime, violence, drugs, gun control, abortion and race relations, but none garnered more than 2 percent of the vote.

144. BAMPAC. (2004).

145. Bositis, D. (2004).



between respondents to the conservative versus progressive organizations' questions. Poll findings are obviously useful and reflective of respondent's priorities at the time of questioning, based on their understanding of the question at that particular time. However, to support our case that the issues prioritized in these polls are important African-American concerns upon which Republicans should focus, we examined demographic data related to each issue to confirm why it is important to the African-American community.

RACIAL DISPARITIES: THE CONTINUED CHASM BETWEEN WEALTH AND POVERTY IN AMERICA

When it comes to economic security, job opportunity and related measures, the average African-American is considerably worse off than his or her white American counterpart. Among the critical relevant findings confirmed by extensive quantitative analysis by the National Urban League and Global Insight, Inc., the following support the priorities reflected in the BAMPAC and JCPES polls.¹⁴⁶

1. ECONOMIC STATUS

African-American men and women earn only 70 cents and 83 cents respectively for each dollar earned by their white American counterparts.¹⁴⁷ Almost three times as many African-Americans as white Americans live below the poverty line (24.7 percent versus 8.6 percent,¹⁴⁸ and three times as many survive on less than half the official poverty level (10.6 percent versus 3.2 percent of white Americans).¹⁴⁹ Since George W. Bush took office in 2001, the number of African-Americans living in poverty has risen by more than 850,000, a fact with inter-generational consequences.¹⁵⁰ There is a startling relationship between poverty and a child's cognitive development, academic performance and behavioral difficulties,¹⁵¹ so this statistic cannot be viewed merely in isolation. The fact that the poverty rate among African-Americans under the age of 18 is 33.6 percent compared to 10.5 percent for white youth amply demonstrates the challenges involved in advancing long-term equality.¹⁵²

Additionally, one in seven African-Americans between the ages of 16 and 19 is neither in school nor employed,¹⁵³ and overall unemployment among African-Americans is more than double the national rate (9.3 percent versus 4.3 percent as of December 2005).¹⁵⁴

146. The National Urban League and Global Insight, Inc. (2005). National Urban League 2005 Equality Index. In L.A. Daniels (Ed.) *The state of Black America 2005*. Washington, DC: Library of Congress.

147. Ibid. p 18.

148. U.S. Census Bureau. (2005, August 30). Income stable, poverty rate increases, percentage of Americans without health insurance unchanged. Washington: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/income_wealth/005647.html

149. The National Urban League & Global Insight, Inc. (2005). p.19

150. U.S. Census Bureau. (2005, August 31). Historical poverty tables. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 31, 2006, from <http://www.census.gov/hhes/poverty/histpov/hstpov24.html>

151. Anyon, J. (2005, April 1). 'What "counts" as educational policy? Notes toward a new paradigm.' *Harvard Educational Review*, 75(1).

152. U.S. Census Bureau. (2005, June 24). Table POV01: Age and sex of all people, family members and unrelated individuals iterated by income-to-poverty ratio and race: 2004 below 100% of poverty - black alone or in combination (A.O.I.C.). Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://pubdb3.census.gov/macro/032005/pov/new01_100_05.htm

153. The National Urban League and Global Insight, Inc. (2005). p.160.

154. U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2006, January 6). *The employment situation: December 2005*. Washington: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/empst.pdf>



Fewer than half of all African-Americans own their home (48.1 percent) compared to more than three quarters of white Americans (75.4 percent),¹⁵⁵ and median net worth is more than 10 times greater for white families than their black counterparts.¹⁵⁶

The ability to plan for long-term economic security is also critical. The above data indicate that the proportion of African-Americans able to plan any sort of private provision for retirement income is extremely low compared to white Americans. Far fewer African-Americans than white Americans have either a 401K savings plan (19.6 percent vs. 32.9 percent) or an IRA (6.5 percent vs. 27.5 percent).¹⁵⁷ Long-term planning also ensures that parents can leave assets to their children, who in turn can use their inheritance as well as their labors to improve their own family's circumstances. Planning for such progress, however, is hard given that the recent economic downturn hit many African-American families extremely hard. One in four African-American families has no liquid assets, and despite all the talk of improving the African-American experience, what is really missing from public dialogue, according to the National Urban League, "...is a serious conversation about the economic status of American's families and the role of government in enabling families to build a wealth pillar for their mobility, stability and well-being."¹⁵⁸

Since George W. Bush took office in 2001, the number of African-Americans living in poverty has risen by more than 850,000.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistic, in 2004 nearly 230,000 African-Americans earned the minimum wage or less.¹⁵⁹ The current level of yearly income for a full-time employed person earning minimum wage totals only \$10,712, far short of the income needed to move an individual out of poverty,¹⁶⁰ and less than half of the \$28,500 increase in salary awarded to members of Congress since the minimum wage last increased.¹⁶¹ Democratic Sen. Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts noted, "I believe that anyone who works 40 hours a week, 52 weeks a year should not live in poverty in the richest country in the world."¹⁶²

A minimum wage is often disparaged by business owners and their allies in Congress as harmful to the lowest paid American workers that it is supposed to help. Critics claim that minimum wage laws serve as a disincentive to businesses to hire new workers, and cause prices to increase to compensate for increased costs; these costs are then allegedly disproportionately borne by the lowest paid workers that the increased minimum wage was intended to help. However, the data indicate otherwise.¹⁶³ After the last increase in 1997, unemployment declined and wages increased for everyone. Additionally, businesses enjoyed tax breaks totaling \$16 billion over a decade as "compensation" for the increased salary costs they had to absorb, significantly greater than the cost to businesses of the increased minimum wage over the same time frame.¹⁶⁴

155. The National Urban League and Global Insight, Inc. (2005). p.161.

156. Ibid.

157. Ibid. p. 161.

158. Shapiro, T. M. (2005). 'The Racial Wealth Gap' in The National Urban League and Global Insight, Inc. (2005). *The State of Black America 2005: Prescriptions for Change.* New York: National Urban League.

159. U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2005, April 5). Characteristics of minimum wage workers: 2004. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.bls.gov/cps/minwage2004tbls.htm#1>

160. Anyon, J. (2005, April 1).

161. Samuel, T. (2005, March 13). Victims of minimum wage. *CBS News*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2005/03/11/opinion/main679698.shtml>

162. AFL-CIO. (2005, March 8). Republicans offer sham minimum wage bill. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved April 27, 2006, from <http://www.aflcio.org/yourjobeconomy/minimumwage/ns03082005.cfm?RenderForPrint=1>

163. Chasanov, A. (2004, July 14). Minimum wage can stand some maximizing. *Economic Policy Institute*. Retrieved April 28, 2005, from www.epinet.org/content.cfm/webfeatures_viewpoints_minimum_wage_maximizing

164. Ibid.



In 2004, legislation to raise the minimum wage was introduced by Kennedy, but defeated by Republicans. After defeating that bill, Republicans, led by Santorum of Pennsylvania, attempted to save face by offering what on the surface looked like an immediate \$1.10 increase in the minimum wage. Santorum's effort appeared reflective of a recent statement declaring that, "The ladder of success must reach down to the most vulnerable in our society. Many of our neighbors continue to be overwhelmed by social breakdown, economic decline and educational failure. This crisis demands a national response."¹⁶⁵ However, the senator has opposed increasing the minimum wage 17 times in the past decade, and this particular piece of legislation was a measure that, while increasing the wage, simultaneously reduced by 10 million the number of people eligible to actually receive a guaranteed minimum wage. The bill also gutted rules protecting workers from being forced to work excessively long hours without overtime pay.¹⁶⁶

According to the AFL-CIO, Santorum, who presents himself as a friend of the African-American community based in part on his opposition to same-sex marriage, offered "...a sham measure supported by big business that fails to address growing economic pressures facing working families. The Santorum amendment is an insult to workers who are struggling to balance household expenses and rising health care costs."¹⁶⁷ This is but one example, albeit graphic, of the lack of connection between conservative politicians and the very neediest Americans, many of whom are African-American. All but four Republicans voted against Kennedy's minimum wage increase effort, while almost all of them voted in favor of Santorum's bill.¹⁶⁸

2. EDUCATION

Educational opportunity and attainment are inextricably linked with the economic prospects just discussed, so it is not surprising to see a large number of African-American survey respondents identify education as an important issue. One over-arching problem facing many students in today's American education system, according to an article in *The Harvard Educational Review*, is that "...education policy has not addressed the neighborhood poverty that surrounds and invades urban schools with low expectations and cynicism."¹⁶⁹ The result is a system seemingly bound to reinforce existing inequalities from one generation to the next. Poor students will live in a neighborhood with fewer support services and will attend schools that are less well equipped and staffed. As a result, many will not achieve the kinds of qualifications needed to escape the situation/neighborhood and so the cycle will continue.¹⁷⁰

Especially hard hit are the youngest Americans who might be helped most by adequate support. Due to insufficient funding, Head Start serves only 50 percent of eligible

"Education policy has not addressed the neighborhood poverty that surrounds and invades urban schools with low expectations and cynicism."
—Jean Anyon, CUNY

165. Santorum, R. (2005, March 4). Fighting poverty—Strengthening families. Retrieved July 26, 2005 http://santorum.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=PressOffice.View&ContentRecord_id=1137&Region_id=0&Issue_id=13&CFID=2553183&FTOKEN=18887263

166. AFL-CIO. (2005, March 8).

167. Ibid.

168. Ibid.

169. Anyon, J. (2005).

170. Garibaldi, A.M. (1997). Four decades of progress and decline: An Assessment of African American educational attainment. *The Journal of Negro Education*. Spring. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3626/is_199704/ai_n8779918/print



children and Early Head Start a mere 5 percent of those the government itself deems eligible.¹⁷¹ Republicans have not sought to increase this level of funding. Even more troublesome is the fact that not one of President Bush's first four budgets fully funded his much trumpeted No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, which makes significant demands on all 50 states, but provides insufficient money to actually carry out all the federal government's mandates. Indeed, the Utah Legislature passed a bill ordering "...state officials to ignore provisions of the federal law that conflict with Utah's educational goals or that require state financing,"¹⁷² and the National Education Association (NEA) filed a lawsuit against the federal government claiming that "Congress has paid \$27 billion less than the law calls for."¹⁷³

The consequences of this reality are all too clear in the educational attainment of African-American students. While there has been a good deal of improvement in high-school graduation rates among African-Americans, performance on standardized college admissions tests shows that black students do significantly worse than any other group, scoring on average 214 points lower than white students and 227 less than Asian Americans on the SAT in a study of college-bound students in 2005.¹⁷⁴

3. HEALTH CARE AND PRESCRIPTION DRUG COVERAGE

Given the importance of staying healthy to optimize learning and earning, it is no surprise that African-American survey respondents cited health care as critical in their decision about which political candidates to support. People without access to healthcare, or with limited access, are more likely to become ill, and as a result are more likely to miss work or school and suffer a loss of income. Furthermore, people employed in lower paying jobs are also likely to have less comprehensive or generous health care coverage provided by their employer, less generous sick time provision, and are less likely to have available disposable income to privately provide appropriate insurance. The consequences of this vicious cycle for the African-American community are vividly demonstrated in the available data.

In 2002 one in five African-Americans had no health insurance at all versus one in seven white Americans. Both numbers are startling in the richest country in the world, where race should not be a predictor of access to health insurance.

In 2002, one in five African-Americans had no health insurance at all versus one in seven white Americans.¹⁷⁵ Both numbers are startling in the richest country in the world, where race should not be a predictor of access to health insurance. African-American women are three times more likely to die during child birth than white American women.¹⁷⁶ Ultimate life expectancy is lower for African-Americans than white Americans at all stages of life, and diabetes, homicide and HIV-related deaths are respectively two, five and 10 times more likely among African-Americans than white Americans.¹⁷⁷ HIV provides a stark

171. Every Child Matters Education Fund. (2003, December). *How federal budget priorities and tax breaks are harming America's children*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.everychildmatters.org/site/DocServer/Federal_Tax_Cut_Report_December.pdf?docID=705

172. Dillon, S. (2005) Utah vote rejects parts of education law. *The New York Times*. April 20, 2005. p.14.

173. Toppo, G. (2005, April 20). NEA, school districts sue over "No Child" Law. *USA Today*. Retrieved December 14, 2005, from http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2005-04-20-nochild-suit_x.htm

174. College Board. (2005). *2005 College-bound seniors: Total group profile report*. New York: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/about/news_info/cbsenior/yr2005/2005-college-bound-seniors.pdf

175. The National Urban League and Global Insight, Inc., (2005). p.165.

176. *Ibid.* p.166.

177. *Ibid.* p.162-163.



example of the impact of a disease on a particular community. In 2003, among African-American males 13 years of age and older, there were 109.2 cases of AIDS per 100,000 of the population versus 13.6 cases per 100,000 for white American males in the same age range. Among African-American women, the multiple is a startling 24 times that of white American women; 49 in 100,000 African-American women are infected with the AIDS virus, while the infection rate among white American women is 2.2 per 100,000.¹⁷⁸

The reasons for such high infection rates are many and complex. Some black thinkers have criticized black religious leaders for not addressing this issue with their congregations.¹⁷⁹ The Rev. Al Sharpton in particular has recently spoken out forcefully about the willful ignorance of many black evangelical Americans on the issue of HIV and AIDS, all too many of whom are preaching many Sundays on the sin of homosexuality, contributing to the guilt, shame and low self esteem that often leads to risky sexual behavior.¹⁸⁰ "...there's far too much homophobia in the African-American community,"¹⁸¹ Sharpton said.

4. OTHER ISSUES

Not all the issues cited by African-Americans as important in the BAMPAC and JCPES polling had related votes in the 108th Congress. Some issues of concern were barely addressed by either the Senate or House, including the so-called "3rd rail of American politics," and a program of crucial importance to the long-term financial security of many in the African-American community, namely Social Security. Politicians largely steered clear of this issue prior to the 2004 election, but in its aftermath the White House and its allies promoted their Social Security reform proposals to the African-American community. Specifically, President Bush commented that "African-American males die sooner than other males do, which means the system is inherently unfair to a certain group of people. And that needs to be fixed."¹⁸² In other words, African-Americans receive less on average of their earned lifetime benefits. Therefore, the administration has argued that the African-American community ought to support Social Security privatization so they can build more wealth more quickly and may bequeath a portion of their newly created private accounts to their heirs.¹⁸³

"Recognizing the shorter life expectancy of people of color is commendable, but placing them further at risk is no solution."
—NAACP Chairman
Julian Bond

However, there are three major problems with this idea. First, the proportion of the private accounts eligible for bequeathing is very small because much of the proceeds must be used to purchase an annuity.¹⁸⁴ Second, because their incomes are lower during their working years, and they are less likely to have employer-provided pensions, African-Americans are disproportionately reliant on Social Security for their retirement

178. Ibid. p.104.

179. Cohen, C. (1999). *The boundaries of blackness: AIDS and the breakdown of black politics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

180. Levister, C. (2005, August 25). Sharpton challenges black homophobia. *The Black Voice News online*. Retrieved January 13, 2006, from <http://www.blackvoicenews.com/modules.php?file=article&name=News&op=modload&sid=3526>

181. Reid, A. A. (2006, January 13). Sharpton rails Bush in pre-MLK speech. *The Dartmouth*. Retrieved January 13, 2006, from <http://www.thedartmouth.com/article.php?aid=2006011301010>

182. Fagan, A. (2005, April 12). NAACP fights Bush Social Security plan. *Washington Times*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://washingtontimes.com/national/20050411-103458-1817r.htm>

183. Wallsten, P. & Tom Hamburger. (2005, January 28). Blacks courted on Social Security; Private accounts would be more useful because of a life expectancy gap, Republicans say. *Los Angeles Times*. p.A1.

184. Anrig, G. Jr. (2005, February 6). What the President didn't say about Social Security. *Newark Star-Ledger*. Retrieved January 13, 2005, from <http://www.socsec.org/commentary.asp?opedid=863>



income. Therefore, they face disproportionately larger risks if privatization proceeds.¹⁸⁵ Third, putting forward a case for privatization that consists of little more than “you are going to die earlier than white people, so why not support this plan so you have something to leave to your kids” is simply offensive. It avoids entirely the fact that extending the lifespan of African-Americans would be a much more laudable goal for any administration. As Julian Bond, chairman of the NAACP, noted in response to this particular example of “reaching out” to African-Americans, “Recognizing the shorter life expectancy of people of color is commendable, but placing them further at risk is no solution.”¹⁸⁶

For each of the issues discussed here, for which votes were included in both the LCCR and NAACP indices, there are, of course, a large number of additional potential votes that could have been included in this analysis. However, we have utilized the pre-packaged indices of these two respected civil rights organizations whose broad progressive agendas are appropriately reflective of the range of issues raised by JCPES and BAMPAC poll respondents.

Given the efforts of Republicans to use their opposition to same-sex marriage as a recruiting tool with African-American voters, it is not unreasonable to assume that “moral values” issues would have been cited in these polls, but this was not the case. In the JCPES poll, the percentage of respondents claiming that “morals/moral crisis” was the single most important issue facing the country was less than 1 percent.¹⁸⁷ BAMPAC’s poll did not offer any similar alternative option. However, both polls did ask specific follow-up questions about same-sex marriage and/or civil unions.

OPINION POLL DATA ON AFRICAN-AMERICAN BELIEFS ABOUT SAME-SEX MARRIAGE AND “MORAL VALUES”

According to the JCPES poll, 47 percent of African-American respondents believed same-sex couples should be allowed to marry or form civil unions (23 percent and 24 percent respectively).¹⁸⁸ Likewise, 24 percent of BAMPAC poll respondents supported legal same-sex marriage, though this poll did not ask about civil unions.¹⁸⁹ Like Americans as a whole, African-Americans are split on the issue of same-sex marriage and partner recognition, with blacks slightly more conservative than American voters in general on same-sex marriage: In 2004, 25 percent of all voters supported marriage equality, and 35 percent supported civil unions. Such statistics do not support the claim that the Republican party’s social agenda is the same as that of the African American community. Perhaps Republicans are hoping

Both surveys show that black Americans do not believe that “moral values” issues are most important. What were identified as important were issues related to personal economic security and health.

185. U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2005, April 21). Table 2: Median usual weekly earnings of full-time wage and salary workers by age, race, Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, and sex, first quarter 2005 averages, not seasonally adjusted. Washington: Author. Retrieved April 27, 2006, from <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/wkyeng.t02.htm>

186. Associated Press (2005, April 11). Black officials see Social Security race card. *New York Times*. p.A19.

187. Ibid.

188. Ibid.

189. BAMPAC. (2004).



to take advantage of a phenomenon identified by Thomas Frank in his book *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, in which he posits that middle-class Kansans are so focused on moral issues like abortion and school prayer that they vote for Republicans even though the Republican tax-cutting policies are against their self-interest.¹⁹⁰

Both surveys show that black Americans do not believe that “moral values” issues are the most important issues facing the country. Indeed, what were identified as important were largely day-to-day issues related to personal economic security and health. These findings are not only consistent with other demographic data concerning African Americans, but are also reflective of what most Americans in general consider to be real moral values issues.

Shortly after the 2004 election, many commentators suggested that concern over moral values and same-sex marriage had cost John Kerry the election.^{191,192} However, though analysis of what might constitute moral values is not available broken down by race, one Zogby poll showed that the moral issues that most affected voting was the “Iraq war” (42 percent) followed by “abortion” (13 percent) and “gay marriage” (9 percent). When asked about the most significant moral issues facing the nation, responses were even more varied, with 33 percent identifying “greed and materialism,” 31 percent citing “poverty and economic justice,” 16 percent “abortion” and 12 percent “gay marriage.” According to Zogby, “. . . though it’s clear that a portion of the electorate voted solely on issues like abortion and gay marriage. . . the vast majority of voters, especially Catholic voters, are influenced by a wide range of issues.”¹⁹³ Public opinion poll data refute the notion that there is a mass of moral values voters solely defined by their opposition to full equality for LGBT Americans.

190. Frank, T. (2004). *What's the matter with Kansas?* San Francisco: Henry Holt and Company.

191. Bennett, B. (2004, November 3). The great relearning. *National Review Online*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/bennett200411031109.asp>

192. Gallagher, M. (2004). The rise of the values voters. *National Review Online*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.nationalreview.com/comment/gallagher200411230852.asp>

193. Zogby. (2004). *American voters say urgent moral issues are peace, poverty and greed* Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved December 10, 2005, from <http://www.zogby.com/soundbites/ReadClips.dbm?ID=10389>



Who are the conservative legislators and how well do they score on issues of concern to African-Americans?

In order to determine whether Republican members of congress really do support the policy concerns of black Americans, we examined the previously discussed NAACP and LCCR voting index scores of our selected group of conservative representatives and senators. Ideological balance is ensured by including in this analysis the conservative and progressive organizations discussed earlier, namely the ADA, HRC, FRC and NTU.

Using the ACU voting index to identify the most conservative members of Congress produces a total of 34 senators (see Appendix 1) and 125 representatives (see Appendix 2) with scores of at least 90 percent.¹⁹⁴ All representatives and all but one senator were Republicans, with the lone exception being (now former) Sen. Zell Miller of Georgia. Miller may be a Democrat, but he voted regularly with the Republican caucus and in 2004 endorsed President Bush for re-election in a passionate keynote speech at the Republican Party's convention in New York.¹⁹⁵

More crucially for the purposes of this analysis, a majority of all Republicans in both the House and the Senate fell within this narrow range of scores on the ACU index, scoring between 90 and 100 percent—the most conservative rating possible. And the leadership of the Republican Party in both chambers reflects this reality. Moderate Republicans have been banished to virtual outsider status by a leadership whose average score across both chambers is 96 percent on the ACU index, 90.8 percent on the FRC index, 19.9 percent on the NAACP index, and 5.2 percent on the LCCR index.

Only two of 125 conservative Republican representatives and one of 34 conservative senators received a rating of 20 percent or greater on LCCR's index. On the NAACP measures, scores were barely better in the Senate and only marginally better in the House, where only one representative scored 50 percent. In the Senate, one senator scored 27 percent, one scored 18 percent, and three scored 15 percent, and their colleagues' scores went down from there. Among the representatives who scored poorly on the NAACP and LCCR indices were Tom DeLay of Texas, former Republican majority leader in the House (23 percent on the NAACP measure and 11 percent on the LCCR index); Marilyn Musgrave of Colorado, who sponsored the Federal Marriage Amendment in 2004 (30 percent and 0 percent, respectively); Arizona Republican John Shadegg who ran for DeLay's old job (23 percent and 5 percent, respectively); and House Majority Whip, Missouri Republican Roy Blunt, who scored 30 percent from the NAACP and 5 percent from the LCCR.

194. We selected our pool of senators and representatives using a threshold ACU score of 90 to reflect what would be a grade of "A" on a traditional academic scale.

195. Miller, Z. (2004, September 1). Remarks by Sen. Miller to the Republican National Convention. New York. Retrieved January 27, 2006, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A54300-2004Sep1.html>



Figure 1 demonstrates the opposition to African-American interests among noted conservative representatives. Across the three conservative measures, the 125 representatives scored an average of 86.2 percent, with most scoring in excess of 90 percent from both the ACU and FRC. Conversely, these 125 had an average on the NAACP voting index of less than 30 percent, only 3.5 percent from ADA and an average of 1 percent from HRC, on whose index only eight representatives scored anything at all.

Almost half of the 125 representatives (62) received a rating of 100 from the Family Research Council, a conservative religious organization whose voting index focused on issues including the Federal Marriage Amendment, abortions on military bases and the prohibition of HIV/AIDS funding for programs that do not explicitly oppose prostitution. Not one of these issues was deemed an important priority by African-American poll respondents.

In the U.S. Senate (see Figure 2), the picture was even more striking. Only five conservative senators scored even 15 percent on the NAACP voting index, while again almost half (16) scored 100 percent from the Family Research Council. Among them were Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist of Tennessee, and Sen. Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, both high-profile leaders in the Republican caucus and vocal proponents of the idea that the Republican Party is the “natural home” for African-American voters.

While examining these individual’s records in one Congress is not a comprehensive analysis of their long-term support or opposition to specific issues, it does provide an interesting picture of their policy preferences and priorities. Later in this report we look at the specific records of high profile leaders in the current movement, but for now it is noteworthy that among the most conservative leaders currently in Congress, there is a history of using wedge issues in an attempt to increase support from African-Americans while simultaneously scoring badly on issues of concern to African-Americans.

To examine whether elected officials are more responsive to black policy priorities when they come from states where there are large African-American populations, we considered how senators and representatives in the six states with the highest proportion of African-American residents were scored

Figure 1: Average scores for selected conservative representatives

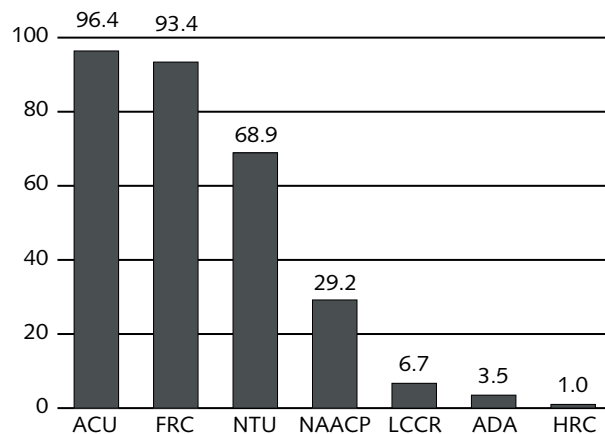
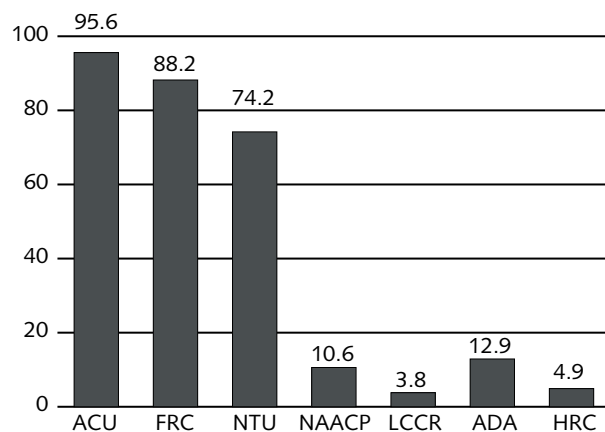


Figure 2: Average scores for selected conservative senators



by a range of political groups. These six—Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi and South Carolina¹⁹⁶— have an African-American rate of population that is more than twice the rate of the nation as a whole.¹⁹⁷ Figure 3 demonstrates that Republicans from these states consistently score high on conservative measures, low on indices addressing African-American concerns, and even lower on HRC’s measure of support for LGBT equality.

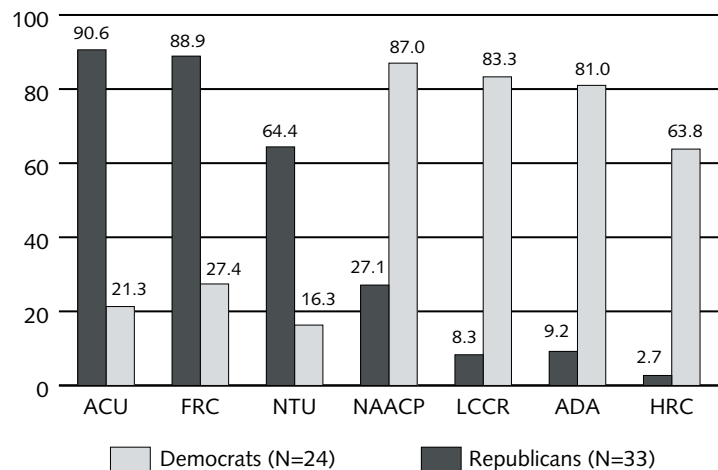
Conversely, while some Democrats manage to score moderately well with conservative groups, they also manage to score much higher on issues of significance to African-Americans, the poor and the LGBT community. In summary, there are three key points to be made here:

- Remarkably few conservative Republican legislators in states with significant African-American populations score even moderately well on measures of African-American interests.
- In contrast, Democrats from these six states score better on conservative measures than their Republican colleagues do on progressive measures. Democrats simultaneously score very well on issues prioritized by African-American organizations.
- These same Democrats additionally score far better on HRC’s measure of support for LGBT equality than do the Republicans. Indeed, contrary to Republican Party leader’s protestations, in Congress at least, support for African-American interests appears to go hand-in-hand with support for LGBT equality.

A note about trends of support for civil rights and civil liberties is worthwhile at this point. LCCR notes in its commentary about its voting index that “Just over 20 years ago (in the 97th Congress), 220 representatives and 52 senators voted in support of civil rights issues at least 80 percent of the time. Today, LCCR can count on only 183 House members and 47 senators to support its priorities on 80 percent or more of the votes in the *LCCR Voting Record*, while 182 representatives and 47 senators support LCCR priorities less than 20 percent of the time...only a few Republicans now vote with LCCR on these issues.”¹⁹⁸

We conducted statistical analysis of the members’ voting index scores as calculated by the NAACP, ACU, FRC, HRC, ADA, NTU and LCCR, to demonstrate the degree to

Figure 3: Average scores for members of Congress from AL, GA, LA, MD, MS, and SC



196. The percentages of African-Americans in these states respectively are: 26.0 percent, 28.7 percent, 32.5 percent, 27.9 percent, 36.3 percent, and 29.5 percent. Washington, DC, has an African-American population of 60 percent, but we only included states in this analysis. Source: McKinnon (2001, August). *The black population: 2000*. Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved January 31, 2006, from <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-5.pdf>

197. As of July 1, 2003 African Americans made up 13.3 percent of the total U.S. population. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (2005, February). African-American history month: February 2005. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/003721.html

198. Leadership Council on Civil Rights. (2005).



which a Member's votes on one set of issues are related to those they cast on another issue. This statistical analysis produces what are known as correlation coefficients, scores ranging between 1 and -1 that represent the strength of a relationship between two organizational voting indices. A coefficient of positive 1 would mean that the scores are perfectly positively correlated; that is that one can predict with certainty that as member's scores on index A increase, so too would their scores on index B. Conversely, a coefficient of -1 would mean that as the scores on index A increased, the same member's scores on index B would decrease.

Table 2 shows statistically significant negative correlation coefficients for the votes of members of Congress on both the NAACP and LCCR indices when compared with the ACU, FRC and NTU voting indices; as member's scores increase on the two progressive groups' measures, they decline on those of the three conservative groups. When the LCCR and NAACP indices are correlated with the progressive ADA and HRC indices, however, the correlations are positive and very close to one. In other words, as members of Congress became more likely to receive a high rating from NAACP or LCCR, they also became more likely to receive high ratings from the ADA and HRC.²⁰⁰ So, despite the assertions of anti-gay conservative representatives that that they have the best interests of African-Americans at heart, it is actually members of Congress who support groups that advocate for full equality for LGBT people, like HRC, who actually vote in line with African-American priorities as represented by the LCCR and NAACP indices.

Looking at specific voting records is one way to examine the extent to which a legislator represents and advances the interests of particular groups. It is also worth looking at the backgrounds and broad philosophies of some of these conservative leaders, as well as the African-American ministers and leaders they have recruited to promote their message. Family values advocates have repeatedly proclaimed that because of some similarities on some social issues, African-Americans ought to vote Republican and focus on "moral values" issues rather than on the social and economic issues prioritized by African Americans in polls.

Table 2: Correlation coefficients* of NAACP and LCCR voting indices with those of conservative and progressive organizations¹⁹⁹

Organizations	NAACP Correlation Coefficient**	LCCR Correlation Coefficient**
Conservative:		
ACU	-.955	-.979
NTU	-.942	-.948
FRC	-.851	-.872
Progressive:		
ADA	.925	-.971
HRC	.867	-.841

* 2-tailed Pearson correlations were used to arrive at correlation coefficient.

** All correlations were significant at the 0.01 level.

199. An explanation of correlation coefficients can be found in the body of the text accompanying this table.

200. These correlation coefficients were close to 1.0, which indicates that as the value of one variable increases the value of the other variable increases at the same rate.



Republican congressional leaders: Historical opposition to African-American interests

In the coming section, we discuss the contributions of two current high profile Republicans. The number three man in the Senate, Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania, has been heavily involved in outreach to the African American community, in his home state and beyond. In the House of Representatives, former Majority Leader Tom DeLay of Texas has been central to Republican Party attempts to reinforce its credentials with the evangelical Christian wing of his party. As key figures in a party presenting itself as pro-African-American, one might reasonably expect that they would have records of supporting and advancing legislation related to African-Americans' priorities, but evidence suggests otherwise. In addition, we discuss the record of former Senate Majority Leader Sen. Trent Lott of Mississippi, who was forced from office after making what many considered to be racially insensitive remarks concerning the one-time segregationist, Strom Thurmond.

SEN. RICK SANTORUM

Santorum is the third-ranking Republican senator, and many believe he will run for president in 2008. He has played a prominent role in reaching out to the African-American community, not only to build bridges for his own political campaigns, but also to extend his party's reach.

For example, Santorum is working with Sen. Arlen Specter to secure millions of dollars of funding for an organization called "Black Clergy of Philadelphia and Vicinity," a faith-based organization that conducts workforce development training. During his 2000 campaign, Santorum received endorsements from that organization, as well as Philadelphia's largest African-American newspaper, *The Tribune*.²⁰¹ Such rewards were reaped despite Santorum's questionable record of support for specific policies advancing African-American interests. During the 108th Congress, the senator scored six out of 100 on the NAACP's voting index and zero on LCCR's index. Conversely, he scored a perfect 100 from both the Family Research Council and American Conservative Union.



Senator Rick Santorum

201. Sokolove, M. (2005, May 22). The believer. *The New York Times Magazine*. Retrieved May 25, 2003, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/05/22/magazine/22SANTORUM.html?pagewanted=print>



Like President Bush, Santorum feels very comfortable injecting his faith into many topics, a fact that may appeal to African-American churchgoers. However, Santorum's actions belie his rhetoric. For example, many African-American families live in abject poverty in this country, struggling to survive on income provided by one or two minimum wage jobs with few if any benefits and little hope for advancement. Santorum not only voted 17 times against raising the minimum wage,²⁰² but personally enjoys an income of \$162,100, an amount that he claims leaves his family living "...paycheck to paycheck, absolutely."²⁰³ Our analysis demonstrates that Santorum has consistently opposed legislation with the potential to profoundly improve the lives of African-Americans, despite the fact that he is a key leader in a political party that is actively recruiting African-Americans because of its position on "moral values."

Santorum not only voted 17 times against raising the minimum wage, but personally enjoys an income of \$162,100, an amount that he claims leaves his family living "paycheck to paycheck."

REP. TOM DELAY

Tom DeLay of Texas, until recently majority leader in the House of Representatives, has not shied away from discussing how he believes social policy can best aid African-Americans. In summary, he believes that moving away from government assistance programs to a culture of self-reliance that encourages future generations to be similarly independent is the key to helping African-Americans climb the ladder of economic opportunity.²⁰⁴ Like Santorum, DeLay's voting record on issues of significance to African-Americans is not reflective of his rhetoric on the issue. He scored 100 percent on the ACU and FRC indices but only 23 on the NAACP index and 11 on the LCCR index, strong evidence that he is not a protector or promoter of African-American interests, at least as the African-American community has defined them.



Representative Tom DeLay

DeLay is demonstrably hostile to attempts to affirm and enable the full citizenship of people of color and other marginalized populations. He has opposed reauthorization of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was among the crowning achievements of the civil rights era, ensuring that minorities—particularly African-American voters—are able to safely and freely exercise their right to vote. The disenfranchisement of as many as six million American voters in the 2000 presidential election, however, highlighted that attempts to erode and undermine this victory have never ceased.²⁰⁵

DeLay opposed the reauthorization of portions of the Voting Rights Act, requiring

202. AFL-CIO. (2005, March 8).

203. Sokolove, M. (2005, May 22).

204. Williams, A. (2003, July 30). House Majority Leader Tom DeLay talks race. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.townhall.com/opinion/columns/Armstrongwilliams/2003/07/30/161089.html>

205. According to Votewatch 2004.org, 4 million to 6 million voters "were voiceless in the 2000 elections due to faulty equipment and confusing ballots (1.5 million to 2 million), registration mix-ups (1.5 million to 3 million), polling-place operations (up to 1 million), absentee-ballot problems (unknown)." Source: Curl, J. (2004, August 7). Foreign observers to audit election. *The Washington Times*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://washingtontimes.com/national/20040806-115723-1192r.htm>



bilingual voting assistance, and he opposed the National Voter Registration Act of 1993, legislation designed to make registering to vote easier for minority populations by allowing individuals to register to vote while applying for a driver's license. Statistics have shown that among those African-Americans who registered to vote after January 1, 1995, approximately 32 percent did so at the time they applied for a driver's license, compared with 23 percent of non-Hispanic Asian and Pacific Islanders and 28 percent of Hispanics.²⁰⁶ These data suggest that the voter registration legislation that DeLay opposed was of critical assistance in boosting African-American participation in the political process.

Additionally, DeLay joined with other conservatives in support of reducing the extension on voting assistance for language-minority populations²⁰⁷ and striking provisions that qualify jurisdictions to receive such assistance.²⁰⁸ Such assistance is particularly crucial to newly naturalized citizens and many older people who may not have learned English despite having lived in the U.S. for many years. For such people, their ability to participate in the democratic process is severely limited if they are not able to access translation or interpretation services.

DeLay also opposed efforts to restore the reach of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 following its narrow interpretation by the judiciary,²⁰⁹ and he has consistently voted against legislation that would restore the remedies and reach of other civil rights laws following their limitation by the judiciary.²¹⁰ He has also opposed other civil rights legislation, including the Americans with Disabilities Act.²¹¹ While DeLay did not criticize the court's narrowing of civil rights legislation, he has aggressively criticized "rogue judges,"²¹² whom he claims abuse their judicial authority to "make law" in cases enforcing the separation of church and state.²¹³ DeLay opposes affirmative action for racial minorities and women in awarding government contracts, and voted to prohibit affirmative action for the same groups in higher education.²¹⁴

DeLay's strong faith may be one reason why he has been open about his desire to bring evangelism into the federal government policy making sphere, a move directly reflective of the current attempt to promote a "moral values" agenda through religious communities, and in particular to attract African-American voters. DeLay credits James Dobson with leading him back to religion as a freshman congressman in the mid-

DeLay opposes affirmative action for racial minorities and women in awarding government contracts and voted to prohibit affirmative action for the same groups in higher education.

206. U.S. Census Bureau. (2000, July 19). Table 14. *Method of registration among those who registered after January 1, 1995, by selected characteristics: November 1998*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.jointcenter.org/DB/table/databank/voting/1998/method_of_registration.txt

207. Project Vote Smart, (2004). Retrieved August 20, 2004, from <http://www.vote-smart.org>.

208. DeLay not only opposed granting nominal financial reparations to the approximately 60,000 surviving Japanese-Americans whose homes were taken and whose families were interned in camps during World War II, but also opposed extending even a formal apology.

209. Project Vote Smart. Retrieved August 17, 2004, from <http://www.vote-smart.org>

210. Goeringer, C. F. (2004, August 17). Tom DeLay's shock and awe campaign against the First Amendment. *American Atheist Newsletter*. Retrieved August 6, 2004, from http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0OBW/is_2_42/at_101797933/print

211. Associated Press. (1990, May 23). How they voted on bill for disabled. *The New York Times*. p.A18.

212. Goeringer, C. F. (2004).

213. In spring 2005, DeLay was a strong critic of state and federal courts during the legal proceedings surrounding Terry Schiavo. He put forth strong opinions about the inappropriateness of their actions, and about Congress' authority to react accordingly against those courts he felt were acting inappropriately.

214. Project Vote Smart. Retrieved August 13, 2004, from <http://www.vote-smart.org>



1980s. Watching a Dobson-produced video “turned my life around when I first came to Congress. He brought me back to Christ.”²¹⁵ Indeed, newspaper reports indicate that DeLay’s Christian rebirth coincided with the rise of the Christian Coalition, enabling him to become a strong advocate for the group ever since.²¹⁶ DeLay is a powerful leader in Congress, with the political and organizational clout to profoundly improve the lives of African-Americans. His record shows that he has not utilized his authority to effect policy changes desired by black voters and advocates.

SEN. TRENT LOTT

Another conservative Republican congressional leader with a poor record of advocating for issues important to African-Americans is Mississippi Sen. Trent Lott, who served as Senate majority leader from 1996 to 2002 despite having a long history of opposition to civil rights and other legislation that would assist African-Americans. He scored only six out of 100 on the NAACP index and fared even worse on the LCCR index, scoring only four out of 100. However, his status as a reliable conservative vote is reflected in his 100 percent rating from FRC and 96 percent rating from the ACU.

Lott has long been associated with the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) as well as the segregationist Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), an organization whose statement of principles includes opposition to, “...all efforts to mix the races of mankind, to promote non-white races over the European-American people through so-called ‘affirmative action’ and similar measures, to destroy or denigrate the European-American heritage, including the heritage of the Southern people, and to force the integration of the races.”²¹⁷ On its Web site, the CCC defends itself against charges that promoting white supremacy is racist:

The word racism was concocted by a communist ideologue in the 1920’s. The purpose of racism was to instill guilt and shame in the minds of white people and to inflame racial hostility among blacks. This word play succeeded beyond all expectations. Of course, the word racism has no meaning unless whites react to it. Because racism defines nothing, but instead generates dubious connotations, the C of CC refuses to be held hostage by what the word implies at any given moment. It is normal for white people to be proud of their race and heritage.²¹⁸

Lott’s relationship with the CCC surfaced as a hot topic in 2002 when he honored Strom Thurmond by saying that the country would have been better off had Thurmond, at the time an ardent segregationist, won the presidency in 1948. Thurmond’s Dixiecrat platform “[stood] for the segregation of the races and the racial integrity of each



Senator Trent Lott

215. Hollar, J. (2000, February 2). The DeLay chronicles: A nice guy in Austin. Retrieved December 12, 2005, from <http://www.texasobserver.org/showArticle.asp?ArticleID=143>

216. Ibid.

217. Council of Conservative Citizens. (2005). A Statement of the Principles of the Council of Conservative Citizens. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.cofcc.org/manifest.htm>

218. Council of Conservative Citizens. (2005). What is the Council of Conservative Citizens? Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.cofcc.org/info/faq.htm>



state,” and he declared during his campaign that “[a]ll the laws of Washington and all the bayonets of the Army cannot force the Negro into our homes, our schools, our churches.”^{219,220}

Ironically, after his death, it was revealed that it was Thurmond who forced himself on Carrie Butler, a 16-year-old black woman working for him and his wealthy family.²²¹

In the furor following Lott’s remarks, one media outlet called Lott “an enemy of civil rights and a legislative instrument of segregation.”²²² Lott was the spokesperson in a recruiting video for the SCV, which works “to preserve Confederate history” and “rejects any group whose actions tarnish or distort the image of the Confederate soldier or his reasons for fighting,” which, of course, included preserving slavery.^{223,224} He received wide criticism for his ties to the CCC, for whom he was a frequent speaker at events and wrote a regular column for several years in the group’s publication, the *Citizen Informer*.²²⁵

219. Baker, T. (2002, December 7). Trent Lott’s bizarro world: Up is down, ignorance is strength, helping the downtrodden is offense, and civil rights equals problems. *American Politics Journal*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.americanpolitics.com/20021207Baker.html>

220. Edsall, T. B. (2002, December 7). Lott decried for part of salute to Thurmond. *Washingtonpost.com*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn/A20730-2002Dec6?language=printer>

221. Monroe, I. (2004, January 21). A different kind of “coming out” story. *The Witness.org*. Retrieved February 8, 2006, from <http://thewitness.org/agw/monroe012104.html>

222. Conason, J. (2002, December 12). Joe Conason’s journal: Lott’s involvement with the neo-confederate movement, racists and extreme rightists goes way back. *Salon.com*. Retrieved January 19, 2006 from <http://www.salon.com/politics/conason/2002/12/12/lott/print.html>

223. Sons of Confederate Veterans Heritage and Honor. (2004). What is the sons of Confederate Veterans? Author. Retrieved September 2, 2004, from <http://www.scv.org/about/whatit.asp>. See also: Marshall, J.M. (2002, December 14). Talking Points Memo. Retrieved January 19, 2006 from <http://www.talkingpointsmemo.com/old/dec0202.html>

224. Temple of Democracy. (n.d.). A Partisan conversation with Trent Lott. Retrieved September 1, 2002, from <http://www.templeofdemocracy.com/Trentlott.htm>

225. Burkeman, O. (2002, December 21). Bloggers catch what Washington Post missed. *The Guardian*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,863964,00.html> See also: Marshall, J.M. (2002, December 14)



Religious influence in Republican outreach to African-Americans

Many national right-wing Christian groups are engaged in the pursuit of a broad anti-LGBT agenda that is also harmful to many African-Americans. These groups cloak themselves in the mantle of mainstream conservatism to mask their true agenda by voicing issues of concern to conservatives, such as opposition to affirmative action, “big government,” gun control, increased immigration and, of course, fair and equal treatment of LGBT Americans. They work proactively to elect right-wing Christian evangelicals to the U.S. Congress and to stack the federal courts with judicial appointees of the same views. Their message, the company they keep, the politicians they finance, and the judges they endorse prove that their agendas are in fact extreme.

Scapegoating LGBT people enables these national right-wing Christian evangelical groups to both camouflage and promote their broader agenda. At the same time, however, these ultraconservative groups are increasingly making direct overtures to the African-American community by positioning themselves as defenders of civil rights against an alleged homosexual onslaught.²²⁶

REV. LOUIS P. SHELDON AND THE TRADITIONAL VALUES COALITION

Among the recognized leaders of the religious right is the Traditional Values Coalition’s (TVC) Rev. Louis P. Sheldon. His organization proclaims that its 43,000-member churches “...bridge racial and socio-economic barriers.”²²⁷ However, little of what TVC advocates is deemed important by the African-American community and it is clear from interviews he has given that Sheldon is seriously out of touch with the real problems facing America today, particularly those faced by African-Americans. In an interview with conservative columnist Tucker Carlson about how churches might help African-Americans better than municipal government, he stated, “You want to know what the single biggest problem facing inner-city black neighborhoods is? Homosexuality.”²²⁸ TVC criticized Democratic Sen. Joe

226. Whittle, J. (2003, May). All in the family. Washington, DC: Americans United for the Separation of Church and State. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.au.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5580&abbr=cs>; See also, Focus on the Family. (2004, March 4). Focus on social issues: Redefining marriage is not a civil right. Retrieved July 27, 2004, from <http://www.family.org/cforum/fosi/marriage/nac/a0031029.cfm>

227. Traditional Values Coalition. (2005). Empowering people of faith with truth. Author. Retrieved June 1, 2005, from www.traditionalvalues.org/about.php

228. Carlson, T. (2006, January 4). What really smells about the Abramoff scandal. msnbc.com Retrieved January 13, 2005, from <http://msnbc.com/id/10693414/>



Lieberman of Connecticut for his support of affirmative action, claiming Lieberman backed racial quotas in hiring.²²⁹

The group also attacked Republican Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania because he hired a former NAACP attorney to work for his Senate Judiciary Committee. In large part their objection seemed based on the fact that the otherwise qualified attorney was not a Republican.²³⁰ Rev. Sheldon has held nothing back in his attacks on gay and lesbian Americans, commenting in a February 2003 report to TVC's members "We are not tolerant of behaviors that destroy individuals, families and our culture...in short, we believe in intolerance to those things that are evil; and we believe that we should discriminate against those behaviors which are dangerous to individuals and to society."²³¹ He also supported two separate initiatives that would have required the internment of people with AIDS.^{232,233} Sheldon has also vehemently criticized African-American leaders who have raised the prospect of reparations being paid to compensate for slavery, noting:

The reparations scam is simply another in a long line of shakedowns that black liberals have created as a way of taking money away from hardworking Americans to put into the hands of those who refuse to work...yet the black shakedown artists don't care. They see millions of dollars of free money available to them, and they'll use whatever con game they can to get that money.²³⁴

Additionally, Sheldon has discussed openly the possibility that President Bush's faith-based social program initiative might help bring African-American voters into the Republican fold because their pastors are able to access program funding that might previously have been beyond their reach, "The political benefits are unbelievable...the Democrats ought to have their heads examined for voting against this."²³⁵



Reverend Louis P. Sheldon

"You want to know what the single biggest problem facing inner-city black neighborhoods is? Homosexuality."
—Rev. Sheldon

229. Traditional Values Coalition. (2005). Lieberman discards 'conscience' to embrace racial quotas. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.traditionalvalues.org/modules.php?sid=189>

230. Traditional Values Coalition. (2005). Senator Arlen Specter Hires NAACP Counsel and Democrat for Committee. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.traditionalvalues.org/modules.php?sid=2088>

231. L. Sheldon, "Discrimination and tolerance," *Traditional Values Coalition special report*, 21(1) (Anaheim, CA: Traditional Values Coalition, February 2003).

232. Donovan, T. & Bowler, S. (1997). "Direct democracy and minority rights: Opinions on anti-gay and lesbian ballot initiatives." In *Anti-gay rights: Assessing voter initiatives*, edited by S. Witt and S. McCorkle. Westport, CT: Praeger. P.114-117. See also: Vaid, U. (1995). *Virtual equality: The mainstreaming of gay and lesbian liberation*. New York: Anchor Books. p.67 and p.113.

233. J. Hardisty. (1999). *Mobilizing resentment: Conservative resurgence from the John Birch Society to the Promise Keepers*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. p.106.

234. Sheldon, L. (2005). African AIDS pandemic now added to the reparations scam. Washington: Traditional Values Coalition. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.traditionalvalues.org/print.php?sid=1008>

235. Wallsten, Peter et al. (2005, January 18). Bush rewarded by black pastor's faith. *The Los Angeles Times*. p.A1.



TONY PERKINS AND THE FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL

Another conservative Christian organization at the forefront of efforts to appeal to African-Americans is the Family Research Council (FRC), currently led by Tony Perkins, a former Louisiana state legislator and candidate for the U.S. Senate. FRC claims that it “champions marriage and family as the foundation of civilization, the seedbed of virtue, and the wellspring of society...[and] shapes public debate and formulates public policy that values human life and upholds the institutions of marriage and the family.”²³⁶

However, as demonstrated in Figure 4, research shows that FRC actually focuses predominantly on what it calls the homosexual agenda that consists in part of “...pro-homosexual brainwashing designed to mold the attitudes of the next generation—in defiance of the moral and religious values of society...”²³⁷ Recent analysis found that there are more than 400 references to homosexual on FRC’s Web site, while there were comparatively few references to issues of demonstrable concern to African-American families such as divorce (125), poverty (78), domestic violence (38), health insurance (22) and child support (9).²³⁸

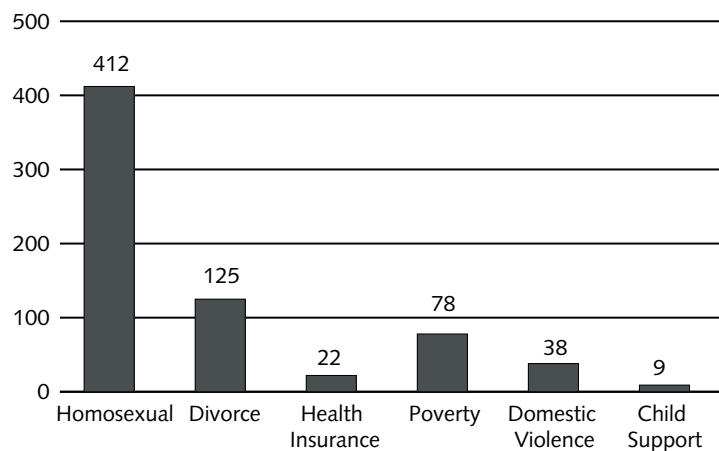
Perkins’ personal record also shows at least two connections to white supremacists. While serving as a state legislator in Alabama, he worked as campaign manager for a conservative Republican Senate candidate, personally authorizing the purchase of former Ku Klux Klan Grand Wizard David Duke’s mailing list for \$82,500.²³⁹ The campaign was fined \$3,000 by the Federal Election Commission for attempting to hide the money paid to Duke,²⁴⁰ yet when the story emerged six years later in 2002 as Perkins set out on his own run for the U.S. Senate, he denied any knowledge of the incident, despite the fact that his own signature was on the paperwork approving the expenditure. In 2000, he addressed the Louisiana chapter of the Council of Conservative Citizens (CCC), the white supremacist group discussed above in the section on Sen. Trent Lott.²⁴¹



Tony Perkins

As campaign manager, Perkins personally authorized the purchase of former KKK Grand Wizard David Duke’s mailing list for \$82,500.

Figure 4: Family Research Council website analysis



236. Family Research Council. (2005). *Over 20 Years Defending Family, Faith, and Freedom*. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?c=HISTORY_ABOUT

237. Dailey, Timothy J. et al. (n.d.). Homosexuality and children: The impact for future generations. *Family Policy* 15(5). Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=FP02k>

238. On January 27, 2006, we conducted a website search using the FRC’s in-built search engine, and searched the 6 terms detailed in Figure 7, including current and archived items in our counts. This search can be replicated at www.frc.org

239. Blumenthal, M. (2005, April 26). Justice Sunday preachers. *The Nation*. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml%3Fi=20050509&s=blumenthal>

240. Ibid.

241. Ibid.



DR. JAMES DOBSON AND FOCUS ON THE FAMILY

Dr. James Dobson is head of Focus on the Family, a \$125 million evangelical Christian right behemoth. Despite calling himself a pro-life Christian, he supports the death penalty. In one of his monthly newsletters, he even advocated for the execution of minors.²⁴² The relevance to the African-American community of these extreme stances is all too clear. This community is more likely to face more serious criminal charges with stiffer penalties than their white American counterparts (e.g., for possession of crack vs. powder cocaine)²⁴³ and more likely to face the possibility of being sentenced to death.²⁴⁴ A 2004 Gallup opinion poll may well have reflected this reality when it found that fewer than half the African-American respondents favored the death penalty while almost three quarters of white Americans did so.²⁴⁵ African-Americans are disproportionately stopped by the police (racial profiling),²⁴⁶ have less disposable income, and are therefore less likely than white Americans to be able to afford private qualified legal counsel. In addition to taking stands on criminal justice issues that run counter to African-Americans' interests, Dobson promotes abstinence-only-until-marriage sex education programs²⁴⁷ and opposes abortion,²⁴⁸ an issue that only two percent of African Americans respondents identified as a priority in BAMPAC's poll.²⁴⁹

His public statements suggest a divergence between his goals and priorities and those of the African-American community, and there is ample evidence to support this assertion. Those he has chosen to associate with, and those who have moved away from him, provide plenty of evidence that Dobson also holds a great deal of animosity towards both LGBT Americans and African-Americans.

In a recent volume railing against same-sex marriage he compared supporters of same-sex marriage to the Nazis and their genocidal war: "Like Adolf Hitler, who overran his European neighbors, those who favor homosexual marriage are determined to make it legal, regardless of the democratic processes that stand in their way."²⁵⁰

As long ago as 1997, Gil Alexander-Moegerle, a former Focus on the Family employee and co-founder of the organization, acknowledged



Dr. James Dobson

"Like Adolf Hitler, who overran his European neighbors, those who favor homosexual marriage are determined to make it legal, regardless of the democratic processes that stand in their way."
—Dr. James Dobson

242. Dobson, J. (2005, April). Life, death and judicial tyranny. April 2005 Action Newsletter. Retrieved December 13, 2005, from <http://www.focusaction.org/articles/A00000066.cfm>

243. Families Against Mandatory Minimums (n.d.). Crack vs. powder cocaine sentencing. Author. Retrieved June 28, 2005, from http://www.famm.org/si_crack_powder_sentencing.htm

244. Amnesty International. (2003, October). Racism and the death penalty. Author. Retrieved June 21, 2005, from <http://www.amnesty.ie/user/content/view/full/907>

245. Carroll, J. (2004). Who supports the death penalty? Washington, DC: The Gallup Poll. Retrieved January 17, 2005 from <http://poll.gallup.com/content/default.aspx?ci=14050>

246. A 1999 study indicated that African-Americans were 20 percent more likely to be stopped than white Americans and that police were more than twice as likely to search a car driven by an African American than a car driven by a Caucasian. Source: Center for Policy Alternatives. (2005). Racial profiling. Author. Retrieved June 21, 2005, from <http://www.stateaction.org/issues/issue.cfm/issue/RacialProfiling.xml>

247. Focus on the Family. (2005). Focus on social issues: Abstinence policy. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved July 13, 2005, from <http://www.family.org/cforum/fosi/abstinence/>

248. Walkuski, C. (1998). Religious right profiles. *Pro Choice Online*. Retrieved July 13, 2005, from <http://www.wcla.org/98-summer/su98-19.html>

249. BAMPAC. (2004).

250. Dobson, J. (2004). *Marriage under fire: Why we must win this battle*. Sisters, Ore.: Multnomah Press p.41.



the bigotry so central to the organization's activities when he said: "I apologize to lesbian and gay Americans who are demeaned and dehumanized on a regular basis by the false, irresponsible, and inflammatory rhetoric of James Dobson's anti-gay radio and print materials."²⁵¹ In an in-depth analysis of Focus on the Family and James Dobson, Alexander-Moegerle has noted that Dobson has repeatedly demonstrated a determination to deny rights to lesbian and gay Americans. He also said that racist undertones exist within the organization. For example, he discusses one meeting where Dobson bemoaned the fact that behavioral science research did not exist to buttress his views, because those who could undertake such work were secular liberals disinterested in potentially finding evidence to support Dobson's version of "family values," or to support other basic truths such as the inherent difference between black and white Americans:

...Consider the American Negro, for instance: Weren't the many differences between blacks and whites visible to the naked eye? Weren't black Americans the descendants of slaves, who were bred for physical strength? Wasn't that why blacks excel at sports? And didn't it make sense that as blacks had become physically superior they had also become intellectually inferior?²⁵²

Dobson did not keep his views hidden in the workplace; he brought them fully into the open in particular with his support for Howard Phillips, the U.S. Taxpayer's Party's 1996 nominee for president. Dobson chose not to endorse Bob Dole, the Republican nominee, claiming subsequent to the election that "I voted for Howard Phillips...because he stands for the principles and the values that I believe in, and nobody else did."²⁵³ Phillips' views, those Dobson himself identified as so close to his own, are alarming at best.

On the domestic front, Phillips has argued for the privatization of Social Security²⁵⁴ and the abolition of the Internal Revenue Service²⁵⁵ and contended that AIDS education should be ended because it amounts to subsidizing "safe sodomy."²⁵⁶ He served at one time for President Richard Nixon, but quit when the President refused to cut certain social programs from his budget.²⁵⁷ His support for the death penalty for all abortion doctors was a central plank of his runs for the presidency, as was his proposal that the Voting Rights Act be repealed. Phillips was a regular visitor to South Africa when it was run by a white minority government: he went there to encourage apartheid's supporters to continue their fight.²⁵⁸

251. Foster, D. (1997, August 16). Former 'Focus' member blasts head of 'Family.' Book details counselor's passion for power, greed. *Rocky Mountain News* p.6A

252. Alexander-Moegerle, G. (1997) *James Dobson's war on America*. Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus Books. p.157.

253. People for the American Way Foundation. (n.d.). Dobson's choice: Religious right leader becomes political power broker. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.pfaw.org/pfaw/general/default.aspx?oid=17941&print=yes&units=all>; Citing a 1998 James Dobson speech to the Council for National Policy retrieved from <http://www.buildingequality.us/ifas/cnp/dobson.html>

254. Constitution Party. (n.d.). Constitution Party national platform: Taxes. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.constitutionparty.com/party_platform.php#Taxes#36 from PFAW doc

255. Constitution Party. (n.d.). Constitution Party national platform: Social Security. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.constitutionparty.com/party_platform.php#Social%20Security

256. Issues2000.org. (n.d.). Howard Phillips on Civil Rights. Author. Retrieved January 20, 2006, from http://www.issues2000.org/text/Howard_Phillips_Civil_Rights.htm

257. Southern Poverty Law Center. (2001, Summer). False patriots: Profiles of 40 antigovernment leaders. Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.splcenter.org/intel/intelreport/article.jsp?aid=196>

258. Ibid.



African-American leaders support equality, not discrimination

Many black civil rights leaders have spoken in support of equality for gay and lesbian Americans. Some have also denounced the right's attempts to pit the black and gay communities against each other.

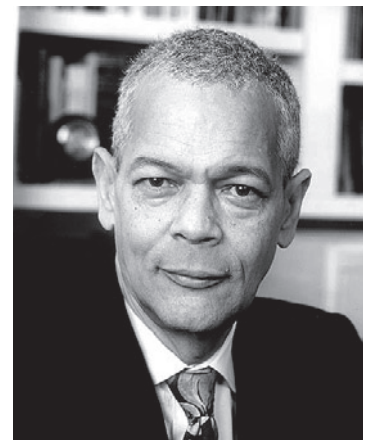
Coretta Scott King, late widow of the slain civil rights leader, came out clearly in favor of full equality for lesbian and gay Americans:

...I still hear people say that I should not be talking about the rights of lesbian and gay people and I should stick to the issue of racial justice. But I hasten to remind them that Martin Luther King, Jr., said, 'Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere'...I appeal to everyone who believes in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s dream to make room at the table of brotherhood and sisterhood for lesbian and gay people. Gays and lesbians stood up for civil rights in Montgomery, Selma, in Albany, GA. And St. Augustine, FL,... fighting for my freedom at a time when they could find few voices for their own, and I salute their contributions.²⁵⁹

Julian Bond, NAACP board chairman and an advocate of equality for all Americans since his undergraduate days, commented recently that "Particularly troublesome is the argument that there are no parallels between discrimination against gays and lesbians and against blacks, and that the former are seeking 'special rights.' Of course there are important differences in our history and experiences. Only African-Americans were enslaved. Only African-Americans still suffer from slavery's legacy. But discrimination is wrong no matter who the victim is. There are no 'special rights' in America; we are all entitled to life, liberty, and happiness' pursuit. There is no race-based admission test requirement for civil rights. Our rights are



Coretta Scott King, R, with Task Force Executive Director Matt Foreman and Mandy Carter of Southerners on New Ground at the 40th anniversary of the 1963 March on Washington.



Julian Bond,
Chairman of the NAACP

259. Lutes, J. (2004). *A false focus on my family*. Lynchburg, VA: Soulforce. p. 13. Retrieved January 20, 2006, from http://www.soulforce.org/pdf/false_focus.pdf



not color-coded; they are available to all.”²⁶⁰ Specifically of same-sex marriage, he has noted, “...I see this as a civil rights issue. That means I support gay civil marriage.”²⁶¹

Another leader of the civil rights movement, and co-founder of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Rev. Joseph Lowery spoke on the topic of gay and lesbian rights recently at the Basilica of St. Mary in Minneapolis, MN. He cautioned black Christians not to “...ever let the Constitution be used to take away rights. You can’t say you’re for equal rights and then make an exception.”²⁶²

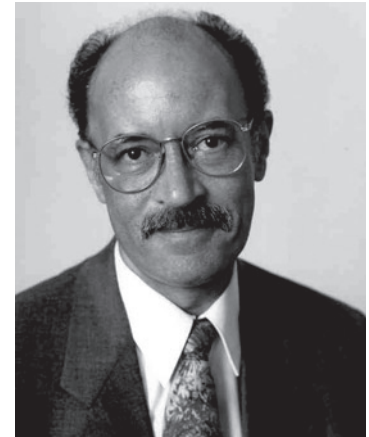
Other African-American religious leaders have been even more specific vocal supporters of LGBT Americans’ rights in general, and of the right to marry specifically. The Rev. William G. Sinkford, president of the Unitarian Universalist Association, commented on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court decision to grant marriage licenses to same-sex couples:

The Unitarian Universalist Association has a long-standing and deeply held religious commitment to support full equality for bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender people, and today’s ruling is a significant step forward in guaranteeing that the rights enjoyed by heterosexual couples in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts are also available to its bisexual, gay, lesbian, and transgender citizens....Unitarian Universalists today celebrate this ruling, and we again dedicate ourselves to work for justice, grounded in faith, which calls us to support everyone’s full humanity, everyone’s ability to love, and everyone’s value in the world.²⁶³

Carol Moseley Braun, former United States senator, ambassador to New Zealand, and candidate for president in 2004, unequivocally supported same-sex marriage during campaign debates, noting on one occasion:

I believe this is a civil rights issue...My aunt married a white man in the 1950s when their marriage was illegal in half the states of this country. Indeed, my uncle, had he taken his wife across the wrong state line, would have been guilty of a criminal violation. It seems to me that if people want to marry a person of a different race that’s no different than somebody wanting to marry someone of the same sex.²⁶⁴

Last but not least, another veteran African-American leader who sharpened his skills as an orator and activist fighting for civil rights for African-Americans half a century ago has declared that same-sex marriage is not only fair, but as the quote below makes clear, an extension of the earlier battles he fought.



**Rev. William G. Sinkford,
President of the Unitarian
Universalist Association**



**Former Senator
Carol Moseley Braun**

260. Bond, J. (2004, March 8). Letter to the Honorable Robert Travaglini [Massachusetts Senate President]. Baltimore, MD: National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

261. National Black Justice Coalition. (2004, February 2). News release: Marriage equality supporters. Retrieved September 21, 2004, from <http://www.nbjcoalition.org/about/supporters.html>

262. Miller, P. (2006, January 16). Martin Luther King Jr. Day; Lowery urges more than lip service to King. *Star Tribune*. p. 1B

263. Sinkford, W. (2003, November 18). UUA president issues statement in Massachusetts court decision in support of same-sex marriage. Unitarian Universalists Association. Retrieved January 20, 2006, from <http://www.uua.org/news/2003/03118.html>

264. National Black Justice Coalition. (2004, February 2).



Now a respected member of the Congress, Democrat John Lewis of Georgia declared:

It is time to say forthrightly that government's exclusion of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters from civil marriage officially degrades them and their families...this discrimination is wrong. We cannot keep turning our backs on gay and lesbian Americans. I've heard the reasons for opposing civil marriage for same-sex couples. Cut through the distractions, and they stink of the same fear, hatred, and intolerance I have known in racism and bigotry.²⁶⁵

This is by no means an exhaustive list of leaders within the African-American community who have come out in favor of same-sex marriage, and who would no doubt urge their fellow African-Americans to be wary of right-wing politicians and their allies who tried to use social wedge issues as a way to increase their support without addressing the identified concerns and priorities of the African-American community. Believing personally that same-sex marriage is not a good idea is one thing. Attempting to impose that opinion on an entire country and to deny rights to millions of Americans through that imposition is unfair and un-American. By presenting themselves as supporters of African-American interests based on one social issue, and simultaneously attempting to recruit African-Americans to the anti-LGBT cause, the right wing is acting disingenuously and does a disservice to African-Americans who fought hard for equality and are today continuing to do so on behalf of the LGBT community.



Representative John Lewis

²⁶⁵.ibid.



Conclusion

“In 2004, the religious right was concerned about re-electing George W. Bush. They couldn’t come to black churches to talk about the war, about health care, about poverty. So they did what they always do and reached for the bigotry against gay and lesbian people.”²⁶⁶

—Rev. Al Sharpton, January 20, 2006,
at the National Black Justice Coalition summit in Atlanta, GA

The Rev. Al Sharpton, quoted above from a recent appearance before the National Black Justice Coalition, has taken a leading role in drawing the African-American community’s attention to the fact that Republican Party leaders are not seriously focused on issues of concern to black Americans. Instead, they and their evangelical Christian right-wing allies have used same-sex marriage as a wedge issue in an attempt to persuade African-Americans that their “natural political home” is in the Republican Party.

This paper quantitatively demonstrates the hypocrisy of the Republican and evangelical Christian right-wing strategy to persuade African-American voters to “come home.” While the economy, health care provision, and education are the priorities of most African-Americans, Republican legislators who currently control the U.S. Congress have frequently voted against legislation to address these issues. Specifically, our analysis of 125 conservative representatives and 34 conservative senators demonstrates that these leaders score poorly on voting indices created by civil rights and other progressive groups, including the NAACP, LCCR and HRC.

Conversely, Democrats have much better records when it comes to supporting African-American priorities and at the same time also support broader progressive organizations’ goals. In other words, legislators who support groups that advocate for full LGBT equality, such as HRC, vote far more often in support of stances taken by the LCCR and NAACP than do conservative legislators who pronounce themselves friends of the African-American community in part because of their stance against LGBT equality. In reality, conservatives have used their unassailable positions running both Houses of Congress not to advance the African-American community, but to promote big business and tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans.

This paper quantitatively demonstrates the hypocrisy of the Republican and evangelical Christian right-wing strategy to persuade African-American voters to “come home.”

266. Banerjee, N. (2006, January 21). Black churches’ attitudes toward gay parishioners is discussed at conference. *The New York Times*. Retrieved January 21, 2006, from <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/01/21/national/21church.html>



Village Voice writer Ta-Nehisi Coates, while discussing Republicans' focus on same-sex marriage instead of substantive policy concerns, cited the Joint Center's David Bositis, in stating that conservatives have yet to outline for African-Americans the benefits of shifting their vote rightward. For same-sex marriage to be a voting issue, they would have to see some sort of cost-benefit analysis. "What do you tell your kids when they ask about the schools?" Bositis asks. "Yeah, but we kept those gay people from getting married?"²⁶⁷

When it comes time to casting a ballot, all voters might well examine their personal needs and preferences. However, they might also appreciate that acting on behalf of their own needs, be they economic, health or education-related, can simultaneously constitute a selfless act that will help LGBT Americans. Bishop Harry Jackson, the man behind the *Black Contract with America*, appears convinced that "rights" and "righteousness" are mutually exclusive, and that African-American voters should focus on voting in a righteous fashion rather than in pursuit of civil rights.

We would argue that voting in a way that increases the likelihood of equal rights is a perfect example of "voting on the side of righteousness." Standing alongside elected officials and religious leaders who believe in improving access to good public schools or increasing healthcare provision for the uninsured is not selfish, and might well be argued to be righteous. Taking such a stand provides each individual with the power to improve the educational and economic opportunities and healthcare provision of everyone, including African-Americans. And if, as our analysis suggests, taking such a principled stand simultaneously helps LGBT Americans see an improvement in their civil rights, then surely this is further evidence of the "rightness" of casting such a vote.

As the Rev. Lewis Jemison, president of the Progressive National Baptist Convention, has stated,

After 50 years of struggle, we face a nation and a world where the gains of African Americans have been eroded by an uncompassionate leadership under the guise of compassionate conservatism. Money that could be used to alleviate poverty, lift up suffering and make a difference in the lives of others has been used in a war that is immoral and threatens the lives of our boys and girls.²⁶⁸

Using uncertainty or fear about the notion of equality for LGBT Americans as a recruiting tool to support a policy agenda that is harmful to African-Americans is immoral. Standing firm in the face of such efforts, and consciously labeling them as bigoted and divisive is accurate, justified, and in the end, the only way to educate all Americans about the harmful reality of the political and religious conservative agenda and voting record.

Legislators who support groups that advocate for full LGBT equality, such as HRC, vote far more often in support of stances taken by the LCCR and NAACP than do conservative legislators who pronounce themselves friends of the African-American community.

267. Coates, T.N. (2003, September 24). Fear of gay marriage gives the GOP another chance at minority voters. *The Village Voice*. Retrieved January 20, 2006, from <http://www.villagevoice.com/news/0339,coates,47234,1.html>

268. Brachear, M. A. (2005, February 27).



Appendix 1

THE MOST CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: SENATORS

HOW THEIR VOTING BEHAVIOR WAS RATED BY VARIOUS INTEREST GROUPS

Senators (by state)	ACU ¹	FRC ²	NTU ³	HRC ⁴	NAACP ⁵	LCCR ⁶	ADA ⁷
Jeff Sessions (R-AL)	96	100	82	0	3	0	10
Ted Stevens (R-AK)	92	67	67	13	15	7	20
Jon Kyl (R-AZ)	100	100	89	0	6	0	5
Ben Campbell (R-CO)	90	50	67	38	27	21	25
Wayne Allard (R-CO)	96	100	84	0	9	4	5
Saxby Chambliss (R-GA)	96	83	83	0	6	0	5
Zell Miller (D-GA)	96	83	78	38	18	9	15
Larry Craig (R-ID)	96	100	76	0	6	0	5
Mike Crapo (R-ID)	92	100	66	0	9	0	10
Charles Grassley (R-IA)	96	83	69	0	12	4	20
Sam Brownback (R-KS)	96	100	78	0	12	0	15
Pat Roberts (R-KS)	92	83	71	0	15	11	15
Jim Bunning (R-KY)	100	100	69	0	12	4	15
Mitch McConnell (R-KY)	96	100	71	0	9	4	15
Thad Cochran (R-MS)	92	100	67	0	9	0	15
Trent Lott (R-MS)	96	100	74	0	6	4	5
Christopher Bond (R-MO)	96	83	62	0	12	4	20
Jim Talent (R-MO)	96	100	64	0	15	4	20
Conrad Burns (R-MT)	100	83	73	0	12	4	5

1. American Conservative Union. (2004). U.S. House standouts - 2004. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.conservative.org/archive2/house.asp>
2. Family Research Council. (2004). Vote Scorecard, 108th Congress, 2nd session. Washington, DC: Author. Available at <http://www.frc.org/get.cfm?i=VR04H01>
3. National Taxpayers Union. (2004). *National Taxpayers Union rates Congress, 108th Congress 2nd session*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.ntu.org/misc_items/rating/V_S_2004.pdf
4. Human Rights Campaign. (2004). *Congressional scorecard, 108th Congress*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.hrc.org/Template.cfm?Section=Home&CONTENTID=30093&TEMPLATE=/ContentManagement/ContentDisplay.cfm>
5. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (2004). *How Congress voted: NAACP civil rights federal legislative report card 108th Congress 2003-2004*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.naacp.org/inc/docs/washington/108/108th_congress_report_card.pdf
6. Leadership Council on Civil Rights. (2005). *Voting record 108th Congress*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from http://www.civilrights.org/research_center/voting_scorecards/108_2.pdf
7. Americans for Democratic Action. (2005). *ADA's 2004 Congressional voting record, 108th Congress, 2nd session*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved January 19, 2006, from <http://www.adaction.org/ADATodayVR2004.pdf>



Senators	ACU	FRC	NTU	HRC	NAACP	LCCR	ADA
John Ensign (R-NY)	92	67	89	25	12	4	15
John Sununu (R-NH)	100	67	82	25	12	4	10
Pete Domenici (R-NM)	95	83	70	0	6	4	15
Elizabeth Dole (R-NC)	92	100	64	0	12	7	25
Don Nickles (R-OK)	100	83	88	0	6	0	5
James Inhofe (R-OK)	100	100	76	0	9	0	10
Rick Santorum (R-PA)	96	100	83	0	6	0	15
Lindsey Graham (R-SC)	92	83	73	0	12	4	25
Lamar Alexander (R-TN)	92	67	75	13	12	7	15
Bill Frist (R-TN)	92	100	66	0	9	0	20
John Cornyn (R-TX)	100	83	74	0	12	4	5
Orrin Hatch (R-UT)	96	100	72	0	12	4	10
George Allen (R-VA)	92	67	67	13	12	7	15
Mike Enzi (R-WY)	96	100	77	0	9	4	5
Craig Thomas (R-WV)	100	83	78	0	6	0	5



Appendix 2

THE MOST CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF CONGRESS: REPRESENTATIVES

HOW THEIR VOTING BEHAVIOR WAS RATED BY VARIOUS INTEREST GROUPS

Representatives (by state)	ACU ¹	FRC ²	NTU ³	NAACP ⁴	LCCR ⁵	ADA ⁶	HRC ⁷
Jo Bonner (R, Al)	95	75	59	30	5	0	11
Terry Everett (R, Al)	92	100	54	27	0	0	0
Robert Aderholt (R, Al)	92	100	49	30	0	0	0
Spencer Bachus (R, Al)	96	100	62	30	0	5	0
Don Young (R, AK)	95	92	54	30	6	0	0
Trent Franks (R-AZ)	100	100	85	27	0	0	0
J. D. Hayworth (R, AZ)	96	92	75	27	0	5	0
John Shadegg (R-AZ)	100	100	81	23	5	0	0
Jeff Flake (R, AZ)	96	100	90	20	11	15	0
Jeff Boozman (R, AR)	96	100	61	33	5	10	0
Wally Herger (R-CA)	100	100	75	30	0	5	0
John Doolittle (R, CA)	92	92	55	27	5	0	0
Richard Pombo (R-CA)	100	100	61	33	11	0	0
George Radanovich (R-CA)	100	100	69	33	5	0	0
Devin Nunes (R, CA)	96	92	59	30	11	0	0
Elton Gallegly (R, CA)	96	92	57	30	5	0	0
Ed Royce (R, CA)	96	92	85	27	6	15	0
Gary Miller (R-CA)	100	100	70	23	0	0	0
Dana Rohrabacher (R, CA)	91	83	80	27	5	15	0
Christopher Cox (R-CA)	100	83	78	27	11	5	22
Darrel Issa (R, CA)	92	92	57	37	11	0	0
Randy Cunningham (R, CA)	92	100	54	33	5	5	0
Scott Mcinnis (R, CO)	100	67	63	23	12	5	22
Marilyn Musgrave (R-CO)	100	100	77	30	0	0	0
Joel Hefley (R, CO)	92	100	77	30	11	15	0
Tom Tancredo (R-CO)	100	92	81	33	17	10	11
Bob Beauprez (R, CO)	92	100	72	33	11	5	0
Jeff Miller (R-FL)	100	83	82	27	5	5	0
Ander Crenshaw (R, FL)	92	92	50	30	11	0	0
Ginny Brown-Waite (R, FL)	96	92	68	23	12	5	0

1. The American Conservative Union. (2004).
2. Family Research Council. (2004).
3. National Taxpayers Union. (2004).
4. National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (2004).
5. Leadership Council on Civil Rights. (2005).
6. Americans for Democratic Action. (2004).
7. Human Rights Campaign. (2004).



Representatives	ACU	FRC	NTU	NAACP	LCCR	ADA	HRC
Cliff Stearns (R, FL)	96	100	77	20	5	0	0
Richard Keller (R-FL)	100	100	70	27	5	0	0
Michael Bilirakis (R, FL)	92	100	59	33	11	5	0
Adam Putnam (R-FL)	100	92	66	27	11	0	0
Katherine Harris (R, FL)	92	92	72	37	11	0	0
Dave Weldon (R, FL)	91	92	54	27	6	0	0
Tom Feeney (R-FL)	100	100	82	27	6	0	0
Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL)	96	75	72	33	17	5	13
Jack Kingston (R, GA)	96	83	64	27	0	0	0
Johnny Isakson (R, GA)	95	83	78	27	0	5	0
John Linder (R-GA)	100	92	69	27	6	0	0
Michael Collins (R, GA)	100	67	79	17	0	0	0
Charlie Norwood (R-GA)	100	92	85	23	0	0	0
Nathan Deal (R-GA)	100	100	78	20	0	0	0
Phil Gingrey (R, GA)	96	100	72	27	0	5	0
C.L. Otter (R-ID)	100	92	82	30	0	5	0
Mike Simpson (R-ID)	92	92	55	30	0	0	0
Philip Crane (R, IL)	96	100	75	27	11	5	0
Dennis Hastert (R, IL)	100	67	§	§	0	0	0
Donald Manzullo (R-IL)	100	100	72	33	5	5	0
Chris Chocola (R, IN)	96	100	75	30	11	5	0
Steve Buyer (R, IN)	96	75	56	23	6	5	0
Dan Burton (R-IN)	100	100	65	30	0	0	0
Mike Pence (R-IN)	100	100	78	33	5	0	0
Steve King (R, IA)	96	100	78	23	5	5	0
Jerry Moran (R, KS)	92	92	68	43	21	10	0
Jim Ryun (R, KS)	96	100	70	33	5	5	0
Todd Tiahrt (R, KS)	92	92	60	33	11	5	0
David Vitter (R, LA)	96	92	74	27	6	5	0
W. J. Tawson (R, LA)	100	42	§	23	8	0	0
Jim McCrery (R, LA)	96	83	63	30	6	5	0
Roscoe Bartlett (R, MD)	92	100	80	33	11	10	0
Peter Hoekstra (R, MI)	96	100	72	30	5	5	0
Nick Smith (R, MI)	100	92	73	27	17	0	0
Michael Rogers (R, MI)	92	92	58	30	16	10	0
Gil Gutknecht (R, MN)	92	100	79	33	0	5	0
John Kline (R, MN)	96	92	72	33	5	5	0
Mark Kennedy (R, MN)	92	100	69	33	11	5	0
Charles Pickering (R, MS)	92	100	51	37	11	5	0
Todd Akin (R-MO)	100	100	78	27	0	0	0
Sam Graves (R, MO)	92	92	61	30	11	10	0
Roy Blunt (R, MO)	96	100	67	30	5	0	0
Kenny Hulshof (R, MO)	91	100	58	27	0	5	0
Dennis Rehberg (R, MT)	96	92	61	33	5	5	0
Lee Terry (R, NB)	92	92	67	33	11	0	0
Jim Gibbons (R, NV)	96	75	77	27	11	10	22
Scott Garrett (R-NJ)	100	100	80	30	0	5	11
Steve Pearce (R, NM)	96	100	53	30	11	0	0
Thomas Reynolds (R, NY)	92	92	60	30	11	5	0
Sue Myrick (R-NC)	100	100	80	27	5	0	0
Steve Chabot (R, OH)	96	92	78	33	11	10	0

§ : Too few votes to permit calculation of a score.



Representatives	ACU	FRC	NTU	NAACP	LCCR	ADA	HRC
Michael Oxley (R, OH)	96	100	58	37	11	0	0
John Boehner (R-OH)	100	100	70	30	11	0	0
Patrick Tiberi (R, OH)	96	92	57	37	12	10	0
Bob Ney (R, OH)	92	100	52	40	16	10	0
John Sullivan (R-OK)	100	100	73	27	6	0	0
Frank Lucas (R, OK)	96	92	53	30	13	0	0
Tom Cole (R, OK)	96	100	68	30	11	0	0
Ernest Istook (R, OK)	92	100	63	23	6	0	0
Melissa Hart (R, PA)	92	100	68	33	11	10	0
Bill Shuster (R, PA)	96	100	64	30	6	5	0
Pat Toomey (R, PA)	100	92	85	33	6	0	0
Joseph Pitts (R-PA)	100	100	75	27	0	5	0
Timothy Murphy (R, PA)	92	92	59	40	21	20	0
Henry Brown (R, SC)	96	100	55	30	11	0	0
Joe Wilson (R, SC)	96	100	75	27	0	0	0
Gresham Barrett (R-SC)	100	92	80	30	0	0	0
Jim DeMint (R, SC)	100	83	75	30	0	0	0
Bill Jenkins (R, TN)	91	92	62	20	6	0	0
Marsha Blackburn (R-TN)	100	100	75	30	0	0	0
Sam Johnson (R-TX)	100	92	77	50	0	0	0
Jeb Hensarling (R-TX)	100	92	83	30	5	0	0
Joe Barton (R, TX)	96	100	69	23	5	0	0
Kevin Brady (R-TX)	100	83	76	30	5	0	0
Kay Granger (R, TX)	91	83	54	27	6	0	0
Mac Thornberry (R-TX)	100	92	74	30	5	0	0
Randy Neugebauer (R, TX)	96	100	73	§	7	5	0
Lamar Smith (R, TX)	92	100	57	27	5	0	0
Tom DeLay (R-TX)	100	100	63	23	11	0	0
Henry Bonilla (R, TX)	92	100	48	27	11	0	0
Michael Burgess (R, TX)	96	100	71	30	5	5	0
John Carter (R, TX)	96	100	69	23	0	0	0
Pete Sessions (R-TX)	100	100	73	23	11	0	0
Rob Bishop (R-UT)	100	92	73	33	0	5	0
Chris Cannon (R-UT)	100	75	73	27	7	0	0
Ed Schrock (R, VA)	100	100	72	27	0	0	0
Randy Forbes (R-VA)	100	83	66	30	11	5	0
Virgil Goode (R, VA)	96	100	65	27	5	10	0
Bob Goodlatte (R-VA)	100	100	67	27	5	0	0
Eric Cantor (R-VA)	100	100	69	27	11	0	0
Doc Hastings (R-WA)	100	92	63	30	11	0	11
Jennifer Dunn (R, WA)	91	67	70	30	11	5	0
Paul Ryan (R, WI)	92	92	78	37	11	20	0
Jim Sensenbrenner (R, WY)	92	92	83	23	11	20	0
Barbara Cubin (R-WY)	100	92	77	27	7	0	0

§ : Too few votes to permit calculation of a score.



Acknowledgements

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National Gay and Lesbian
Task Force

policy institute bestsellers

Black Same-Sex Households in the United States

A REPORT FROM THE 2000 CENSUS

by Alain Dang and Somjen Frazer

Political and religious leaders often claim that LGBT people do not need protection from discrimination because they are white, wealthy, and privileged.

This study breaks that myth through an analysis of the almost 85,000 black same-sex households that self-identified in the 2000 U.S. Census. This study shows that black same-sex couples and their children are disproportionately impacted by anti-LGBT policies and have more to lose when anti-same-sex marriage amendments are on the ballot.

(October 2004; 46 pp.; \$10.00; www.thetaskforce.org/library/)

Hispanic and Latino Same-Sex Couple Households in the United States

A REPORT FROM THE 2000 CENSUS

by Jason Cianciotto

Post the success of anti-same-sex marriage ballot measures in the 2004 election, anti-LGBT political and religious leaders are supporting the next wave of anti-marriage and anti-parenting laws and ballot measures in a number of states with large Hispanic populations, including California and Florida. This study sheds light on the over 105,000 Hispanic same-sex couple households counted in the 2000 Census, nearly half with children, who are disproportionately harmed by such anti-LGBT legislation.

(November 2005; 85pp.; \$10.00; www.thetaskforce.org/library/)

Transitioning our Shelters

A GUIDE FOR MAKING HOMELESS SHELTERS SAFE FOR TRANSGENDER PEOPLE

by Lisa Mottet and John M. Ohle

The problem of unsafe shelters for transgender people is pervasive. *Transitioning our Shelters* is a guide designed for shelters that want to provide safe shelter for transgender people but are not sure how to do so. A joint publication of the Task Force and the National Coalition for the Homeless, the Guide provides many answers to concerns about safety and privacy for transgender residents based on successes at real shelters across the country, the bulk of which are addressed without monetary expenditures.

(January 2004; 56 pp.; \$10.00; www.thetaskforce.org/library/)

Education Policy

ISSUES AFFECTING LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER YOUTH

by Jason Cianciotto and Sean Cahill

Education Policy provides a comprehensive overview of social science research on the extent and impact of harassment and violence against LGBT students, as well as the public policy interventions that support LGBT students and make schools safer. It includes the first in-depth analysis of how President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act affects LGBT students, profiles eight students who stood up to anti-LGBT abuse, and articulates an agenda for future research and policy analysis. (November 2003; 168 pp.; \$20.00; www.thetaskforce.org/library/)

Selling Us Short

HOW SOCIAL SECURITY PRIVATIZATION WILL AFFECT LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER AMERICANS

by Mandy Hu

Selling Us Short highlights the disproportionate impact of President Bush's plan to privatize Social Security on LGBT Americans. LGBT Americans, on average, have lower incomes than their heterosexual counterparts, and they are less able to keep what they earn. This translates into lower Social Security payments in retirement. This report also explains how the cuts in retirement benefits for all but the poorest workers inherent to Bush's plan will disproportionately hurt LGBT elders. (August 2004; 31 pp. Available at www.thetaskforce.org/library/)

A Report From "Love Won Out: Addressing, Understanding, and Preventing Homosexuality"

by Cynthia Burack and Jyl J. Josephson

This report provides a first-hand account of an "ex-gay" conference sponsored by the evangelical Christian group Focus on the Family. The report's authors detail the theories and world views espoused by the presenters and "ex-gay" leaders who spoke at the conference, one of at least four sponsored annually by Focus on the Family around the country. It also provides information and analysis about the "Love Won Out" ministry, and concludes with some political implications of the "ex-gay" movement for LGBT people. (May 2004; 20 pp. Available at www.thetaskforce.org/library/)

Caregiving

AMONG LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER ELDERS IN NEW YORK

The largest-ever study of caregiving among LGBT people 50 and older, by Marjorie H. Cantor, Mark Brennan, and R. Andrew Shippy, documents how central older gay people are to caregiving, both for family of origin members as well as for same-sex partners and close friends. It also examines unequal treatment under key policies such as the Family and Medical Leave Act. (June 2004; 108 pp.; \$10.00; www.thetaskforce.org/library/)

Family Policy

ISSUES AFFECTING GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER FAMILIES

This report by Sean Cahill, Mitra Ellen, and Sarah Tobias examines family policy as it relates to LGBT people and their loved ones. It provides information useful to those advancing supportive legislation and policy, particularly at the state and local levels. Covers partner recognition; antigay adoption and foster policies; youth and elder issues; health care and end-of-life concerns; and the impact of welfare reform and the faith-based initiative. (December 2002; 216 pp.; \$20.00; www.nglhf.org/library/)

Say it Loud: I'm Black and I'm Proud

THE BLACK PRIDE SURVEY 2000

This largest-ever study of Black LGBT people is the result of a two-year collaboration between nine Black LGBT Pride organizations, the Task Force Policy Institute, and five African-American researchers. The survey of nearly 2,700 respondents documents significant and often surprising demographics, experiences, and policy priorities of Black LGBT people. (March 2002; 86 pp.; \$10.00; www.nglhf.org/library/)

Campus Climate

FOR GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER PEOPLE: A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Based on a survey of nearly 1700 students, faculty, and staff at 14 colleges and universities across the country, this report, by Susan R. Rankin, documents anti-LGBT bias and harassment, along with levels of institutional support for LGBT people. It highlights differences in experiences between various identity groups and concludes with recommendations for creating an inclusive and supportive environment for LGBT people. (May 2003; 70 pp.; \$10.00; www.nglhf.org/library/)

Leaving Our Children Behind

WELFARE REFORM AND THE GAY, LESBIAN, BISEXUAL, AND TRANSGENDER COMMUNITY

This report, by Sean Cahill and Kenneth T. Jones, describes the reactionary agenda of senior policymakers in the Bush administration to change social service provision in the United States. It examines welfare reform and the impact of marriage and fatherhood initiatives, abstinence-only-until-marriage education, and the faith-based initiative on the LGBT community. (December 2001; 112 pp.; **\$10.00** www.nglhf.org/library/)

Social Discrimination and Health

THE CASE OF LATINO GAY MEN AND HIV RISK

This report, by renowned AIDS researchers Rafael Diaz and George Ayala, documents the correlations among homophobia, racism, poverty, and HIV risk, and has significant implications for prevention strategies. Although Latinos were the subject of this case study, the findings are relevant to other communities of color and marginalized groups. Available in English and Spanish. (July 2001; SOLD OUT; download at www.nglhf.org/library/)

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