



Most Worshipful Union Grand Lodge
Most Ancient and Honorable Fraternity
Free & Accepted Masons of
Florida, Belize, Central America & Jurisdiction, Inc.
Prince Hall Affiliated
Founded 1870
The Honorable Jeffery G. Jones
19th Most Worshipful Grand Master

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10/17/20

The African American and the Choice of Political Affiliation: *One Grand Master's Opinion*

Choose for your tribes wise, understanding, and experienced men, and I will appoint them as your heads.'

Deuteronomy 1:13



There is a new movement that is slowly—but quietly—gaining momentum in these yet to be United States of America. This movement, known as Blexit (Black Exit of the Democratic Party), is silently supported by some White Americans, and sadly being led by a Black woman with ties to the Republican Party. I say sadly because black people have always talked about the importance of knowing their history to avoid the possibility of repeating it.

Many African Americans, who choose to affiliate with the Republican Party, appear to do so on singular platform issues. For example, some supporters cite the case of Roe vs. Wade, because of their stance on pro-life. Others are Veterans, who somehow perceive the Republican party more patriotic. Additionally, there are individuals, who worked hard to reach the upper middle class, and now choose to embrace the Republican ideology. However, in my opinion, regardless of the platform, very few will find common ground with their White Republican counterparts. Those who manage to work their way into the inner Republican circle are sometimes used as strategic pawns to enact a larger, covert agenda.

In light of the significance of unity at the polls, this communication is written to provide *my perception* of the Republican agenda to divide African Americans. Below is a synopsis of historical accounts when African Americans were unified in their quest for equal rights and to vote.

Many of our Brothers and Sisters in the African American Community have been seen supporting the 45th President of the United States of America: Donald J. Trump. This is perplexing to many, to say the least. The majority of Americans are acutely aware that Trump associates with White Supremacist, Neo Nazi, and White Nationalist organizations—most notably, the Ku Klux Klan (his father, Fred Trump, was detained at a Klan rally) and the Proud Boys. As is documented on

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various syndicated shows, the President refers to members of these organizations as “fine people”, while ridiculing and promoting violence against any person, persons, or groups that speak out against racism and injustice in America. His recent admonishment of the Proud Boys during a nationally televised Presidential debate (i.e. “.....stand down and stand by.”) was an international embarrassment to many in this country. What is more, this portion of his response during the debate was viewed as a call to action by the Proud Boys. Equally important, his response was also viewed by communities of color as a direct threat to their life and liberty. The President’s rhetoric created such extreme views among radical, right-wing extremist that two major political figures (i.e. Governors of Michigan and Virginia) were recently under the threat of kidnapping, torture, and murder by a group of domestic terrorists. This should serve as a wakeup call to not only people of color, but to **ALL PEOPLE OF DECENCY**. Moreover, the President’s actions may have emboldened these hate-filled groups to commit unprovoked acts of violence. Depending on the group’s collective response to his request, this country could very well be on the verge of a second Civil War.

While some of our Black Brothers and Sisters are increasingly identifying with the Republican Party, it is my belief that they do so out of ignorance of this country’s true political history. Believing that the Republican Party still the party of “Honest” Abe, some people of color identify with Republicans because of past victories. Additionally, due to the fact that Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, he is viewed by many as the Republican leader who freed the slaves. During Lincoln’s time, however, the Republican party was largely populated by the citizens of the Northern states. As inhabitants of Union states, African Americans found freedom during the slave trade, and great opportunities for advancement after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. Nevertheless, in the south, the Democratic party was largely colonized by former slave owners, who fought in the American Civil War to maintain the slave trade. Defined as Southern Democrats, who seceded from the party in 1948 in opposition to its policy of extending civil rights, extremists were affectionately referred to as “Dixiecrats”. Understanding this dynamic, during those times, it was quite difficult for African Americans to consider affiliating themselves with the Democratic party or the “Party of their Oppressors.”

Fast forward to 1965, the last decade of the Jim Crow era and nearly 100 years after the passing of the U.S. Constitution’s 15th Amendment in 1869, this country was in turmoil—much like it is today. The Civil Rights movement marks a brutal time when lynching blacks in the south was a common occurrence. It was also a time when the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of racial segregation under the guise of “Separate but Equal” (i.e. Plessy vs Ferguson). As such, there

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were separate restrooms, restaurants, hotels, water coolers, and education systems, none of which were equal by any stretch of the imagination.

In 1963, John F. Kennedy, a president loved and admired by many African Americans, was assassinated. Although President Kennedy represented a new day in America, many believed he may have been assassinated due to his empathy for black people and their oppression in this country. The successor to the Kennedy presidency, President Lyndon B. Johnson was not nearly as popular with African Americans. As the new leader of the United States, President Johnson felt many of the pressures of the Civil Rights movement because he was under intense scrutiny by numerous black leaders. Most of the civil right pressures experienced by Johnson were due to the profound determination and charismatic leadership of and the non-violent protests led by the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr. King understood that people of color would never ascend to their rightful place in America and never truly obtain the promises of the U.S. Constitution, *unless they had a voice. And that voice was the ability to vote.* Without such inalienable rights, Dr. King believed that African Americans would never have control over their own lives. Although the 15th Amendment granted Black men the right to vote, the laws of the Jim Crow era still made it far too easy for racists to block voting during that era.

Under pressure from Dr King and the many Civil Rights activists of the 1960s, President Johnson signed the Voter's Rights Act of 1965, making discrimination at the polls a crime. It eliminated the barriers at the state and local levels, which prevented rights which were granted to Black men with the passing 15th Amendment. Shortly after the Voter's Rights Act of 1965 was signed, in protest of Johnson's decision, some Northern democrats and White Supremacist of the deep south made a mass exit or a "Wexit" to the Republican Party, taking their discriminatory ideologies with them.

When considering lessons learned after the Wexit movement, supporting the current Blexit philosophy is a foolish idea that divides black people and the black voice. This movement also marginalizes people of color and could adversely impact our future for decades to come. Some Black Republicans abandoned their own interest, choosing to follow the old ideology of their former oppressors. Such division and manipulation should be expected, when there is systemic racism in this country. However, the willful, self-imposed division perpetrated by our own people is a greater threat to us all.

The Prince Hall Masonic Family is one of the oldest and largest groups of people of color and an institution of faith, which believes heartily in the concept of unity. We are Men and Women who

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have been working together for self and community improvement since our inception. For more than a century, we supported one another and our collective, under the protection of God, our Father in Heaven. Let us Continue in this same realm and set a unified example for the rest of the world to follow. Keep in mind that a house divided will fall; however, five (5) fingers of the hand, united into one (1) fist, can deliver a powerful blow. Let's continue to unite for the betterment of the United States, people of color, and the Prince Hall Family. Let's remember to vote and encourage others to do the same.

WHETHER YOU EMBRACE THE PHILOSOPHY OF REPUBLICANS, DEMOCRATS, INDEPENDENTS, OR OTHER PARTIES, TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED AND LEAVE NOTHING TO CHANCE. MAKE A MIGHTY FIST AND VOTE!!!!!! OUR MOST IMPORTANT OBLIGATION TO HISTORY AND OURSELVES IS TO VOTE!



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