

The Clintons and the Politics of Racism: Hillary Clinton and the Plight of African Americans

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Racism in America is a sensitive issue for politicians especially among U.S. presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. The question you need to ask yourself is Hillary Clinton a true champion of the African-American community? Her husband and former U.S. president Bill Clinton was called “the first black president” by author Toni Morrison in The New Yorker in 1998 where she wrote “white skin notwithstanding, this is our first black President. Blacker than any actual black person who could ever be elected in our children’s lifetime.” Morrison’s comment did not have any merit regarding President Clinton as the “first black president”, in fact his actions against the African American community suggests otherwise.

Does Hillary Clinton on the other hand care about the plight of a minority group who suffers from high-unemployment and incarceration rates that seems to be increasing year after year? Actions do speak louder than words and sometimes in Hillary Clinton’s case “words” alone can say it all. You don’t have to dig deep to find out the truth about Bill and Hillary’s actions against the African American community.



In fact, there are past words and actions that prove the Clinton’s policies have been destructive for the African American community. It is a fact that William J. Clinton’s Crime Bill and Welfare Reform devastated African Americans and to an extent the Latino Community, both policies were fully supported by Hillary Clinton. It was the Clinton crime bill that has incarcerated African Americans at unprecedented levels. According to Michelle Alexander, a human rights advocate, legal scholar and author of ‘*The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*’, says the Clintons decimated Black America. Alexander wrote an incisive article for ‘*The Nation Magazine*’ in early February of this year criticizing Bill Clinton’s policies regarding the African American community titled ‘*Why Hillary Clinton Doesn’t Deserve the Black Vote: From the crime bill to welfare reform, policies Bill Clinton enacted—and Hillary Clinton supported—decimated black America*’. Alexander wrote:

Bill Clinton presided over the largest increase in federal and state prison inmates of any president in American history. Clinton did not declare the War on Crime or the War on Drugs—those wars were declared before Reagan was elected and long before crack hit the streets—but he escalated it beyond what many conservatives had imagined possible. He supported the 100-to-1 sentencing disparity for crack versus powder cocaine, which produced staggering racial injustice in sentencing and boosted funding for drug-law enforcement.

Clinton championed the idea of a federal “three strikes” law in his 1994 State of the Union address and, months later, signed a \$30 billion crime bill that created dozens of new federal capital crimes, mandated life sentences for some three-time offenders, and authorized more than \$16 billion for state prison grants and the expansion of police forces. The legislation was hailed by mainstream-media outlets as a victory for the Democrats, who “were able to wrest the crime issue from the Republicans and make it their own.”

A fact that holds true today in modern day America. The *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*(NAACP) Criminal Justice Fact Sheet explains the incarceration rate of young African American men:

African Americans now constitute nearly 1 million of the total 2.3 million incarcerated population.

African Americans are incarcerated at nearly six times the rate of whites.

Together, African American and Hispanics comprised 58% of all prisoners in 2008, even though African Americans and Hispanics make up approximately one quarter of the US population

The U.S. population has roughly 5% of the world population while it holds 25% of the world’s prison population which places the U.S. at number #1 for the most prisoners in the entire planet.

Regarding the U.S. economy, African-American’s and Latino’s are suffering from high-unemployment rates and reduced benefits for poor families. The correlation between Clinton’s crime bill and the economy is striking. Many argued that the Clinton Administration’s economic policies were effective in reducing unemployment rates for African Americans but that could not be further from the truth. Michelle Alexander makes its clear about Bill Clinton’s economic miracle:

The truth is more troubling. As unemployment rates sank to historically low levels for white Americans in the 1990s, the jobless rate among black men in their 20s who didn’t have a college degree rose to its highest level ever. This increase in joblessness was propelled by the skyrocketing incarceration rate

Alexander further explains:

Why is this not common knowledge? Because government statistics like poverty and unemployment rates do not include incarcerated people. As Harvard sociologist Bruce Western explains: “Much of the optimism about declines in racial inequality and the power of the US model of economic growth is misplaced once we account for the invisible poor, behind the walls of America’s prisons and jails.” When Clinton left office in 2001, the true jobless rate for young, non-college-educated black men (including those behind bars) was 42 percent. This figure was never reported. Instead, the media claimed that unemployment rates for African Americans had fallen to record lows, neglecting to mention that this miracle was possible only because incarceration rates were now at record highs. Young black men weren’t looking for work at high rates during the Clinton era because they were now behind bars—out of sight, out of mind, and no longer counted in poverty and unemployment statistics.

To make matters worse, the federal safety net for poor families was torn to shreds by the Clinton administration in its effort to “end welfare as we know it.” In his 1996 State of the Union address, given during his re-election campaign, Clinton declared that “the era of big government is over” and immediately sought to prove it by dismantling the federal welfare system known as Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC). The welfare-reform legislation that he signed—which Hillary Clinton ardently supported then and characterized as a success as recently as 2008—replaced the federal safety net with a block grant to the states, imposed a five-year lifetime limit on welfare assistance, added work requirements, barred undocumented immigrants from licensed professions, and slashed overall public welfare funding by \$54 billion (some was later restored)

Bill Clinton’s policies increased the incarceration rate for African Americans which benefitted the Prison Industrial Complex while claiming he reduced the unemployment rates at the same time ignoring the clear correlation between both statistics. African American politicians support Hillary Clinton as “loyal Democrats” but the truth is they are being used by the Clinton political machine to win votes and ignore the failed policies that have been destructive to their communities.

Hillary Clinton and the “Super Predators” Speech

Hillary Clinton called young African Americans “Super Predators” in 1996 but the media is quick to forget.

Video: Hillary Clinton in Keene, New Hampshire, on January 25, 1996:

Actor and former Rapper from the popular 1990’s group ‘NWA’, Ice Cube was interviewed by Bloomberg news this past April and criticized Hillary Clinton for calling African Americans “*Super Predators.*” He said “*To call your own citizens ‘super predators’ is pretty harsh and a pretty big indictment,*” Ice Cube said “*It’s really not solving the problem, it’s just making it worse.*”

“My Friend and Mentor Robert C. Byrd” Hillary Praises Former KKK Member

Senator Robert C. Byrd was a “*former racist*” but changed his views when he got into political office. Hillary Clinton saw him as a mentor. Here is Hillary Clinton’s statement after his passing in 2010 when she said “*Today our country has lost a true American original, my friend and mentor Robert C. Byrd*” she went on to say.

It is almost impossible to imagine the United States Senate without Robert Byrd. He was not just its longest serving member, he was its heart, its soul, and its historian. From my first day in the Senate, I sought out his guidance, and he was always generous with his time and his wisdom.

I admired his tireless advocacy for his West Virginia constituents, his fierce defense of the Constitution and the traditions of the Senate, and his passion for a government that improves the lives of the people it serves.

Former Democratic U.S. Representative and Senator from West Virginia Robert Carlyle “Bob” Byrd was a former member of the Ku Klux Klan. In the 1940’s Byrd created a chapter of the Ku Klux Klan in Sophia, West Virginia. A racist by every definition, Byrd refused to serve in the military with African-Americans during World War II in a letter he wrote to

Senator Theodore Bilbo (D-MS) in 1944. What he said is striking:

I shall never fight in the armed forces with a negro by my side ... Rather I should die a thousand times, and see Old Glory trampled in the dirt never to rise again, than to see this beloved land of ours become degraded by race mongrels, a throwback to the blackest specimen from the wilds

Calling African Americans "*race mongrels*" is as racist as you can get. Hillary Clinton knows Byrd's history of hatred against the African American community but he was her friend, her mentor. Maybe he taught Hillary Clinton how to maneuver against the republicans on the senate floor on various issues? Who knows? In a letter to the Grand Wizard (a leader of the Klan Byrd stated "The Klan is needed today as never before, and I am anxious to see its rebirth here in West Virginia and in every state in the nation." In 1946, Byrd supposedly became "*disinterested*" in the KKK as he changed his stance on his membership when he said "*After about a year, I became disinterested, quit paying my dues, and dropped my membership in the organization. During the nine years that have followed, I have never been interested in the Klan.*" He also claimed he joined the KKK because it was exciting and it was anti-Communist.

In 1997 Byrd said "*be sure you avoid the Ku Klux Klan. Don't get that albatross around your neck. Once you've made that mistake, you inhibit your operations in the political arena*" in an interview stating that joining a racist organization can destroy your political career if you decide to become a politician. Sure it was decades ago that Byrd was a member of an organization that consistently lynched African-Americans but his views changed as the years went by. I guess he finally saw the light! In the 1960's Byrd backed Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) against John F. Kennedy for President in West Virginia primaries. The Kennedy's took advantage of Byrd's past regarding his involvement with the KKK and Kennedy went on to win the primary in that state. Byrd voted for the 1960 Civil Rights Act, during the following summer that allowed a measure by LBJ which allowed federal judges to appoint referees (or monitors) to register voters who were discriminated against if they proved it in court.

It is important to know Byrd opposed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Around that time, Byrd supported the Vietnam War but decades later, in 2002, he voted against the Bush administration's push for the war on Iraq (Hillary voted for the war).

Going back to Byrd's history of diplomatic racism, Byrd filibustered (delayed a vote to prevent the passage) the Civil Rights Act for 14 hours straight (which showed his commitment to defeat the Civil Rights Act) but eventually backed it in 1968 after his views changed when he became a practicing Baptist. The real reason he changed his views was mainly to move the Democratic Party into a mainstream political party that needed the African American votes not because "*Jesus Christ*" assured him salvation and a one way ticket to heaven. Byrd was aligned with other Democrats and Republicans during his political career that opposed "*desegregation*" and "*civil rights*" for African-Americans. One of the Democrats Byrd was closely aligned with was Senator James Eastland (D-Miss), Lyndon B. Johnson once said, "*Jim Eastland could be standing right in the middle of the worst Mississippi flood ever known, and he'd say the niggers caused it, helped out by the Communists.*" Senator James Eastland and several other Senators including Byrd attempted to block the confirmation of the first African American to the Federal Court of Appeals and the U.S. Supreme Court, Thurgood Marshall. All of the political actions Senator Byrd took against the African American community are well documented. Hillary is not ignorant of the

historic facts of her colleagues in the halls of Washington; nothing is really secret among them. It is on public record that Byrd was a member of an organization with racist ideologies particularly against African Americans. Byrd's participation in the KKK was a long time ago and people do change, people do make mistakes, and Byrd made a huge one which he claimed he regretted. But his actions in Washington clearly prove that he did not support the possibility of the African American community becoming a major political power in the halls of Washington. That was clear.

Is Hillary Clinton a friend of the African American community? Is she a "closet racist"? Not sure. But one thing is clear; Hillary and Bill Clinton both have a long history of supporting policies and certain politicians that have been more harmful to the African American community than one might think. Bill Clinton playing saxophone on the Arsenio Hall Show in the 1990's did not mean anything; it was just a political stunt for the African American community to show he had some sort of "soul". He does not. The Clinton's have decimated the African American community, yet Hillary and her supporters believe she is the answer to the problems facing the African American community today and that is just wishful thinking, nothing more.

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