

OPINION

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Republican Leader Must Step Down

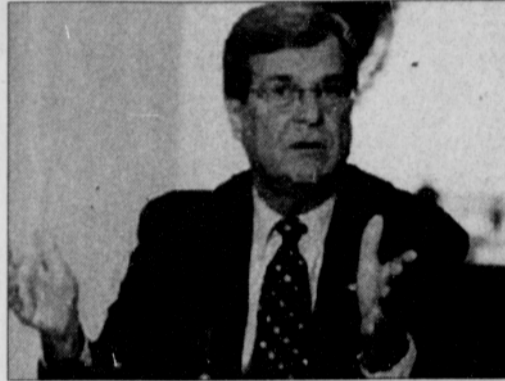
Hateful bigotry has no place in the halls of Congress

The NAACP has called for Senator Trent Lott to resign from the majority leader-elect post citing recent bigoted remarks he made during the congressional celebration for Senator Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday.

The junior senator from Mississippi said: "When Strom Thurmond ran for president we voted for him. We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead we wouldn't of had all these problems over all these years, either." Thurmond, the outgoing senator from South Carolina, ran for president in 1948 on a staunch segregationist platform.

Kweisi Mfume, NAACP President & CEO, said: "Senator Lott's statement is the kind of callous, calculated, hateful bigotry that has no place in the halls of the Congress. His remarks are dangerously divisive and certainly unbecoming to a man who is to hold such a highly esteemed leadership role as the majority leader of the senate." Lott is scheduled to become the senate majority leader next month when the 108th Congress convenes.

Mfume added, "Sen. Lott should resign from the position of majority leader-elect to make way for another member of the Republican Party whose moral compass is pointed



Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss.

toward improving race relations and not dredging up this nation's poor, polarizing performance of the past."

Lott Mindset is No Surprise to Mississippians

The recent statement by U.S. Sen. Trent Lott regarding his support and Mississippi's support of Sen. Thurmond's candidacy for President of the United States in 1948 is shameful, disrespectful, insensitive and racist!

The mindset that produces such a statement from a Mississippi Senator comes as no real surprise to the Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus or most black people in the state of Mississippi. We live with and experience such attitudes at all levels on a daily basis.

While such attitudes of racial bias and indifference exist throughout our country, it is very disappointing to note most are prevalent in the South and seemingly "housed" in "the Republican Party."

We hope this embarrassing exposure to "truth" regarding Sen. Lott and others with similar beliefs will cause them to reexamine their values of morality, their commitment to our Constitutional Principles and be guided by "where all men are created equal" from our Declaration of Independence.

We hope and pray Majority Leader Trent Lott would take the necessary steps to genuinely change his heart or "do the right thing" by declining any and all positions of public leadership.

Phillip West,
Mississippi Legislative Black Caucus chairman

DON'T TAKE THE BLACK VOTE FOR GRANTED

Political pundits were quick to attribute the Republican sweep on low voter turnout among Blacks, however, as actual numbers are slowly compiled, it appears that African American voter turnout did not "plummet."

Political parties must stop taking the Black vote for granted and pay closer attention to issues that affect the Black community, said a panel of African American leaders during a post election briefing hosted recently by the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation.

The panel suggested that candidates stop blaming their losses on low voter turnout and focus on creating clear messages and agendas



A panel of political experts and activists discuss black voter turnout in the recent election during a post-election briefing hosted by the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation.

that include the needs of those in the Black community. Also, elected officials need to recognize that they will be held accountable once they're in office.

According to anecdotal evidence collected from NCBCP at sites in 60 cities across the country, Blacks went to the polls at about the same rate they did in past midterm elections.

I light this candle to Garrett Morgan for inventing the traffic light and to Dr. Charles Drew for discovering the method of preserving blood plasma.

I light this candle for the bus boycotters who walked for an entire year.

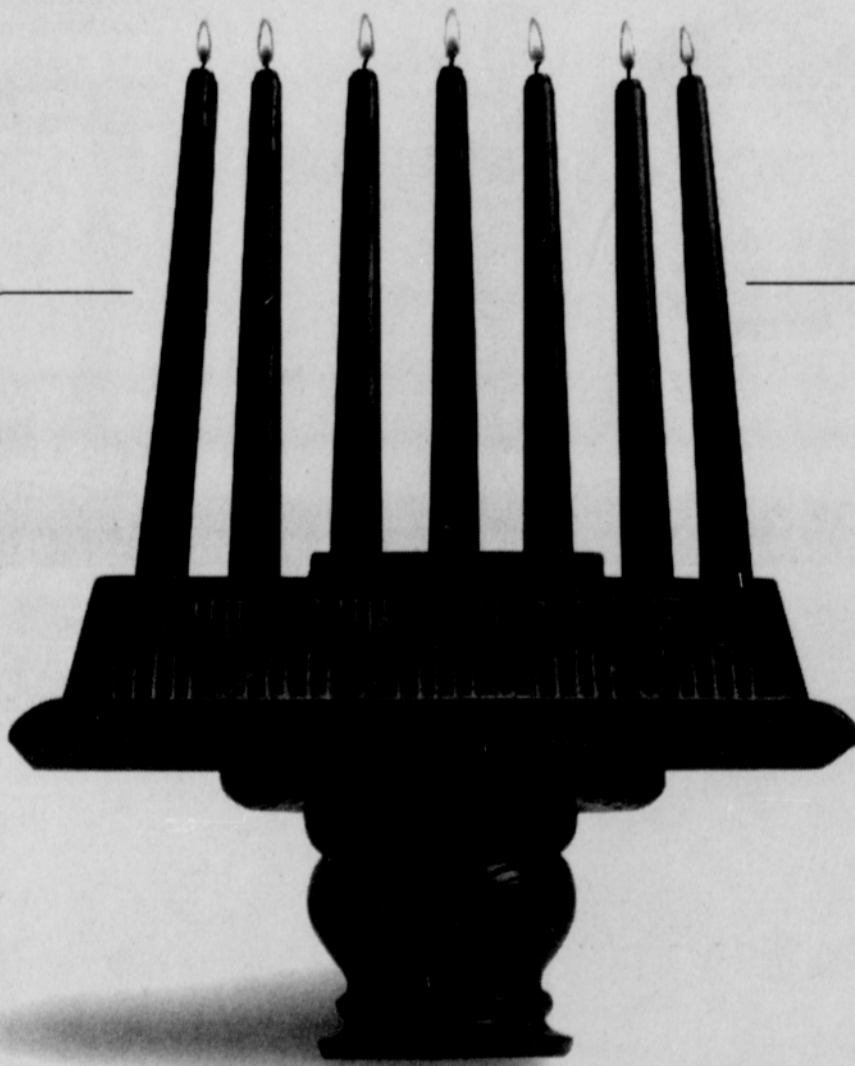
I light this candle for the punches thrown by Joe Louis.

I light this candle remembering the self-determination of Harriet Tubman.

I light this candle for the punches not thrown by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

I light this candle in honor of the slaves, who stuck together.

I light this candle for the faith that lit the way for all of them.



This week, we join the community in lighting Kwanzaa candles to the African-Americans who made the path brighter for all of us. Happy Kwanzaa.

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