

Let's Talk about Jobs, Race, and Herman Cain

Democrats and Republicans chant in unison jobs, jobs, jobs. President Obama offers an American Jobs plan, but Republicans use the filibuster in the Senate to kill it and a Republican majority will not consider it in the House. House Democrats offered a heftier jobs bill, but it is ignored by the majority in control. Republicans offer more of the same - tax cuts for the rich whom they call "job creators" - but they have put no actual jobs plan on the table.

As a result, 15 million Americans still languish, officially unemployed, with another 10 million underemployed or so discouraged they have stopped looking for work.

One of the leading Republican candidates for President, Texas Gov. Rick Perry, is an advocate of Tenth Amendment (states' rights) solutions and we are suspicious of anyone advocating Tenth Amendment solutions because that amendment protected the peculiar institution. Further, the Tenth Amendment solutions guy was also found to have taken friends, colleagues and contributors hunting on a ranch widely known by the name on a rock at its entrance called Niggerhead.

While in the past, unacceptable language used by Minister Louis Farrakhan was overwhelmingly



**DEMOCRAT
REP.**

Jesse Jackson Jr.

condemned by a House resolution, Republicans voted down a similar resolution that would have con-

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But what if not condemning racism when it raises its ugly head is actually diverting and delaying the jobs discussion? What if Herman Cain's presence in the race is actually camouflaging the fact that President Obama's jobs plan (and virtually anything else he proposes) is actually being blocked, not just by conservatives, but by white conservative Republicans determined to use any means necessary, including race - as both Republicans and

word lovers before they were murdered. Most recently James Anderson was murdered in Mississippi and the young white perpetrator reportedly said, "I ran that n****r over."

If the American people were to conclude that white Republicans - not just conservative Republicans - were actively working to defeat Barack Obama because of his race, they would overwhelmingly reject the Republican Party, its candidates and proposals, and understand more clearly a Republican strategy of blockage and obstinacy.

The heart and soul of "conservatism" is the South. When race was rampant, it was the solid Democratic South. In today's "post-racial" society it's the solid Republican South - minus the African and Hispanic American congressional districts. But why would the poorest, least educated, most ill-housed and most unhealthy region of the country be solidly conservative? Conserving such poverty seems unnatural. So what are the people of the South conserving?

Clearly, historically, the rich - be they slave-owners or possessors of other wealth or power - were conserving their privilege. They used the fear of blacks to manipulate whites and blacks politically to keep them separated, and from

rebelling and joining forces to fight their mutual state of unemployment, poverty, lack of health care, housing and education.

Poor whites were not told the truth about the Civil War - that they were fighting to protect the slave-owners' economic self-interest. Instead they were told they were fighting for states' rights. Rather than join the civil rights movement for social, economic and political equality for all in the '60s, poor whites were told to stay away because African Americans were being manipulated by "communists" and "socialists" like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and now Obama.

So when the first 15 Presidents avoided resolving the race issue the result was an explosion, the American Civil War. And when white politicians know the American weakness on race, and exploit it politically, we can never really get to the jobs discussion.

Dealing with and getting beyond "Niggerhead" may actually be the key to addressing the needs of the American people and unlocking a real discussion on jobs.

Jesse L. Jackson, Jr. represents Illinois' 2nd Congressional District: the people of the South Side and southeast suburbs of Chicago.

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