

News

Thanks, But No Thanks: CBC Rejects Second Meeting with Trump

By **Lauren Victoria Burke** (NNPA Newswire Contributor)

Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Cedric Richmond (D-La.) rejected an offer from the White House to meet with all 49 members of the caucus, citing steps that the Trump Administration has taken, “that will affirmatively hurt Black communities.”

In a letter addressed to President Trump, Richmond wrote that, “Your Administration has yet to provide a response to the policies we presented. Additionally, your Administration has not followed through on a pledge you made to us to facilitate meetings with relevant Cabinet officials.”

The letter also noted that roughly 60 percent of the proposed cuts in Trump’s budget plan will slash programs that serve the most vulnerable Americans.

Pell Grants

“For example, you propose a \$4 billion cut to Pell Grants that help low-income college students pay their tuition,” the letter said. “You also proposed the complete elimination of the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LI-HEAP), which helps seniors and other helpless populations heat their homes in the winter and cool them in the summer.”

Drug Wars

The letter continued: “[Attorney General Jeff Sessions] issued guidance to federal prosecutors to accelerate the failed war on drugs that will continue to wreck the Black community and exacerbate our nation’s shameful scourge of mass incarceration. Attorney General Sessions has also explicitly stated his unwillingness to utilize consent decrees to protect the civil rights of Americans and has called for an agency-wide review of these agreements. These short-sighted decisions represent willful ignorance by relying on ideology instead of data and compassion.”

Historically Black Colleges and Universities

The letter also said that

“Given the lack of response to any of the many concerns we have raised with you and your Administration, we decline your invitation for all 49 members of the Congressional Black Caucus to meet with you

some Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) have lost funding through TRIO programs under Education Secretary Betsy DeVos’ leadership.

Although, Richmond speaks for the entire



CBC Chairman Cedric Richmond (D-La.) wrote that President Trump has taken steps that hurt the Black community.

caucus, some CBC members are divided on the next move. In the letter, Richmond suggested that Trump reach out

asked about the invite.

Rep. Al Lawson (D-Fla.), who is a freshman member to the United States Congress, but a veteran lawmaker from Florida, spoke with NNPA Newswire in June and said that he wants to meet with Trump.

“I talked to Omarosa [Manigault] about the opportunity to meet with [President Trump] and talk about some issues that are very important to me in Florida,” said Lawson. “I think it’s important to meet. I might not agree with his issues and his politics but we’re here to work. This is someone who is going to be here for the next three and a half years. You have to work with him.”

The first meeting between members of the CBC and Presi-

dent Trump took place on March 22. At that time, seven members of the CBC met with the president and Vice President Mike Pence. The meeting included: Rep. Richmond along with Reps. Andre Carson (D-Ind.), Karen Bass (D-Calif.), Jim Clyburn (D-S.C.), Brenda Lawrence (D-Mich.), Anthony Brown (D-Ma.) and Gwen Moore (D-Wis.).

A substantive meeting between the president and the entire CBC would be a long shot.

“Given the lack of response to any of the many concerns we have raised with you and your Administration, we decline your invitation for all 49

members of the Congressional Black Caucus to meet with you,” wrote Richmond. “The CBC, and the millions of people we represent, have a lot to lose under your Administration. I fail to see how a social gathering would benefit the policies we advocate for.”

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Book

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still eludes the majority of Blacks in the country. Meanwhile, plenty of TV pundits point to Obama as proof that the U.S. has arrived at a post-racial reality where skin color is irrelevant.

However, since millions of Blacks continue to suffer from a host of woes associated with the inner city, they remain in critical need of political leadership. That is the contention of Gil Robertson, author of “Book of Black Heroes: Political Leaders Past and Present.”

His timely tome is composed of biographies of about four dozen African American icons who have served in the political arena over the past century and a half. The enlightening opus’ aim is not only to educate but to inspire the next generation of selfless torchbearers.

Many of the luminar-

ies profiled are household names, such as President Obama, Representatives John Lewis and Maxine Waters, and Senator Cory Booker. Others members of Congress are rising stars in their respective parties, ranging from Democrats Kamala Harris and Keith Ellison to Republicans Tim Scott and Mia Love.

Along the way, we learn that Ellison converted from Catholicism to Islam while in college and that Harris is of Jamaican and East Indian extraction. Some of the most fascinating entries are about little-known leaders from the Reconstruction Era, like Pinckney Pinchback who served as Governor of Louisiana for 15 days, and Hiram Revels who was elected to represent Mississippi in the U.S. Senate in 1870.

Overall, a priceless primer on the intrepid, political pioneers who have spearheaded the African American fight for equality.



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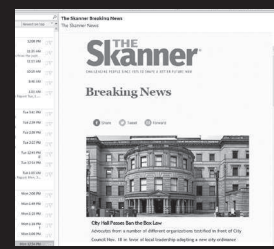
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