

Let's elect Tim Scott President

Written by William Reed, □ NNPA Columnist
Monday, 07 January 2013 14:20



If Sen. Timothy Eugene Scott is the GOP standard bearer in the 2016 presidential elections, will any Black Americans vote for him? The appointment of Scott to a U.S. Senate seat representing South Carolina is the Republicans' most recent example of doing everything they can to shed the perception that the party is comprised, and run by old, White men. Being anti-Republican, however, is systemic among African Americans.

Making Scott the first African-American senator from the South since Reconstruction is a major step forward for the Republicans. The move made Scott the GOP's most prominent African American. If Scott runs for president, as did Sen. Barack Obama, it's questionable how Blacks will vote. Some Blacks are calling Scott, "another Clarence Thomas."

Seven Blacks have served in the U.S Senate – four happened to be Republicans. The first was Hiram Revels, a Republican from Mississippi. From the Civil War to struggles for equality in the 1950s and 1960s, the Republican Party has led the way on civil rights, abolishing slavery, passing the 14th and 15th Amendments, ending Jim Crow and enacting the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Like so many of today's Black males, Scott was raised by a single mother. He was "lost and struggling" until a Chick-fil-A franchise owner took an interest in him. It was this relationship that taught Scott individualism and conservative values. Scott praises his mother and the late conservative entrepreneur John Moniz, for teaching him "basic Biblical business practices."

Scott is the type of Black success story most would brag about. After barely making it through high school, Scott went to college on a football scholarship, became an insurance salesman

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and eventually a U.S. congressman and senator. Scott's story is akin to many Americans who struggle early in life and rise to greatness through hard work and determination.

Scott is a Black role model. Unfortunately, many of the opportunities Scott was able to take advantage of are not available today. Prior to being elected to Congress in 2010, Scott served on the Charleston County Council for 13 years, including four terms as chairman and in the South Carolina House of Representatives for two years where he was elected Chairman of the Freshman Caucus and House Whip. He owned Tim Scott Allstate and was a partner in Pathway Real Estate Group.

African-American U.S. Rep. Jim Clyburn, South Carolina's only Democratic congressman says, "I am confident Tim Scott will represent South Carolina and the country honorably." The South Carolina African-American Chamber of Commerce says, "He brings a unique – and badly-needed perspective – to Washington." The 47-year-old-Scott is a Tea Party conservative and isn't married, making South Carolina the only state in the Union with two unmarried senators. Lindsey Graham is the other.

Scott is long on Biblical values and, in 1997, supported having the Ten Commandments posted outside county council chambers. Scott replaces Sen. Jim DeMint, an influential conservative and Tea Party favorite, who resigned to become president of the Heritage Foundation. DeMint took over the conservative think tank from Heritage founder Ed Fuelner, whose million dollar salary in 2010 was 10 times DeMint's \$174,000 annual Senate salary.

Scott's appointment was an adept and "smooth move" on the part of Republicans. The move means that this new breed of Republicans are consulting veteran Black Republicans such as strategist Raynard Jackson who says, "Republicans will not gain significant Black support unless they take policy positions that advance core Black interests ... African Americans need capitalism and conservative values, and Scott is a great vehicle."

Prior to Scott, only six Blacks have served in the U.S. Senate. They were two Mississippians – Revels who served in 1870 – 1874 and Blanche Bruce who served from 1875 to 1881; Edward Brooke of Massachusetts from 1967 to 1979; Carol Moseley Braun of Illinois from 1993 to 1999; Barack Obama of Illinois from 2005 until he resigned after his presidential election in 2008; and Roland Burris, who was appointed to replace Obama and served until November 2010.

William Reed is head of the Business Exchange Network and available for speaking/seminar projects through the Bailey Group.org.