

## The State of Equality and Justice in America: No one can change the change

Written by Dr. E. Faye Williams, Esq.

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The state of equality and justice in America is shameful-especially since the election of President Barack Obama. Unlike many of my friends who think America is going to hell in a hand basket, and have given up thinking things will get better for those who've been marginalized for so long, I still have hope for a better day.

When Barack Obama was running for President of the United States, a close friend told me, "Mark my word. When Senator Obama is elected, some people will go absolutely crazy, and after he's re-elected, they will go mad!" His rationale was that the average White person had never had the opportunity to wake up every morning and see a brilliant Black man on television who was the most powerful man in the world! Unless they were wed to FOX News and the O'Reilly, Hannity, Beck, Von Susteren programs, they would learn so much about us- so many good things they had refused to acknowledge before.

So many of our people are brilliant in what they do, but never had a fair chance to be seen in a positive light in their daily newspapers or on mainstream television or heard on major radio stations. Now, here we are after the Obama victories. He's there every single day! The madness really swung into high gear with the Tea Party, Michelle Bachman, Sarah Palin, Senator Ted Cruz and a whole lot of others. Some I didn't mention because they were already on the list of what most of us have come to know as the "crazies", such as Rush Limbaugh and his horrible ilk.

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Black women like our First Lady, Michelle Obama, had not often been seen on the evening news, except when they were there crying over a son or daughter who'd been shot or accused of being involved in some kind of wrongdoing. Now, here she was-beautiful, smart, Mom in Chief, presiding over social events for world leaders and their first ladies. She was dealing with real American challenges-such as military families and childhood obesity. She was out making speeches and inspiring women of all backgrounds.

With people who could not stand all these positive scenes and unbelievable accomplishments, insanity set in, and instead of grinning and bearing the strides America was making, they began trying to set us back to what they called "the good ole days". Some make every effort to send Black people to the back of the bus, send immigrants of color back to from wherever they had come, send gay people back into the closet, and force women to go back to the kitchen! They began talking about taking back their country as though they didn't take it from the Native Americans and as though immigrants and enslaved people had done nothing to build this country.

Many in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate tried to block every thing President Obama supported-even if they had supported the same things in the past. They were tone deaf to the phrase "Where there is no justice, there will be no peace!" With a President who truly tried to make all levels of government look like America by appointing women, Hispanics, Asians, gays and lesbians, Democrats and Republicans and being totally inclusive of all of us, those who'd gone mad did not understand that you cannot put a genie back in the box.

We may be going through a rough period as far as progress on equality and justice, but I still believe there are enough good people who will work through their prejudices and biases with which they were reared as they understand that those of us who've previously been left out, won't turn back. I still have hope. No one can change the change for which we've worked so hard.

*Dr. E. Faye Williams is national chair of the National Congress of Black Women. This article - the 13th of a 20-part series - is written in commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. The Lawyers' Committee is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, formed in 1963 at the request of President John F. Kennedy to enlist the private bar's leadership and resources in combating racial discrimination and the resulting inequality of opportunity - work that continues to be vital today. For more information, please visit [www.lawyerscommittee.org](http://www.lawyerscommittee.org) .*