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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0922

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The Honorable Emanuel Cleaver
Chairman
Congressional Black Caucus
United States House of Representatives
1433 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cleaver:

It has come to my attention, from the numerous statements made by my colleagues in the Congressional Black Caucus over the last several weeks, that in order to cover for the failings of the Obama Administration and the economic policies which have led to unemployment of more than 15 percent in the Black community, the CBC strategy is to demonize the Tea Party.

It is unconscionable when a fellow CBC Member, Congressman Andre Carson, comes to South Florida and claims that some in the Tea Party would love to see black Americans “hanging on a tree.” It is appalling to hear another CBC colleague, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, say “The Tea Party can go straight to hell.”

As Chairman of the CBC, I believe it is incumbent on you to both condemn these types of hate-filled comments, and to disassociate the Congressional Black Caucus from these types of remarks. Otherwise I will have to seriously reconsider my membership within the organization.

As we prepare to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. over the coming weeks, with a new Memorial on the National Mall, it is important that we, as Representatives to the United States Congress – Representatives for *all* of our constituents –live by what Dr. King taught and ultimately gave his life for – that “people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

Congressman Carson's desire to generally criticize a large grassroots group as racist is baseless and desperate. When individuals believe they are defeated in a political disagreement, they normally resort to race-baiting, which in my opinion is in itself racist.

As a member of the CBC, I look forward to working with you to help end this practice. All of us, especially Congressman Carson, Congresswoman Waters and others who have engaged in racially-motivated rhetoric, should follow the example of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., not the example of Reverend Jeremiah Wright.

Our nation, our black communities, as well as every American community are facing many problems. I wholeheartedly believe that every member of the CBC wants to ensure every

American citizen has the opportunity to pursue happiness and success, regardless of race, creed or religion.

Let us not take the failed policies of the Obama Administration and the Great Society – policies which one of the original CBC members, Congressman Charles Rangel admits have failed – and make the Tea Party movement the scapegoats.

The Tea Party movement, which stands for “Taxed Enough Already” is made up of millions of Americans who want to see our government exercise fiscal responsibility, and whose hope is a restoration of American Exceptionalism that has made the United States the leader of the Free World.

Tea Party leaders have condemned the few racist statements made by those who claim to be Tea Party activists in the past, and Tea Party Leaders will continue to condemn those rare acts in the future.

I look forward to having a productive discussion with you and the entire Congressional Black Caucus on how we can begin to reverse the trends of the last few years and the sense of American Exceptionalism that transcends the concept of the “Balkanization” of our country. The American people – all American people – expect nothing less from their Representatives in Congress.

Steadfast and Loyal,



Allen B. West
Member of Congress