

Washington Times OP-ED:

America is no doubt the greatest country the world has ever known. Our citizens have the opportunity to be anything they want to be, worship as they please and live as they please. We are truly free.

Still, Americans are suffering. They have lost their jobs, they have lost their home, and in many situations, they have lost hope.

For the black community, the situation is even more dire.

Black unemployment hovers around 14 percent, compared to 8 percent unemployment overall. For black teenagers, the number more than doubles, as 38 percent of black teens are unemployed.

It is not just the undereducated black Americans who are suffering — 6.6 percent of black Americans with at least a bachelor's degree are unemployed, a rate 50 percent higher than the overall unemployment rate for those with a four-year college degree.

Since 2007, black median household income has declined by 11 percent — the largest decline of all major racial and ethnic groups.

In 2011, the poverty rate among black Americans was 27.5 percent. The poverty rate among blacks living in families headed by women is 41 percent.

President Obama's programs continue to pour billions into black communities across the country in hopes of curing well-documented socioeconomic problems, including failing schools and inadequate housing, rampant crime and drug abuse, black-on-black killings, unemployment and more. Still, despite the courageous efforts of many local institutions, agencies, school leaders, grass-roots organizations and community residents, the problems remain, and in many places have become worse.

It will take new ideas and new voices to find solutions. It will take a president who is committed to policies of economic freedom as opposed to economic dependency. [Mitt Romney](#)'s belief in basic conservative principles of limited government, fiscal responsibility, individual industry leading to self-sufficiency and his beliefs about equality of opportunity will revitalize the black community.

[Mr. Romney](#)

's policies would enable urban people to empower themselves and, ultimately, become self-sufficient.

When it comes to education, black children are 17 percent of students nationwide, but they are 42 percent of the students in our worst-performing schools. [Mr. Romney](#) supports empowering parents of at-risk students in the inner cities to escape failing schools by allowing federal dollars to follow children to the school of their choice.

Many black-owned businesses struggle to gain access to capital that would enable expansion or fund operating costs. Sixty percent of startups are in the white community. Compare that with just 9 percent of startups coming from the black community.

[Mr. Romney](#) will reform regulatory policies that can help black-owned businesses increase and thrive. He will reform Dodd-Frank and allow more money to be accessible to responsible black community banks so they can get money into the hands of responsible black entrepreneurs. Lower capital gains taxes and dividends also will incentivize growth in the black community.

[Mr. Romney](#) also plans to revisit the concept of urban economic zones, an idea from the late congressman and HUD Secretary Jack Kemp and Reagan economist Art Laffer. Enterprise zones are geographic areas of high unemployment that qualify for special tax breaks.

What [Mr. Romney](#) understands is that communities are best served when they're empowered to care for themselves. The more they come to rely on government checks, the less they learn to rely on their own ability and ingenuity. As my mother always told me, "Self-esteem comes

from doing estimable things.”

Conversely, Mr. Obama’s appetite for ever-increasing redistributionary handouts is the most insidious form of slavery remaining in the world today and does not promote economic freedom.

Still, it is easier to convince people that government should be doing something for them that it currently isn’t doing than to convince them that government shouldn’t be doing something for them that it currently is.

More than 95 percent of black voters voted Democratic in the last election. I am hoping we can change this status quo. When you invest your money, you diversify. You don’t put it in one single account. Black Americans need to invest their political capital so they have a voice across the entire political spectrum. If we don’t, the black community will be taken for granted and risk becoming politically irrelevant.

A recent poll showed the percentage of black Americans who have a “strongly positive” view of Mr. Obama has slipped from 83 percent to 58 percent. Those numbers show black Americans are paying attention, and they don’t like what they see.

I grew up in inner-city Atlanta, and I can tell you the most conservative people I know are my neighbors in the black community. It isn’t just in Atlanta. Thirty-three percent of Americans in the black community self-identify as conservatives. They are anti-abortion, and they believe marriage should be between a man and a woman.

Black Americans need to vote their values in November, and they will find themselves more aligned with [Mr. Romney](#) and the Republican Party. It is time for the “Party of Lincoln” to re-connect with black America.

With a core belief in the supremacy and the sovereignty of the individual and the unconditional dignity of every human life, the Republican Party is, always has been and forever shall be the party of equality of opportunity.

Read online article: [here](#)