

Prior to my campaign, I attempted to speak with many Afro American local leaders to explain the philosophy of my campaign, the importance it has to the evolution of gay political maturity, but most importantly to reaffirm that the race was neither a challenge to the Afro American community nor to Mr. Calloway personally. (Humorously, I now can understand Dick Gregory's joke about how a black man gets a taxi in New York. "He stands in the middle of the street yelling I'm not going to Harlem." Attempting to talk to many black leaders prior to the election proved difficult and I realize I should have prefaced my requests with "I'm not asking for an endorsement! I'm not asking for an endorsement!") Those few persons I did speak with understood my concerns, were sympathetic to the need for a non divisive campaign, and offered advice as to how I might avoid antagonizing a community whose ties to me and whose importance to my progressive agenda is unquestioned.

However, I believe it is imperative to formally restate to the African American community the strong importance of maintaining the ties of justice that bind our respective communities. One community's struggle for dignity does not diminish another's right to justice.

As the gay community joins in the historical progressions of the vulnerable seeking a voice, it must be within the community of common progressive, who formed the foundation of our past successes.

In conclusion, I wish to address the issue of Congressman Craig Washington's endorsement. Craig and I have stood together for over 25 years on issues as important as welfare reform, health care reform and first amendment rights. He was my student, my representative, my senator and my congressman. Craig, to me, is the most independent, courageous, and selfless elected official I have ever known. His endorsement was a commitment to twenty-five years of our mutual struggle. It in no way was a negative reflection on Mr. Calloway - as I publicly affirmed to the press and I'm sure the Councilmember realizes that.

Yet there are those, mainly members of the press, who used his endorsement to further their personal vendetta against the congressman while directly raising the insidious issue of race into a campaign which both Mr. Calloway and I have avoided.

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To imply my race made me unqualified for Craig's endorsement is an insult to the Congressman, to me, to Councilmember Calloway, to the residents of District D and to the basic concept of democracy.

Unfortunately, Craig is once again the victim of a double standard applied to him because he dares to let integrity and honesty overcome political pragmatism. Tellingly, no outcry was heard when the past National Chair of the Women's Political Caucus endorsed a man over Ann Richards for governor; no front page story accompanied Hispanic endorsements of Gene Green over Ben Reyes for Congress; community leaders who belittle Craig's endorsement were oddly silent when major Black elected officials supported Bob Lanier over Sylvester Turner. No Anglos ever accused numerous progressive Anglo leaders of being racist in campaigning against Anglo candidates in favor of more qualified minority opponents.

To demand that Craig adopt a racial litmus test is to demand that the very principles which makes him the conscience of Texas be abandoned.

I am proud of my campaign. I cherish Craig's endorsement. Yet most of all, I look forward to strengthening the binds of the Afro American-Gay progressive partnership.

Those who misunderstand or minimize the importance of all three really misunderstand the democratic process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Eugene M. Harrington". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

EUGENE M. HARRINGTON