

The US Commission on Civil Rights was established along with the US Civil Rights Act of 1957. It was enhanced by the Commission on Civil Rights Act of 1983. It is to receive and analyze complaints and to provide studies and advice to the President of the United States. It cannot enforce anything but the body can advise and provide input in regards to the civil rights of American citizens.

The finest days of the US Commission on Civil Rights were under the management and chairmanship of Arthur A. Fletcher who served under President George H.W. Bush. His best accomplishment was a detailed study on the implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 for each major federal agency. He also did much work in assuring that the US military carried on with its tradition of exemplary affirmative action. Art, the “Father of Affirmative Action”, was certainly on the case and the nation was better for it.

Mary Frances Berry succeeded Art as Chairman under the Clinton Administration. She turned it into a personal bunker for ultra liberal agendas. Chaos and political bickering festered to a boil by the time she was replaced by the current Administration. From there it was “rock bottom” as the opposite side, the anti - affirmative action right wingers decided to put on the mother of all charades. Today the US Commission on Civil Rights is an anti-affirmative action clique with a mission to neutralize the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and destroy what it can of the Voting Rights Act. It is anti – civil rights. It seeks to hurt and provide hurdles to those trying to diversify the American economy. Let’s look at their membership.

Their Chairman is Gerald A. Reynolds who comes from the Center for New Black Leadership. Don’t let the name fool you. This is a white organized group of racial animus pointed against those of the traditional Civil Rights Movement. They couldn’t lead 100 Black folks to a barbeque. According to the STLtoday.com Mr. Reynolds “doesn’t just oppose affirmative action; he abhors it. Affirmative action is The Big Lie. It is, he writes, a corrupt system of preferences, set-asides and quotas... a concept invented by regulators and reinvented by political interest groups seeking money and power. Furthermore, many of the problems devastating low income black communities are the result of a spiritual decay. Mr. Reynolds would remedy that through school choice programs, faith based institutions, replacing self-defeating values with middle class values, urban economic development and opposing the use of racial preferences in education and the workplace.” Wow, what a slap in the face of Art Fletcher, MLK, Rosa Parks, Whitney Young and the entire Civil Rights Movement. I think we are talking “nut case” here.

Along with Reynolds are three other Republican slots filled by equally venomous anti-affirmative action attitudes - total of three Negroes and one Hispanic. Go to www.usccr.gov and view their pictures. They are strange! There is another slot that is reserved for an “Independent”.

However, that independent is a Senior Fellow at the Manhattan Institute – an absolute anti-affirmative action think tank. It's rather disingenuous to think that she is actually "independent".

Two of the three allotted Democratic seats are filled by a Hispanic and a Native American. They have proven to be staunch defenders of affirmative action but by virtue of a 5-2 vote their views become somewhat muted.

Affirmative Action has been the key to the Black middle class of America. It has been the driver for improvement in education, job opportunity and career enhancement. Thus, it brought economic power to a group of Americans who were living 75% under the poverty level at the time of enactment in 1968 (Art Fletcher under the Nixon Administration). Today, 75% of African Americans are living a middle class lifestyle. While there is still much room for improvement we can all say that there has been much success.

Many have been confused about affirmative action. The NAACP opposed it and the steps Arthur Fletcher took until 1990 when it freed itself from the chains of construction union lobbyists. Many right wing republicans now detest it even though its roots and success came under Republican administrations. And now here we are when the US Commission on Civil Rights prints publications denouncing affirmative action, disparity studies, federal minority procurement programs, strong enforcement of the Voting Rights Act and anything else that promotes a level playing field for all Americans. It embarrasses us all. It behooves Congress and this Administration to start upgrading the members of this organization and eliminate the buffoondary that now plagues it.

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