

I never thought it would get this low. Here we are with the first “black” president and the first black attorney general and they move to kill enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The shock is that they dare do it. The reality is they can't win at this as this is the law. But still they work to hurt small business per se and Black, Hispanic and Asian business specifically. This sinister action is to promote their socialistic pro union manifesto.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the prize of the Civil Rights Movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and totally supported by people like Whitney Young, Rev. Joseph Lowery, Benjamin Chavis, Julian Bond and legions of other committed heroes. We won and President Lyndon B. Johnson ran the “N____ Bill” (as he off the record called it) through. This bill ended institutional discrimination in fact. But the key was to get the bill implemented.

President Johnson was distracted with the Vietnam War debacle. It would be his successor, Richard M. Nixon, who began the implementation in 1968. My mentor, Arthur A. Fletcher, was working in the Department of Labor and saw the great opportunity. He implemented the Philadelphia Plan which brought affirmative action to hiring in federal contracting. The vehicle was Title VI of the Civil Rights Act which stated that if you do business with the federal government or benefit from a federal program you cannot use discriminatory practices in your business interaction. The way to prove that you don't is to have a formal program of inclusion, such as affirmative action. Some of the labor unions were very racist and they protested to the max. Art had a union/mob contract put on his life and as he integrated federal jobs and contracting across the nation he had to have two secret service agents shadow him for his protection.

The biggest example of the intensity was in Chicago where a direct attempt of mob action against Dr. Fletcher was enacted at the Palmer Hotel. A mob made various attempts to break into his room and kill him. He contacted the White House and that led to a call from President Richard Nixon to Chicago Mayor Richard “Dick” Daley. The President told the Mayor that “if my guy doesn't arrive in DC this evening or is harmed the 101st Airborne will be marching down Michigan Avenue tomorrow morning and take your city over”. The Mayor backed the goons off and affirmative action proceeded on.

On the direct contracting front was another giant to emerge, the Honorable Congressman Parren J. Mitchell (D-Baltimore). Parren used the bully pulpit of the Chair of the House Small Business Committee and wrote various programs for minority business development with

federal dollars. The Small Disadvantaged Business Program (SDB), the 8A program, the Disabled Veteran Program, the Disadvantaged Business Program (DBE) at the Department of Transportation and others were implemented by this giant. The number of black millionaires and new jobs in the Black community created by Congressman Mitchell exceeds all other programs combined. Most of this growth came during the Ronald Reagan Administration.

As we improved and benefited from these programs, adversaries tried to stop the programs. There was the Croson Decision and the Adarand Decision by the US Supreme Court which caused a pause in the programs. But the reality of it was that it was the law and all we had to do was strictly abide by the law. We did and the programs proceeded. We still get nuisance lawsuits opposing these programs by entities such as the Associated General Contractors, US Road Builders and a few ultra right wing think tanks. Still, we prevail and move on.

The Black percentage of federal business peaked during the Reagan Administration at 6% of the total. It started to decline during the Clinton Administration but then leveled off and began an upswing during the George W. Bush Administration (HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson was the Most Valuable Player in this up tic). Then, as the Obama Administration moved in, and to the shock of all of us watching, the “rug” was pulled from us. The new movement was to put unions back into power and eliminate small business, inclusive of minority business, from federal procurement. Today, Black business is at 0.3% and falling. It is a direct assault and a disaster. Keep in mind that 70% of all jobs are created by small business. This administration is killing small business and that is the reason for Black unemployment to be at record levels.

This administration is killing us and it is time for the Congressional Black Caucus and all Black concerned associations and citizens to say “enough”. This Obama experiment has failed us miserably and a real change is drastically needed. We will get over this but it is going to require some big decisions that will make it better for our future and legacy.

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