



National Black Chamber of Commerce
1350 Connecticut Avenue NW Suite 405, Washington DC 20036
202-466-6888 202-466-4918fax www.nationalbcc.org info@nationalbcc.org

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Contacts:
Kay DeBow (202) 553-7344

Former White House Officials File Bipartisan Amicus Brief in Anna Nicole Smith Estate Case

Pending Supreme Court Case May Threaten Constitutional and Civil Rights

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Late yesterday, Lanny Davis, former special counsel to President Bill Clinton, and David Rivkin, attorney who served in the administrations of both Presidents Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, filed a bipartisan amicus brief on behalf of the National Black Chamber of Commerce with the U.S. Supreme Court in the *Stern v. Marshall* estate case to defend the constitutional rights of civil rights litigants in state courts.

“Drastically expanding the authority of specialty courts, which lack legal expertise or appropriate evidentiary procedure, infringes on the rights of individuals to a fair and fully heard case,” said Lanny Davis. *“Shifting legitimate claims in matters of privacy, gender bias, gay rights and civil rights to bankruptcy courts – or any other specialty court – could allow for the usurpation of Article I courts’ authority and potentially violate minority litigants’ rights to due process.”*

“This is a truly unique case that appeals to even the extreme opposite ends of the political spectrum. The Justices have a rare opportunity to set binding legal precedent on the authority of state and federal courts versus specialty courts appeasing those on both the Right and the Left.”

Harry Alford, President at NBCC, added, *“Here at the National Black Chamber we are dedicated to economically empowering and sustaining African American communities, something that may be jeopardized if this case sets precedence for uncertainty. Therefore, Stern v. Marshall highlights the importance of maintaining the long-held tradition of allowing state and federal courts – who are constitutionally empowered to rule broadly on a variety of issues – to hear cases involving potential violation of civil rights.”*

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To speak with Mr. Alford or Mr. Davis please contact Kay DeBow at (202) 553-7344.

The National Black Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nonsectarian organization dedicated to the economic empowerment of African American communities. The goal of the NBCC is to sustain African American communities through entrepreneurship and capitalistic activity within the U.S. and via interaction with the Black Diaspora. The NBCC was incorporated in Washington, D.C. in March 1993, represents 95,000 Black-owned businesses, and provides an advocacy that reaches all 1 million Black owned businesses in the U.S.