

# OPINION

THE BATTALION

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## Republicans will not get black vote

### Hostility towards minorities makes it difficult for blacks to support Republicans

In a recent on-campus debate between the Aggie Democrats and the College Republicans, Jeff Graham, director of activities for the College Republicans, made a direct overture for immigrants and minorities to support the Republican Party. So continues the Republican Party's futile effort to entice minorities, blacks in particular, to join its ranks. But many black Americans are too loyal to Democrats and too distrustful of Republicans to consider Graham's offer.



COLLINS EZEANYIM

In fact, Democrats are so convinced that blacks will show their support for Democratic candidate Ron Kirk in the race for the senate seat left vacant by departing Phil Gramm that they're specifically adjusting their campaigns to attract white voters, according to a John Williams column in the *Houston Chronicle*. Williams accuses Kirk of "spending millions of dollars to appear as Republican Lite."

To some, it might seem arrogant that the Texas Democrats would assume they can count on the support of practically every black voter that shows up at the polls. But statistics showing the voting behavior of blacks justify their campaign strategy.

In both the nation and in Texas, a whopping 91 percent of blacks voted for Gore in the 2000 election, according to *USA Today*. No one should really be surprised by these numbers considering that "African-Americans have given overwhelming allegiance to the Democratic Party since 1936," according to *Issues in*

*Democracy*, an electronic journal issued by the U.S. Department of State.

One reason why is that blacks perceive the Republicans as hostile toward minorities. Even J.C. Watts, the only black Republican in Congress, conceded to *Time* that the Republicans are still largely a whites-only party. Watts — who plans to retire when his fourth term ends next year — added, "If diversity is OK for God, it ought to be OK for Republicans." Perhaps blacks would consider supporting Republicans if the party was committed to diversity and equality. But the GOP often gives blacks no choice but to support the Democratic Party.

One horrifying example from 1992 concerns current Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott from Mississippi, who is one of the most important and visible Republicans in Washington. A decade ago, Lott gave a speech to the Conservative Citizens Council (CCC), a known white supremacy group, according to *The Washington Post*. At the speech, Lott reportedly said that "the people in this room stand for the right principles and the right philosophy."

Although Lott later told the *The Washington Post* that he had "no first-hand knowledge" of the true nature of the CCC, the damage to the Republicans' image in many black voters' minds had already been done. The message was clear: the Republican Party is not a welcome place for blacks.

African-Americans, a community known for looking out for one

another, take their allegiance to the Democratic Party so seriously that they often put politics before race. Two examples prove this. One is the recent attack by singer and activist Harry Belafonte on Colin Powell, who is currently serving as Secretary of State under a Republican administration. Belafonte likened Powell to a "house slave," according to *Miami Herald* columnist Leonard Pitts. Belafonte, who apparently believes that Powell only does whatever President Bush tells him to do, added, "When Colin Powell dares to suggest something other than what the master wants to hear, he will be

turned back out to pasture."

Although Pitts and other prominent black columnists denounced the attack, many other black leaders were suspiciously silent on the issue. This may be because they felt Powell got what he deserved. The implication is clear: if you're black and don't toe the Democratic party line, you will be ostracized.

Meanwhile, as Powell was being blasted by members of the black community, former President Bill Clinton, who was dubbed by Nobel-prize winning author Toni Morrison as "the first black president," was recently given an honorary induction into the Arkansas Black Hall of Fame, according to ABCNews.com.

Affirmative action is another barrier to African-American support of the Republican party. Republicans express their opposition to any sort of preference programs in terms of giving equal treatment to everybody.

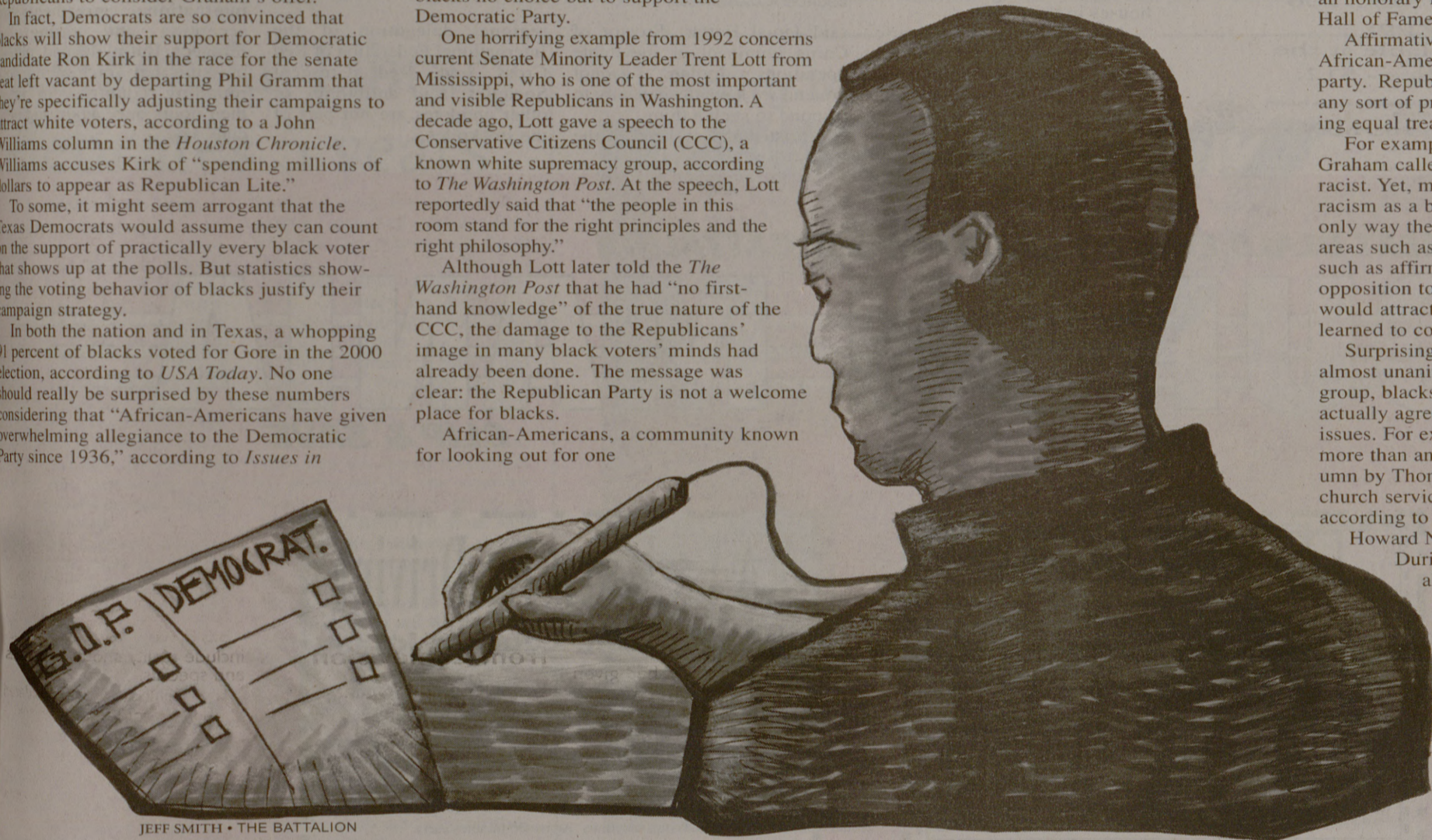
For example, in the aforementioned debate, Graham called affirmative action policies racist. Yet, many blacks, who still perceive racism as a big problem in America, believe the only way they can be given equal treatment in areas such as employment is through policies such as affirmative action. The Republican opposition to this issue is irrational, and they would attract more black support if they learned to compromise.

Surprisingly, although blacks voters are almost unanimously Democrats, taken as a group, blacks are surprisingly conservative and actually agree with Republicans on many key issues. For example, "blacks favor vouchers more than any other group," according to a column by Thomas Sowell. Also, blacks attend church services more than any other race, according to a survey conducted by Scripps Howard News Service and Ohio University.

During the debate, Graham made several references to God and mentioned how the Republican Party specifically supports the teachings of the Bible.

It would seem that blacks and Republicans have much in common — maybe enough to siphon black support away from the Democrats — but the GOP shouldn't hold its breath.

Collins Ezeanyim is a senior computer engineering major.



JEFF SMITH • THE BATTALION

## Protests would improve issue awareness

### A&M learned from protests regarding China president's visit to campus

On Oct. 24, Texas A&M did something quite unusual. It offered grounds to hold protests and demonstrations against China's president when he visited the George Bush Presidential Library. Complex and spoke to a select group of audience members. A&M is not the traditional hotbed of political protests and demonstrations like the University of California at Berkeley or even the University of Texas at Austin, but students should consider the option of protests to convey minority views and opinions. Protests are an important form of communication, not only to the public, but to officials in power. This form of communication should be a welcome addition to the A&M campus.



BRIENNE PORTER

Many people at A&M consider protests as problems that are only found at "liberal" campuses such as Texas, but Aggies should re-evaluate this view. There are many different opinions on this campus, and one way to spread different opinions is to organize a protest. With increased diversity on campus, there is not one belief on all issues and many of the minority views are not well-publicized.

A protest can spread awareness of opposing views that are held by students on campus. "Students should have the oppor-

tunity to hear different points of view, including those that may be repugnant to many people," said Charles Hermann, associate dean of A&M's Bush School of Government and Public Service, when discussing the planned protest of China President Jiang's visit to A&M.

Communication is key to having an enlightened and informed public. It is necessary to be able to communicate the minority points of view that are not widely known to help educate the A&M community.

For many people or groups that do not agree with the majority view on political issues, a protest can help inform students of different views and the reasoning behind them. For example, the Falun Gong group was protesting Chinese persecution of the group, which has been labeled a cult and outlawed.

"All we want is for the persecution to stop," Dianna Roberts, spokeswoman for a Houston-based Falun Gong organization, said in *The Eagle*.

The protest effectively allowed people who were unaware of the situation in China to learn about the complaints of the group.

Counter protests were held to show support for the China president, James Jiang, a Chinese emigrant who currently resides in Pearland, said he and other Chinese turned out at the airport to "express our support and promote what is in the best interest of Sino-U.S. relations," according to the *Houston Chronicle*.

There are many political issues that are ripe for an effective protest. The resolution passed by Congress that gives President Bush power to use military action in Iraq is one example. On many other campuses, there have been anti-war demonstrations and protests, but these protests have yet to make it to A&M. The possibility of a new war with Iraq is highly controversial and not every student on this campus agrees with it.

Another issue worthy of public debate is divestment from Israel, which involves universities such as Harvard and MIT withdrawing endowments supporting companies that do business with Israel. These universities say Israel is a morally repugnant state.

There are numerous issues that have opposing viewpoints, and many of these opinions are represented on campus without the public's knowledge. There is a need for protests to incite debates and allow for well-informed students.

A&M's political climate is not conducive to protests. This must change. Students need to become proactive and organize political protests regarding important world events. Protests are necessary for democracy and political debate, and they should be a welcome addition to the A&M campus.

Brienne Porter is a senior political science major.

### MAIL CALL

#### Republicans should get the facts straight about their party's history

In response to Jessica Berkey's Nov. 4 guest column:

Jessica Berkey makes several references to the founders of the Republican Party. However, she may have forgotten that in those times, Republicans were considered left-wing progressives who pushed for change, ideals that are now associated with the Democratic Party.

It was not until recently that each party acquired the beliefs they uphold today. There is absolutely no comparison between today's Republican politicians and those in the past; trying to make a comparison only creates contradiction. Also, the Democratic party is not an "enemy within." Unless we want to live in a totalitarian state, different political parties are needed to represent every voice in America.

My advice: instead of trying to use token images of the past to get others to vote with your party, focus on

the issues instead. Don't urge others how to vote when you don't have the facts straight on your own party.

Amanda Gurrola  
Class of 2004

#### Browser can prevent pop-up ads

In response to Derek Lazzaro's Nov. 1 column:

It is easy to avoid pop-up ads if you use Mozilla instead of Microsoft Internet Explorer. Mozilla is a free Web browser available from [www.mozilla.org](http://www.mozilla.org). To disable pop-ups, select Preferences from the Edit menu. Next, click the plus beside the word Advanced followed by a click on "Scripts & Windows" or "Scripts & Plugins" (depending on the version). Finally, uncheck "Open unrequested windows" and click OK.

Jeffrey McGee  
Class of 2005

