



Joe L. Reed Official Homepage

For Immediate Release

December 7, 2009

I have just read Congressman Davis' comments and attack on me. First, let me say on the outset that I have not told anyone who I was going to support for governor. I never told Congressman Davis whether I would support him or not. Neither have I told Ron Sparks who I was going to support. I don't know that yet. The person I am going to support may or may not have entered the race yet.

At any rate, I don't enjoy the luxury of announcing six months in advance or a year in advance who I am going to support. I am the Chairman of the Alabama Democratic Conference and historically we have met at our semi-annual convention to make a joint decision in order to help unify black people behind a candidate that is electable, supports issues relevant to the organization's members and can win the race they desire to enter. Second, I don't know what Congressman Davis expects to gain by attacking me, but he is free to do so even though he has been a beneficiary of my work and of my blood, sweat and tears over the years. However, I don't believe he is going to get a lot of votes by attacking me. It appears that he is trying to appeal to some voters he's not going to get in the first place. His attacks may get him a headline, but it won't get him many votes.

Furthermore, I don't need Congressman Davis to define my approach to politics in Alabama. He represents a black district and if he wants to deny that, let him deny it. If he wants to say he would have been elected without the black district, let him make that false claim as well. According to a recent poll conducted by the Capital Research Survey Center, 93% of Black voters in the state of Alabama support President Obama's effort to reform Healthcare. If Congressman Davis believes that his judgment trumps the will of the people who elected him to represent them in Congress, then so be it.

One thing is for certain, I am very proud of the contributions I have made over the last fifty years trying to help both blacks and whites get elected to office. My record is second to none, and I was doing this while Congressman Davis was making mud cakes under the shade tree. I reserve the right, and have the responsibility, to expose the voting record of ANY public official in Alabama, whether black or white, Republican or Democrat. If you don't want folks to know how you vote, or don't want folks to criticize or commend your vote, then you shouldn't cast it. Many of you read my article criticizing both Parker Griffith and Bobby Bright, who are both white, after they voted against the Lilly Ledbetter Bill. That was no different. No public official should expect to vote for or against any issue with impunity or immunity.

I have never asked Congressman Davis or anyone else to pre-clear a political decision they are going to make about running for office with me or anyone else. My record has been very clear on Congressman Davis' candidacy. If he wants to run, let him run. He has no obligation to ask me for support and I have no obligation to give him any. I don't know why some newspapers as well as some candidates (particularly blacks), think that I want them to pre-clear anything with me about running for office. This is a self-imposed thought on the part of certain candidates. Of course, Congressman Davis has been in my office to talk about his candidacy, and I suspect he will come back again. But for someone to imply or suggest that people in Montgomery, whether they be members of ADC, my church, AEA, or anything else are expected to pre-clear something with me is totally asinine.

I have been bringing people together for the last forty-six years. The AEA celebrated forty years of unity over the past weekend. Paul Hubbert and I have received national awards and recognition based on what we have done to pull blacks and whites together during our tenure at AEA. I've supported white candidates over blacks and blacks over whites. I've worked to get majority black districts at the local, state, and national level, including, but not limited to, the one Congressman Davis serves. .

You will not find any person in Alabama, black or white, whose record on supporting diversity in politics is better than my own--five decades, of which I am proud. Who gets to be governor of Alabama will be up to the voters. My record and public life stands on its own and I am very proud of it. I am glad Congressman Davis benefited from it.

Joe L. Reed