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THE RBE SURVEY: ENGAGING UNHEARD VOICES *The Pulse of the Black Conservative*

South Carolina will be a key state in deciding which candidate goes on to campaign as the nominee for the Republican Party; with Florida, Georgia and Illinois also playing significant roles on February 5th – Super Tuesday. In each of these states, a critical mass of black votes will be in play and Presidential candidates need to recognize that a considerable number of these potential votes represent conservative blacks.

At the core of its mission, Republicans for Black Empowerment (RBE) seeks to bridge the vast chasm between the GOP and the black community. To garner a greater understanding of the views of black conservative voters and provide perspective to those seeking to target this group, RBE recently conducted a membership survey, the results of which we are pleased to share with the Presidential candidates, the Republican Party, media, members of the black community and general public alike. Our goal is to ensure that the voices of black conservative voters no longer go unheard.

The RBE Survey assessed many integral questions including, which political party best represents the interests of blacks? The results of this question, in particular, showed an even split with 49% indicating the Republican Party represented black interests while 49% indicated that neither party did. The results suggest that the GOP can gain significant support from conservative blacks that say neither party best represents the issues of the community. To realize this support, the Republican Party must become more effective and persuasive in reaching out to blacks whose political views are very or somewhat conservative (more than 80% of RBE members). The candidates and the Party's overall messages should highlight strategies for addressing black conservative voters' principal concerns of Economic Growth, Terrorism, Affordable Healthcare and Illegal Immigration.

Notably, to many Americans the term "black Republican" reflects such a small number of Americans as to practically represent an oxymoron. This perception is due to a combination of i) scant media attention given to leading black conservative thinkers and political activists, ii) alienation mutually carried out by both the Republican Party and the black community and iii) minimal resources devoted by the Republican Party to consistently communicating the value of conservative solutions to blacks' concerns.

A brazen example of this alienation was illustrated during the Republican Presidential debate hosted by Tavis Smiley and PBS on the campus of Baltimore's Morgan State University last September. The assumption on the part of the leading Presidential candidates – all of whom claimed "scheduling conflicts" – that the predominately black audience would primarily comprise Democratic voters uninterested in hearing the conservative case for improving the state of black America was a gross miscalculation. It was also a missed opportunity for the GOP to show the black Republican community that their votes indeed are valued and wanted.

However, with polls confirming the closest race for the Republican nomination in 30 years, the margin of victory for the eventual winner will likely be slim. As a result, ironically, the potential exists for Republican candidates to obtain a meaningful edge through encouraging support from the conservative black community. Republicans for Black Empowerment strives to inform such efforts through providing insight into this growing group of voices that too often has gone unheard.

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If you would like more information on this topic, to read the survey analysis, or to interview RBE President Don Scoggins (donscoggins@theblackgop.com) or Vice President Lorin Crenshaw (lorincrenshaw@theblackgop.com) please call RBE Communications Director Tiara Grant at (505)702-5091 or e-mail her at info@theblackgop.com