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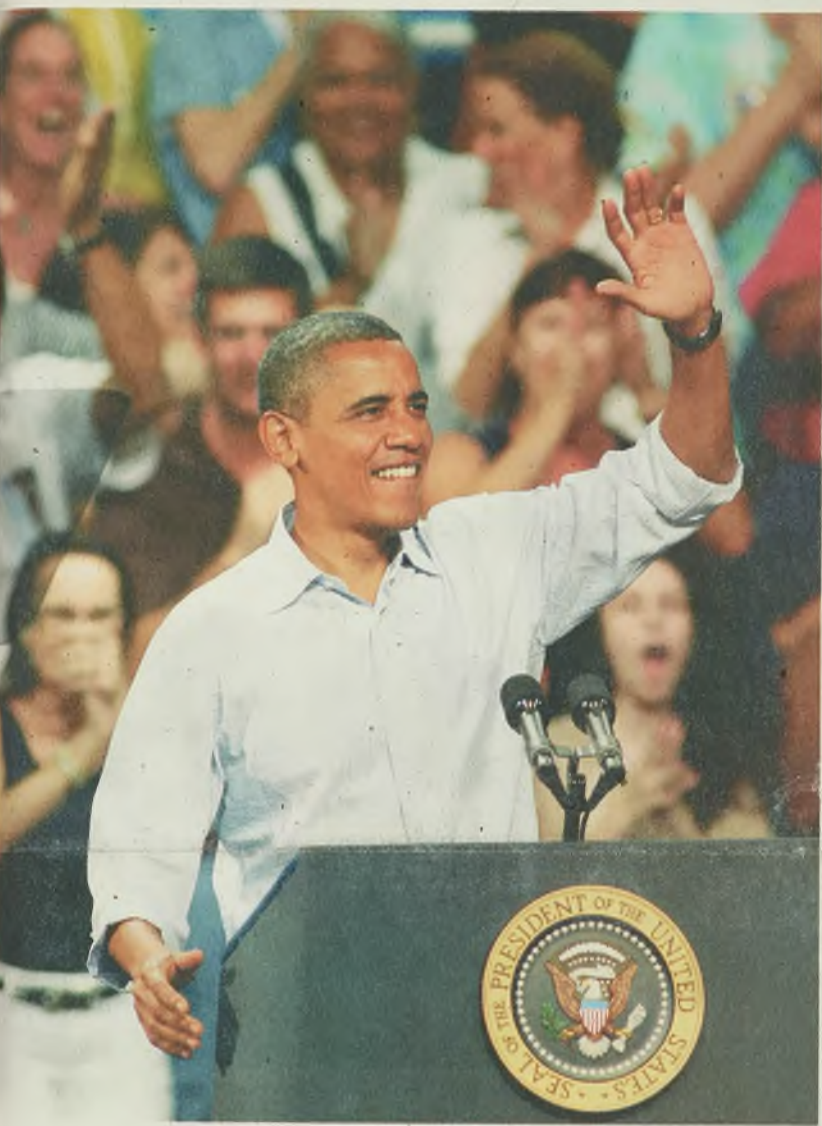
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Does racial bias fuel Obama foes?



President Barack Obama speaks at the Palm Beach County Convention Center in West Palm Beach, Fla., Sun., Sept. 9. (AP Photo by Terry Randal)

By Jesse Washington (AP) - Is it because he's black?

The question of whether race fuels opposition to President Barack Obama has become one of the most divisive topics of the election. It is sowing anger and frustration among conservatives who are labeled racist simply for opposing Obama's policies and liberals who see no other explanation for such deep dislike of the president.

It is an accusation almost impossible to prove, yet it remains inseparable from the African-American experience. The idea, which seemed to die in 2008 when Obama became the first black president, is now rearing its head from college campuses to cable TV as the Democratic incumbent faces Mitt Romney, the white Republican challenger.

Four years after an election that inspired hopes of a post-racial future, there are signs that political passions are dragging us backward.

"We're at a tipping point," said Susan Glisson, director of the Institute for Racial Reconciliation at the University of Mississippi. "But I don't know which way we're going to tip."

Glisson knows that many conservatives disagree with Obama solely because of his policies. "But I am also quite certain that there are others who object to the president because of his race, because they have a fear of blacks that is embedded in our culture," she said.

Her conclusion is based on something called "implicit bias" - prejudices that people don't realize they have.

Studies show that due to longstanding negative stereotypes about African-Americans - which give such false impressions as most black people are dangerous, unintelligent or prefer welfare to work - many people harbor anti-black biases yet don't even know it. Such unconscious biases, the studies show, are present in people of all backgrounds, not just whites.

"Our history has created this unconscious bias," said Gail Christopher, vice president of program strategy for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, which has funded research on the subject. "Now we need to create safe places to discuss and educate people about unconscious bias, where we are not blaming and shaming them."

Those safe places generally do not include the political arena.

"Every time they say, 'We want our country back,' I know what that means," Susan Bankston, a white Democratic National Convention delegate from Richmond, Texas, said at the gathering last week.

"You recognize it when every time the Republicans with their own convention refer to him by his first name, Barack Obama. He's President Barack Obama," said Pat Sanders, a delegate from Englewood, Calif., who is black.

Such logic inspired James Taranto, a conservative Wall Street Journal columnist, to write: "Every comment from a

Republican can be translated, through a process of free association, to: 'We don't like black people.'"

At their convention, Republicans made sure to show that the GOP does like black people, showcasing speeches by black and Latino conservatives. Two attendees who threw peanuts at a black camerawoman while commenting "this is what we feed animals" were swiftly ejected and denounced by GOP organizers.

On television, MSNBC host Chris Matthews unleashed an emotional rant at Republican (Continued On Page 15)

Are you Better Off than You Were Four Years Ago?

By George E. Curry NNPA Editor-in-Chief CHARLOTTE (NNPA)

Judging from the recently-concluded Republican and Democratic conventions, the question of who will be inaugurated as president in January may turn on how voters answer a question posed by Ronald Reagan in his 1980 debate with Democratic incumbent Jimmy Carter: Are you better off today than you were four years ago?

The question was raised at the Republican convention in Tampa and last week here at the Democratic counterpart.

In his acceptance speech in Tampa, Romney said: "This president can ask us to be patient. This president can tell us it was someone else's fault. This president can tell us that the next four years he'll get it right. But this president cannot tell us that 'you' are better off today than when he took office."

Former President Bill Clinton looked at where the country was four years ago and reached a different conclusion.

Clinton said President Obama accepted a floor under the crash. He began the long, hard road to recovery and laid the foundation for a modern, more well-balanced economy that will produce millions of good new jobs,

'vibrant new businesses and lots of new wealth for innovators.

"Now, are we where we want to be today? No. Is the president satisfied? Of course not. But are we better off than we were when he took office? And listen to this. Listen to this. Everybody - when President Barack Obama took office, the economy was in free fall. It had just shrunk 9 full percent of GDP. We were losing 750,000 jobs a month. Are we doing better than that today? The answer is yes."

Aside from the intensely partisan delegates, what do Americans really think?

First, let's recap where we were four years ago. George W. Bush was completing his second term. Gasoline was averaging \$3.84 a gallon. Unemployment had risen to 6.1 percent, the highest since December 2003. On Sept. 15, 2008, Lehman Brothers announced that it would file for bankruptcy, and the stock market had taken a dive.

A Sept. 15, 2008 New York Times story began:

"Fearing that the crisis in the financial industry could stun the broader economy, investors drove stocks down almost 5 percent Monday, sending the Dow Jones industrial average and Standard & Poor's 500-stock index to their lowest levels in two

years."

The following day, another New York Times story began:

"Fearing a financial crisis worldwide, the Federal Reserve reversed course on Tuesday and agreed to an \$85 billion bailout that would give the government control of the troubled insurance giant American International Group."

"The decision, only two weeks after the Treasury took over the federally chartered mortgage finance companies Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, is the most radical intervention in private business in the central bank's history."

Determining whether the public feels it is better off today than four years ago has a lot to do with how the question is framed.

For example, a Gallup/CBS News poll taken two weeks before the Republican convention asked: "Would you say you and your family are better off than you were four years ago or not?" In that survey, 42 percent said they were better off, 55 percent said they weren't.

However, when a CBS/New York Times poll offered those two options for responses and - or is it about the same as it was four years ago?" Given three options instead of two, 40 percent said they were the same, 20 percent said they were better and 39 percent said they were worse off.

Similarly, an AP-GfK poll found that 36 percent said they were about the same," 28 (Continued On Page 16)



Salena Watkins Crowned Miss Black USA. See story on page 9). (NNPA Photo by Freddie Allen)

Durham Branch of the NAACP Annual Freedom Fund Banquet Oct. 27

The Durham Branch of the NAACP will host its 38th Annual Freedom Fund and Awards Banquet on Saturday, October 27, at 6 p.m. at the Durham Convention Center at the Marriott Hotel located at 201 Foster Street, Durham, North Carolina. Our vendor area and silent auction will open at p.m. Seating will begin at 5 pm. and the banquet will commence at 6 p.m. promptly. This year's theme is "No Justice, No Peace While Injustice Reigns in America"

(Continued On Page 15)



MISS BLACK USA AND COURT - From left to right: Second runner-up Miss Black North Carolina, Pia Jessup, First runner-up Miss Black Oklahoma, Claudia Williamson, 2011 Miss Black USA Ocelia Gibson, 2012 Miss Black USA Salena Watkins, Third runner-up Miss Black Minnesota, Brittany Lynch, Fourth runner-up Miss Black Michigan, Alescia Hollowell. See story on page 9)

CORRECTION-Last week we incorrectly identified Wendell Davis in the Move-In Day picture with Interim NCCU Chancellor Charles L. Becton. We apologize for the error.