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**THE STAND**  
**BLACK HISTORY MONTH**

We Americans honor the blacks among us, African-Americans by decent. Rightly so.

We should honor black Americans every bit as much as we honor white, red or yellow Americans. For, after all, all men and women are created equal, are they not?

Most blacks are descendants of human beings who were once held in slavery. For most of us who live in the 21st Century, it is inconceivable, absolutely incredible, that another human being could be held in bondage, in slavery, forced to live a life totally against the human will and without freedoms of any kind. But slavery was real, very real in America, and in fact, in the South and elsewhere, a way of life. Ironically, while early Americans fought in revolutionary days for freedom, their own of course, others among us were held in slavery and treated as inferior beings. That, again, is simply hard to comprehend and utterly and diabolically wrong. But it was a fact, an ugly fact of our otherwise great American history. We then abolished slavery. We Americans had to do it with a Constitutional Amendment. We had to do it by force, by force of the law. We had to do it with a war, a civil war, which tore our country apart, divided states. The victory by our North over South produced among many other things the end of slavery. No black American citizen today can fully appreciate what it was like for ancestors to live in slavery other than to feel strong emotional ties. But all blacks, and in fact all right thinking men and women, can and should do everything possible to make certain this horrific circumstance never again occurs.

We Americans, black and white, chafe under inequality. We cherish liberty. We do as our great document says, count it as an inalienable right that we can pursue life, liberty and happiness. We can live life to the fullest as we wish. We are free to pursue our own path and make our own life, the stuff of liberty. It is critical, vitally important, that all Americans think in terms of justice for all without discrimination of any kind toward anyone. Every white person should be incensed when there is any inequality for any black person, and any black person should be incensed when there is any injustice for any white person. America stands for justice for all, or justice for none.

So, we honor the great African Americans in history. And there are many indeed. But we should honor this month of February, our great black fellow citizens who contribute so much to our society. Not so much athletes and actors, but African American doctors, lawyers, clergy and the leaders of black citizenry and all of us. We should honor black citizens who are ordinary citizens, like most of us, possessed of strong work ethics, raising families, law abiding citizens making our society better. We can indeed think of those black citizens who are special, leaders, in the spotlight, but we should look much deeper into the African American community and honor those among us who are most like us, ordinary citizens who make our society work. They are there by the millions.

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But even though slavery was abolished, there is still inequality among us. Several decades ago, our legislatures and courts permitted the concept of Affirmative Action in order to advance the cause of equality. Ironically, Affirmative Action creates a different kind of preference and lessens or takes away certain rights from one to give to another. In that sense, there is something inherently unjust about Affirmative Action but it has been a legal tool, the inventors say, to lessen prejudice and promote a greater equality. It is a tool to allow blacks and in fact all minorities a better footing, an equal footing to pursue the AMERICAN DREAM. In reality, America should be structured fairly so in a way that would allow all men and women to pursue the American Dream on an equal footing. But that would occur only in a perfect world, which this world will never be. There is nothing better to see than a man or woman striving to improve, grow, and do better economically, socially, spiritually-in every way. Nothing better at all. No law can ever do what the will, the inner motivation of a human being can produce in the way of life energy. It is so rewarding to see any black citizen successful, but it is equally rewarding to see a white citizen successful as well. We should this month honor black Americans who have made our country better, and who see themselves no better than white, yellow or red Americans as well. All of us, black or white, and no matter the color, should reach out in love and understanding to everyone regardless of color so that we can make a new kind of history in February 2007, and each month thereafter. The old black history is riddled with prejudice and discrimination. How good, how necessary for America for the new black history to chart an historical path of reconciliation, understanding, cooperation and mutuality. That is a kind of history of which we can all be proud.

Black history month should teach us to honor all citizens, true Americans, red, yellow, black or white. That kind of citizen action is truly an affirmative action, the course of conduct for every true American.

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