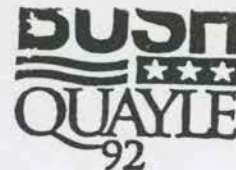


CLINTON FACTS

Research Office



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Clinton and Civil Rights -- A Questionable Commitment

Clinton Poses as a Leader of Civil Rights ...

- "Nobody has a better civil rights record than I do...."
- Clinton has said that if there was only one idea that he could fight for as president, no matter what the political cost, it would be racial equality: "I'll stand for it, against all comers, to the very end."²
- "I have always had a passionate commitment to civil rights and equal rights...."³

But Clinton's Civil Rights Record is a Failure

Despite his rhetoric, Clinton's civil rights record in Arkansas presents a different picture of his commitment to civil rights.

- During Clinton's five terms as governor, no civil rights legislation has been passed, and Arkansas remains only one of two states without such legislation.⁴ When the Arkansas Legislature's 1991 session ended after failing to pass a proposed civil rights bill, Clinton called the session an "unbelievable success ... just unbelievably productive ... amazing ... historic.... I never dreamed that all this would be done."⁵
- Arkansas has no housing discrimination law.⁶
- In 1983, Clinton promised that he would give 10 percent of the state business to minority-owned businesses.⁷ However, in 1984, the state purchased only 4.8 percent of its business from minority-owned enterprises, and this declined to 2.1 percent in 1991.⁸
- Clinton signed two bills in 1991 and one in 1985 that specifically call for minority quota appointments.⁹ However, he flip-flopped in 1991, stating that he is in opposition to quotas.¹⁰
- In 1986, Clinton instituted race-norming -- adjusting test scores according to applicants' race -- in Arkansas state employment practices.¹¹ He flip-flopped on this issue in 1991 (after the Democratic Leadership Convention came out against quotas) and ordered the Arkansas State Employment Security Division to end its race norming procedures,¹² saying it "leaves a bad taste in your mouth."¹³
- As governor, Clinton has had severe problems implementing school desegregation in Arkansas. A 1982 desegregation case involving Little Rock schools was not settled until 1989, at a cost of \$118 million dollars to the Arkansas taxpayers.¹⁴ It wasn't until 1985 that Clinton provided technical assistance for school districts to

help them comply with desegregation.¹⁵ In 1991, the Arkansas Department of Education and Clinton were sued for allegedly failing to take steps to eliminate segregation in the state's schools despite the fact that segregation was outlawed more than 30 years ago.¹⁶ The outcome of that case is still pending.

- It wasn't until Clinton's fourth term in office that many of Arkansas' segregation laws were repealed. In 1989, Clinton finally signed a bill that repealed several Arkansas codes that upheld segregation: "It is hereby found and determined by the General Assembly that certain Arkansas Code provisions which have their roots in the segregation practices of the 1950s, are still in effect and may be impeding the state's efforts to rid itself of all vestiges of segregation."¹⁷

Clinton Has Failed To Ensure Civil Rights For Arkansas' Minorities

- A 1988 *Arkansas Gazette* investigation revealed that although African Americans comprise approximately 20 percent of the Arkansas state government employees, only 10 percent of the top state jobs were held by women and minorities. Of state jobs paying more than \$43,000, only 20 percent were held by women.¹⁸
- In 1989, 17 African American electors sued Clinton, claiming that the Arkansas Apportionment Plan, which he helped create, violated the federal Voting Rights Act. The U.S. Federal District Court decided in the plaintiff's favor and voting districts were redrawn (*Jeffers et al v. Clinton, 1989*).¹⁹
- Although African Americans comprise only 15.9 percent of the Arkansas population, they are 54.3 percent of the total inmate population.²⁰
- African American juveniles in Arkansas are three times as likely to be charged as adults and are twice as likely to be arrested and held in adult jails as white Arkansas juveniles.²¹ In 1989 and 1990, 72.5 percent of youths arrested for violent crimes were African American.²²
- Under Clinton's leadership, Arkansas State Police troopers were given the authority in 1986 to stop drivers and search their cars without probable cause if the occupants looked Hispanic or had Texas license plates.²³ After a lawsuit and a Federal court order, Clinton reluctantly stopped the practice. When the court declared the program unconstitutional, Clinton criticized the decision and said he wished a way could be found to expand the searches again.²⁴
- Clinton signed not one, but two English-Only laws in 1987,²⁵ one of which established English as the official language of Arkansas. He later flip-flopped, saying that he probably should not have signed the laws and that he is opposed to any movement to make English the official language.²⁶

Clinton Has Not Supported Civil Rights For Arkansas' Gay Community

- While Clinton has told national gay rights leaders that they are a part of his "vision," it appears that he did not do too much for gays in Arkansas.²⁷
- The chairperson of the Arkansas Gay and Lesbian Task Force, states that Clinton "made a conscious decision to not have anything to do with the issue of lesbian and gay rights in Arkansas."²⁸
- A New York gay activist evaluates Clinton's record on gay rights in Arkansas as "markedly different from what he is promising he will do in the future."²⁹
- In 1989, when Clinton was asked by the Arkansas Gay and Lesbian Task Force to proclaim a day in commemoration for National Coming Out Day, Clinton's office said that it fell under the "'Ollie North Rule,' which denies proclamations for any controversial subject."³⁰
- According to Drew Toon of the Arkansas Chapter of the radical AIDS activist group, ACT-UP, "George Bush has done more for people with AIDS in Arkansas than Bill Clinton."³¹ Underscoring this is the fact that Arkansas did not spend any state funds on AIDS until 1991, and then only \$30,000 was spent.³²

- 1 *The Washington Post*, 3/7/92.
- 2 "Listening to America With Bill Moyers," 7/7/92.
- 3 CBS, *This Morning*, 8/10/92.
- 4 *Time*, 4/13/92.
- 5 *Arkansas Gazette*, 3/31/92.
- 6 *Time*, op cit.
- 7 *Arkansas Gazette*, Clinton Ads Blitz Football Fans, 9/5/90.
- 8 Arkansas Minority Purchasing Program Quarterly Reporting Summary, 1991.
- 9 AR Acts 1163 and 1164 of 1991, AR Act 850 of 1985.
- 10 Georgetown University Speech, 10/23/91.
- 11 *Arkansas Gazette*, Clinton Takes Civil Rights Record to Blacks, 8/11/91.
- 12 *Arkansas Gazette*, Education Key to Clinton Record, 10/3/91.
- 13 *Arkansas Gazette*, 8/11/91, op. cit.
- 14 *Arkansas Gazette*, State's Cost: \$118 million, 3/2/89.
- 15 AR Act 231 of 1985.
- 16 *Arkansas Democrat*, Grady District Says State To Blame for Segregated Schools, 10/11/91.
- 17 AR Act 950 of 1989.
- 18 *Arkansas Gazette*, Women, Minorities Lag in Top State Positions, 12/7/88.
- 19 *Village Voice*, Promises to Keep, 5/12/92.
- 20 Annual Report, Arkansas Department of Correction, 1990-91.
- 21 Juvenile Adviscry Study Group, 1991.
- 2 Ibid.

- 23 *Arkansas Gazette*, Most of Proposal Shelved; Clark Suspicious, 10/24/89. *Arkansas Gazette*, Videos Allow Drug Stops, Protect Citizens and Police, 12.20.90.
- 24 *Arkansas Gazette*, Most of Proposal Shelved; Clair Suspicious, 10/24/89. *Arkansas Gazette*, Robinson and Clinton at It Again, 8/19/89.
- 25 AR Acts 40 and 77 of 1987.
- 26 *Albuquerque Journal*, Clinton Says English Law Was Mistake, 4/25/92.
- 27 *USA Today*, Clinton Reaches Out to the Gay Community, 5/20/92.
- 28 *Village Voice*, Pleasure and Danger, Queers Confront the Candidates, 3/24/92.
- 29 *Arkansas Democratic Gazette*, AIDS Activists Criticize Clinton's Record at Home, 5/20/92.
- 30 *Arkansas Gazette*, Toll Free Phone Set Up For Gay, Lesbian Queries, 10/12/89.
- 31 *Associated Press*, Anti-AIDS Group Seeks Better Coordination of Political Activities, 3/30/92.
- 32 *The Washington Times*, 7/15/92 -- Hotline.