

POSITION PAPER

THE RACIAL AND ETHNIC CLASSIFICATION OF AMERICANS

By: John W. Wallace

It seems that America has become a country obsessed with classifying its citizens into different racial and ethnic sub-groups. President Obama is routinely called the first Black president, but isn't he also half white? To be more accurate, isn't he really the first mixed race president? The media and special interest groups constantly refer to him as the Black president. Americans are constantly being bombarded by government and media reports of the first Hispanic person to do this, the first Asian person to do that, or the first Black person to do something else.

My message to the government bureaucrats, the special interest groups and the mass media is that the vast majority of Americans don't care what a person's race or ethnic origin is. Throughout our history, Americans of all races and ethnic backgrounds have fought and died as one people to preserve this country's freedoms and liberties, not to separate us or divide us into racial and ethnic groups.

America has always been known as a country of rugged individualism based on individual freedom and liberty, not race and ethnic origin. Most Americans do not care if Black people comprise 12.1% of the population or 14.3%. They do not care if Hispanic people comprise 19% or 28% of the population. The Racial and Ethnic classification of Americans is nothing more than institutionalized racism and must be ended. Rather than helping a diverse population become assimilated and united as one nation, the Federal government is doing what the Nazi government of Germany did in the 1930's and 40's; creating government supported institutionalized racism by the intentional classification of it's citizens by race and ethnicity.

Americans are also beginning to realize that racial and ethnic identification is more a matter of personal choice than anything else. In the 2000 Census, seven million American citizens refused to place themselves into a single category by refusing to describe themselves as *only* white, black, Asian, Latino or any one of the other specific categories listed, because they were of mixed race. Attempts by the government to create a "mixed race" box for the 2000 Census was met with resistance by racial and ethnic special interest groups like the NAACP and the National Council of La Raza, because they feared that a mixed-race box could pose a danger to the justification for their existence.

The only groups that actively support the continued collection of racial and ethnic data are big government bureaucrats and "racial and ethnic special interest groups" that also happen to receive significant funding from the federal government. These organizations argue that identifying people by race and ethnicity is necessary in order to redress some past injustice and that the federal government must continue to collect and use this information in order to set up special racial and ethnic programs,

affirmative action quotas and other set-asides for these groups, many of whom now consist of new immigrants, illegal aliens and non-citizens. Nothing can be further from the truth. In a country where we can no longer ask people what religion they are, what their party affiliation is or what their sexual orientation is, why are we still asking them about their racial and ethnic background?

The fuzzier such racial and ethnic categories become, the harder it will be for these racial and ethnic special interest groups and the government to traffic in them. If a mixed-race category were to be added, every brown-skinned person of mixed race registered in this category would shrink the government's official count of Blacks, Latinos, Asians or American Indians, eventually reducing their political influence and ultimately the amount of money these groups receive from the federal government, which amounts to approximately \$200 billion a year.

With the support of racial and ethnic special interest groups, our federal government seems to view our citizens not just as Americans, but rather as "pawns" in some social science experiment to be classified and separated into different racial or ethnic sub-groups for some unknown purpose. By mandating the classification of Americans into specific racial and ethnic sub-groups, the federal government and the advocates of "diversity" are actually perpetuating institutionalized racism and keeping Americans artificially divided. Maybe that is their real plan.

If we want to help poor Americans escape poverty, get better health care, find a job or get a good education, why should it matter what their race or ethnic background is? The answer is: It should not! Americans need to come together as members of one country and remember that we are all individual Americans, regardless of race or ethnic background. Martin Luther King, Jr., inspired a nation when he voiced his dream for a color-blind nation, a nation in which people would be judged by the content of their characters, "not the color of their skin."

The answer to this government encouraged racism is the concept of Liberty with a limited, constitutional government that is devoted to the protection of individual rights rather than the claims of different racial and ethnic special interest groups. Where Liberty is present, individual achievement and competence are rewarded, not people's skin color or ethnicity.

The American people need legislation barring the federal government from the collection of racial and ethnic information about them and/or the classification of American citizens by race and ethnicity, including the collection of this data for census information. Exceptions should be made for law enforcement, hospitals and medical research purposes.

I am proud to be an American and it is none of the government's business what my race, religion, sexual orientation or ethnic background is.

For more information about John W. Wallace, or to find out about his positions on other issues, please go to: www.TeaPartyRep.com