



Written by [Thomas Sowell](#) on September 27, 2016

“Favors” to Blacks

Back in the 1960s, as large numbers of black students were entering a certain Ivy League university for the first time, someone asked a chemistry professor — off the record — what his response to them was. He said, “I give them all A’s and B’s. To hell with them.”

Since many of those students were admitted with lower academic qualifications than other students, he knew that honest grades in a tough subject like chemistry could lead to lots of failing grades, and that in turn would lead to lots of time-wasting hassles — not just from the students, but also from the administration.



He was not about to waste time that he wanted to invest in his professional work in chemistry and the advancement of his own career. He also knew that his “favor” to black students in grading was going to do them more harm than good in the long run, because they wouldn’t know what they were supposed to know.

Such cynical calculations were seldom expressed in so many words. Nor are similar cynical calculations openly expressed today in politics. But many successful political careers have been built on giving blacks “favors” that look good on the surface but do lasting damage in the long run.

One of these “favors” was the welfare state. A vastly expanded welfare state in the 1960s destroyed the black family, which had survived centuries of slavery and generations of racial oppression.

In 1960, before this expansion of the welfare state, 22 percent of black children were raised with only one parent. By 1985, 67 percent of black children were raised with either one parent or no parent.

A big “favor” the Obama administration is offering blacks today is exemption from school behavior rules that have led to a rate of disciplining of black male students that is greater than the rate of disciplining of other categories of students.

Is it impossible that black males misbehave in school more often than Asian females? Or Jewish students? Or others?

Is the only possible reason for the disparities in disciplining rates that the teachers and principals are discriminating against black males?

Even when many of these teachers and principals in black neighborhoods are themselves black?

But Washington politicians are on the case. It strengthens the political vision that blacks are besieged by racist enemies, from which Democrats are their only protection. They give black youngsters exemptions from behavioral standards, just as the Ivy League chemistry professor gave them exemption from academic standards.

In both cases, the consequence — unspoken today — is “to hell with them.” Kids from homes where they



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were not given behavioral standards, who are then not held to behavioral standards in schools, are on a path that can lead them as adults straight into prison, or to fatal confrontations with the police.

This is ultimately not a racial thing. Exactly the same welfare state policies and the same non-judgmental exemption from behavioral standards in Britain have led to remarkably similar results among lower-class whites there.

The riots of lower-class whites in London, Manchester and other British cities in 2011 were incredibly similar to black riots in Ferguson, Baltimore and other American cities — right down to setting fire to police cars.

One of the few bright spots for black children in American ghettos have been some charter schools that have educated these children to levels equal to, and in some cases better than, those in affluent suburbs.

You might think that this would be welcomed by those who are so ready to do “favors” for blacks. But you would be dead wrong. Democrats who have been in charge of most cities with sizable black populations, for decades, are on record opposing the spread of charter schools. So is the NAACP.

That is a de facto declaration of moral bankruptcy in both cases, just as in the case of the Ivy League chemistry professor. In all three cases, it is a question of promoting one’s own special interests, while offering “favors” to blacks.

The Democrats’ special interest is in serving the teachers’ unions, which oppose charter schools and support Democrats financially. The NAACP’s special interest is in serving the same donors — and in keeping ghetto schools controlled by racial activists, as part of their turf.

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