



**KRIPCHAK FOR CONGRESS
YOUNGSTOWN**



February 2024

SUBJECT: RUMINATIONS AND REVELATIONS ON BLACK HISTORY MONTH

PURPOSE: LAUNCH OF THE RED TAILS INITIATIVE

Over the past month, my campaign has been super busy as I've been criss-crossing over our great district. It's hard to believe that back in January I started this operation on a wing and a prayer and now I have the beginnings of a team with volunteers, donors, and supporters. Every journey begins with a single step, as they say, and it's been incredibly humbling to see fellow Ohioans start to believe that nothing about our district is "safe" for the GOPers.

As we close out the month of February, I would be remiss not to mention Black History Month and what it means to me and my campaign. Despite having Black members in my family, I struggled with how best to celebrate a group of Americans who have so heavily enriched our great Nation through the face of adversity. Seeing my opponents pandering with empty platitudes made me uneasy to "keep up with Joneses." Would my thoughts come out as genuine? Would the voters think I'm pandering? These questions I wrestled with until I snapped out of it by simply talking to my fellow citizens on the campaign trail. I realized I have nothing to fear and my convictions will be apparent through my words and my deeds.

So before we end this month celebrating the unique culture of some of the greatest Americans, I'd like to offer you my thoughts and desires for those of us in the 6th we specifically celebrated this month.

"The power of excellence is overwhelming. It is always in demand and nobody cares about its color."

This is a quote from General Daniel "Chappie" James, the first African-American to earn the rank of four-star General in the USAF. As a Tuskegee Airman, he famously was arrested for participating in a mutiny fighting for the right of blacks to fully integrate into the armed services. All cadets at the US Air Force Academy have to memorize this quote and recite it under great mental and physical stress over the course of our military training.

RESTORE THE AMERICAN DREAM

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This quote came to mind during the middle of this past month talking to voters in my very own Mahoning County. For some background, while traveling all over the district and meeting voters – both Democratic and Republican – I’m always listening to what people expect out of their new Congressman and what issues they want me to focus on. As those of you who have visited my website and my “Issues & Policies” page know, I’ve been slowly filling out my policy objectives thanks in large part to the feedback I’ve received on the trail. Yet when I spoke to what I consider my “home crowd” I was taken aback. A main focus was simply on whether I will defend their voting rights. Something as basic as the Right to Vote – the primary instrument in the execution of Democracy – was not only questioned but there was apprehension whether I would even support so basic a right for my own constituents. Answering “YES” was as trivial as asking me if I support the right to breathe air.

First let me state that the very birth of our Nation was born from the notion that “Taxation without Representation” is a cardinal sin that is worth going to war against the greatest Empire of the time, not once but twice! It is preposterous that we have SCOTUS judges dare to claim that the Constitution doesn’t consider this a “Fundamental Right” when the entire basis of our Nationhood rests upon the desire to vote. **Not only will I wholeheartedly support the John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, but I will work with any and all who work to enshrine voting access as a fundamental right.** “Citizens United” needs to be overturned and district lines should be determined by the People and not political parties with the goal of eradicating gerrymandering.

Yet I feel these policies are not enough. We must do more. A Congressman should be able to go to his voters and hear about what he can do for them to *improve* their lives, not just *maintain* their survival. So perhaps Black History Month is the perfect time to address this and announce my plan to live up to General Chappie James’s power of excellence by unveiling what I would like to call “The Red Tails Initiative” in honor of him and all Tuskegee Airmen who were pioneers in enriching the Air Force.

As the Red Tails were in the top echelon of aviators in the Air Force, the Red Tails Initiative will focus on increasing BIPOC (black, indigenous, and other people of color) representation in the upper echelons of business. There are many efforts across America *pushing* for increased BIPOC opportunities, I would like to complement these efforts by nurturing an elite cadre of BIPOC firmly in the corporate governance structures of our district and the surrounding areas to include the greater metropolitan areas of Columbus, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh *pulling* BIPOC up from on high.

Firstly, in the time-honored tradition of Change Management, “what gets measured gets managed.” **I will work with the SEC Chairman to use their existing authority to mandate the disclosure of demographics statistics of both their C-Suite and their Board of Directors on Form 10-K annual reports.** Then, through the power of my Office, I will work with Wall Street to encourage the development of a new asset class called DEI (Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)-certification akin to the recent boom of ESG (Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance)-certified companies.

Such a DEI-certification will incorporate best practices such as having a minimum of two BIPOC members - as studies have shown “token representation” of a single member means these members do not get to achieve the network effects intended by such measures. In addition, to combat “checkbox ticking” efforts to emplace board members from staff positions, these certifications will consider whether the board members have operational and profit and loss (P&L) experience to ensure a steady pipeline of BIPOC representation in critical managerial roles up and down the corporate ladder. Once they get a seat at the table, they will actually be listened to. With such standards, I believe we can accomplish for DEI initiatives what ESG has done in the recent past. As ESG entered the forefront of both institutional and retail investors, environmental considerations have taken more prominence in corporate governance decision-making. My two-pronged approach will do for DEI what ESG did to the environment: DEI-certified companies will enter more and more funds, a natural market force will thus materialize increasing DEI efforts throughout the American corporate landscape.

With an established and accepted DEI-certification, **I can then use the power of Congress to direct DEI-certified set-asides for government contracts just like we already do for Veteran and Women-owned businesses.** It will then not only benefit minority-owned small businesses but extend this effect to mid and large-cap public companies, breaking the public/private corporate divide.

Having established an initial thrust of Corporate Governance representation, it then needs to be maintained. One of the key measures for board qualifications is “access”- access to industry leaders and access to industry best-practices. This requires a broad view and experiences within a single company, no matter how fruitful, will not cut it. As I have stated on the campaign trail and outlined on my campaign website, creating an industry hub in the 6th is one of my top priorities. This hub, importantly, feeds into the already existing vibrant economies of our surrounding metro areas: Columbus, Cleveland, Pittsburgh. Fortunately, all these areas are represented by Congressmen in the CBC (Congressional Black Caucus). What I plan to do is leverage the power of our Congressional Delegations (CODELs) to not only have my fellow colleagues in the CBC expose their constituents to the levers of power in DC and in their districts, but enable them to cross-pollinate their experiences throughout the Ohio River Valley centered upon the 6th. **Having our CODELs work together and having our entire region benefit from legislative and commercial initiatives means our diverse CODELs will amass invaluable knowledge, experience, and connections that businesses and corporate boards crave.** We can then jointly pull the levers of Congress together to benefit the greater Ohio River Valley region in a unified and synergistic manner.

Going back to my campaign priorities, the other issue near and dear to my heart is education. The road to effective corporate governance starts in our classrooms. Studies have shown that tight-knit university communities, particularly amongst Ivy-League MBA programs, feed this virtuous cycle of “corporate access” to aspiring corporate leaders. A lack of diversity in these groups makes it that much harder to have organic representation at these higher echelons of business. **Therefore, I will work with HBCUs and BIPOC fraternities & sororities to adapt best**

practices of nurturing network effects for their alumni to further improve their members' desirability in corporate leadership.

All these initiatives I plan to do in order to enhance our "power of excellence" and I hope my fellow Ohioans can agree to support this initiative and live up to the great words of General Chappie James. Excellence will always be in demand and no one cares about its color.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MK', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

MICHAEL L. KRIPCHAK
Candidate
US Congressional District 6, OH