



March 23, 2010

Mr. Chip Forrester
Chairman
Tennessee Democratic Party
PO Box 60948
Nashville, TN 37206

Dear Chairman Forrester:

I'm writing today to express concern over racial comments made yesterday by State House Democrat Caucus Chairman Mike Turner. I was shocked to learn that Rep. Turner lashed out at well-meaning Tennesseans who have legitimate concerns and an understandable dislike for the health care legislation signed into law by the President this morning. A report by the *Nashville City Paper* yesterday noted a few of his comments, the most disturbing of which follow:

"We've got a lot of bills on states' rights here, state sovereignty and all that," he added. "We went through that fight once before. All of a sudden, we have a black man elected president and everybody wants to start acting like something's wrong with our country..."

"Asked to elaborate afterward, Turner said, 'I think some of the people who are against Obama are just against Obama because he's African-American.'"

You and I can both agree that debating policies on their merits and engaging in the exchange of ideas is all part of a healthy political process; however, Rep. Turner's efforts to turn a debate on government-run health care into a racial issue are irresponsible and wrong. His statements are an insult to concerned Americans with sincere viewpoints that happen to be different than his own.

Recent polling conducted by Middle Tennessee State University showed that the majority of people in our state are opposed to Democrats' health care legislation that has been rammed through Congress. This means that Rep. Turner is not only completely out-of-line, but his comments demonstrate he is completely out-of-touch with Tennesseans on this issue.

While you and I have a respectful difference of opinion on the role the federal government should play in Americans' lives, I think that you would agree these comments about race have no place in a healthy political debate. Rep. Turner's remarks are uninformed and misguided.

It is my hope that you will immediately ask Rep. Turner to apologize for his personal attacks on the vast number of Tennesseans who do not agree with his Democratic Party's agenda for our country.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Chris Devaney
Chairman
Tennessee Republican Party