# The BLACK CoMMentator

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Cover Story
CBC Monitor: Watchdogs of the Black Caucus
Harold Ford and David Scott Rated Worst

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For the first time in history, an African American group has graded the Congressional Black Caucus's legislative performance on a curve that reflects the Black Political Consensus. The results were startling. Harold Ford, Jr., of Memphis, registered only a five percent positive grade, based on his votes on nine "bright line" issues that came before him in this legislative session. David Scott, the Black Congressman from suburban Atlanta, did little better. Scott rated only a ten percent positive score.

Ford and Scott led the field of what the CBC Monitor called "The Derelicts of the CBC."

"They are derelict in their duties to their Black constituents," said Leutisha Stills, who oversaw the study of the CBC's legislative behavior, this year. "The CBC Monitor is based on Black people's political views. Other organizations rate legislators in ways that dilute African American opinion – that discount our view of the world. Such a methodology diminishes the profound lessons that Black people have learned in our centuries of struggle. We must hold our own people to account for their political actions."

Jared Ball, a Washington-based journalist who called the CBC Monitor into existence, insists that accountability is paramount. "There are now 43 Black representatives in Congress," he said, "one of them a Senator. They must be held to a standard. That's what the CBC Monitor does: establish a standard."

By the CBC Monitor's standards, seven Congressional Black Caucus members are derelict. The worst malefactors, including the aforementioned Harold Ford (D–TN) and David Scott (D–GA), are Sanford Bishop (D–GA), at 25 percent, Albert Wynn (D–MD), at 30 percent, Artur Davis (D–AL), 40 percent, Gregory Meeks (D–NY), 45 percent, and William Jefferson (D–LA), at 55 percent.

These men have failed our people, and sold out to other interests.

The CBC Monitor gives credit to those members who have stood tall, as well. They are called the Honor Society. First among the honor list is Rep. John Conyers, Jr., a founding father of the CBC from Detroit, followed by Barbara Lee (D-CA), Maxine Waters (D-CA), Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), Robert Scott

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(D–VA), John Lewis (D–GA), and Charles Rangel. All registered 100 percent grades. "These are the stand up people," said Leutisha Stills.

The CBC Monitor survey's nine "bright line" issues tracked the votes of members on the bankruptcy bill, estate tax, gang deterrence, REAL ID Act, Iraq authorization, Watt Amendment (federal authorization), the class action bill, CAFTA, and the energy bill and Capps Amendment. The Senate's lone Black member, Barack Obama, earned a "C" grade (70 percent) for his vote for the Republican–led so–called tort "reform" measure that limited access to the courts for citizens harmed by corporations. Obama's vote placed him in the company of Edolphus Towns (D–NY), Kendrick Meek (D–FL), and Sheila Jackson–Lee, who all scored in the 70s – marking them as "underachievers" by the CBC Monitor's standards.

The majority of the CBC ranked in the 80s and 90s, earning "A"s and "B"s. The survey found that these members are solidly within the spectrum of the Black Political Consensus. That's good news. The defection to the Right of the Seven Derelicts, and the backsliding of the Underachievers, is disturbing. The Derelicts must be ousted. The Underachievers should be educated to respond to the people's will. The Honor Roll should be applauded.

#### For Whom the Bell Tolls

### **CBC** Monitor Report Card

Score	Grade	CBC Member	Constituency	Distinction
100	A	Maxine Widors	D-California	Honor Society of the CSC / Profiles in Courage Award
100	Α.	District Lee	D Cathoma, Salutationan	Honor Society of the CSC. J. Profiles In Courage Award.
100	A	Cysthia McKinnes	D George	Pronor Eccuty of the CEC, / Profiles in Courage Award.
100	Α.	JOAN LAWS	D-Georgia	Honor Society of the CDC / Froties in Courage Award.
	A	John Convers, JR	D.Michigan, Videdictionan	Honor Society of the CDC If Profiles In Courage Award.
100	A	Charles Rangel	O-New York	Honor Society of the CDC
100	Α.	Robert C. "Bottle" South	D-Vegeta	Monor Society of the CEC. I. Profiles In Courses Award.
100	A	"Eleanor Holmes Norton	Delegate Virgin Islands	Pronouncy Manthers
100	A	*Donna Christian-Christiansen	Delegate Virgin Islands	Photograp Martino
- 90		Juanta Millander McDonald	O Carrieria	Minor Society of the COC
- 90	A	Diane Wiscon.	Q-Cathinia	Prince Security of the CDC
90		Alter History	D-Donda	Moon Society of the CEC
- 90		Conna Brown	D.Flords	Henry Secretar of the CBC
_ 90	A	Eliph Commings	O-Maryland	Honor Society of the COC.
- 90	A	Bennie Thompson.	Q-Mississippi	Honor Society of the CBC
90	A	Donate Payne	Olive Jenny	Prince Security of the CEC
- 90	A	Major Owens	D.Nee Yark	Honor Society of the COC
90	Α.	Melvin Watt	D-North Carolina	Honor Society of the CDC
90	A	G. K. Outterfeld	D-North Carolina	Hiner Society of the CEC.
- 90	A	Stephane Tubbs-Jones	D-ONe	Planor Society of the CBC
90	A	Chaka Fattah	O.Pennsylvania	Hanni Society of the COC
90	A	Edda Damica Johnson	O freeze	Minor Society of the CSC
90		Al Oteen	O-Teras	Hanor Society of the CBC
- 65	- 6	Jesse Jackson, Jr.	D.Breis	
- 65	8	Bibby Rush	O-Mines	
86	8	Danny Davis	D-Bross	
85	0	Julia Carson	D-Indiana	
85	0	Carolyn C. Xilgatrick	D-Michigan	
85	8	Wen, "Lecy" Clay	D-Misseyri	
86	8	James Clyburn	D-South Carolina	Western Committee of the Committee of th
75	0	Kendrick Meek	D-Flonds	The Under Achievers :
70	C	Barack Obama	D-Binnie, U.S. Senate	The Under Achievers
70	0	Edolphus Towns	D-Nine York	The Under Achievers
70	0	Shella Jackson-Lea	D Texas	The Under Achievers
- 64	- 6	Victory Arterior		Develops of the COC
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We at The Black Commentator praise the efforts of the activists and scholars who have established a methodology to hold Black politicians to account for their behavior. It's a new thing. For so many generations, Black people were just so happy to have somebody of their hue in office. Now, with 43 members in the Congress, it has become imperative to exercise more discretion. Seven members have failed us – betrayed us – and four are on the cusp of treachery. We must encourage those members who have held fast to the Black Political Consensus to stay the course, and to punish those who do not.

The CBC Monitor opens a new window on African American political discourse. It is unacceptable for

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Members of Congress like Harold Ford, who represents extremely poor districts, to vote for a Republican bankruptcy bill that creates an even worse economic environment for their own constituents. It is despicable for representatives of the Black and poor to vote to allow unearned wealth to be passed on to unearning children, while the sponsors of such legislation spout racist garbage about "welfare queens."

The report from the CBC Monitor makes us hold our breath, knowing that the Congressional Black Caucus has fallen into such disarray. But Jared Ball and Leutisha Stills have pointed the way. And the finger points at all of us.