

## Velma Hart: A Lesson for Us All

By Louis P. Solomon

There is much turmoil in the land.

The Republican leader in the Senate says publicly that the most important thing the Republican Party can do in the next session of Congress is to make sure that the President is not reelected. That is correct; there is no typographical error.



The Democrats want to defeat their own party leader, the President, because he yielded to the Republicans and allowed the tax cuts to continue for everyone. The deficit, which is monstrous at the moment will now increase substantially. The Republicans would not have continued unemployment support for a working population which has a 9.8% unemployment rate; of course the President yielded.

The press, both paper and electronic, is looking for anything which they can use to embarrass one political party or another. The common man (us) is trying to figure out how to feed our families, keep our job, and continue to live while waiting for the economy to get better.

All of this turmoil can cause one to despair of everything. And then, out of nowhere, comes Velma Hart. It is Velma Hart who makes me believe that perhaps the American citizens are far better than the politicians and news pundits try to make us believe.

OK you say. You give up. Who is Velma Hart? Think back to Thanksgiving 2010. Specifically it was on 20 September. President Obama was having a Town Hall Meeting arranged by CNBC. A woman, Velma Hart, stood up and spoke to him, calmly, carefully, and with respect. She said that she was exhausted from defending him and his economic policies while waiting for the change she had hoped for after voting for him. As he should, he took her comments with good grace, and answered back seriously and with care. What was impressive was that here was a middle aged black working class woman who had the courage to stand before the President of the United States and tell him that things that he had promised, and which she and others believed in, were not working. There was no rancor or sarcasm. What she wanted to say she said as one human being to another. It was spell binding.

Two months later, almost to the day, Velma Hart lost her job. She was the the chief financial officer for AmVets, a veteran services organization 501(c)(19) based in Maryland. The designation number means that it is exempt under the Internal Revenue Code since it is an organization of past or present members of the United States Armed Forces. She lost her job because there simply was not money to pay her. Her performance was not an issue.

The news media immediately got in touch with her. "Do you blame the President?" "Is this the fault of the Congress?" "What do you have to say about how badly you have been treated?" were the types of questions thrown at her. She was calm and composed, particularly when compared to the semi-hysterical news people who sensed a coup of some type to further their organization or career.

It was then that I began to feel my faith in the American people flooding through my system. I waited and watched how she handled herself.

It is not the fault of the President that I lost my job, she said. "I want to focus on the positive and be optimistic," said Hart, who lives in Upper Marlboro, Md. "And assume that somehow things will work out, that there's an opportunity out there with Velma's name on it that's right around the corner."

Here is someone who is unknown to virtually the entire nation. She didn't and doesn't have a high visibility job. She is doing what she can do for herself, her family, her neighbors, and her community. And she holds no one to blame. I am not sure that she is representative of the great mass of the American people but I want to believe that she is. And I am proud to make common cause with her.

The economy must get better for many reasons. Not because I say so, but because if it doesn't get better it will get worse. Nothing remains constant. While the Republicans forced through an across the board tax cut, even for people making in the millions of dollars, there may be trouble in the future. If people like Velma Hart become permanent members of an economic class of low and no income people while people who are rich aren't forced to bear more of the economic burden, all Americans should remember that there is a new election looming, and it is only two years away. If the economy doesn't improve as judged by the people attempting to make a living in their towns and communities, the Velma Harts of America, then I believe that incumbents of all shades and political parties should worry about their future. And hopefully they will get what they so richly deserve.