

## HISTORICAL QUOTATIONS

## STUDENT ACTIVITY



Joseph Hayne Rainey  
U.S. Representative, 1870–1879  
Republican from South Carolina

“We [Black Americans] are earnest in our support of the Government. We are earnest in the house of the nation’s perils and dangers; and now, in our country’s comparative peace and tranquility, we are earnest for our rights.”

— Representative Joseph Hayne Rainey



Ronald V. Dellums  
U.S. Representative, 1971–1998  
Democrat from California

“To get up every day and put on your uniform and put on your tie and march on the floor of Congress knowing that, in your hands, in that card, in your very being, you have life and death in your hands, it is an incredible thing.”

— Representative Ronald V. Dellums



Robert Smalls  
U.S. Representative, 1875–1879;  
1882–1883; 1884–1887  
Republican from South Carolina

“My race needs no special defense, for the past history of them in this country proves them to be equal of any people anywhere. All they need is an equal chance in the battle of life.”

— Representative Robert Smalls



Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.  
U.S. Representative, 1945–1967;  
1967–1971  
Democrat from New York

“I’ve always got my mouth open, sometimes my foot is in it, but it is always open. It serves a purpose; it digs at the white man’s conscience.”

— Representative Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.



John Adams Hyman  
U.S. Representative, 1875–1877  
Republican from North Carolina

“If [an African American] is a man, he is entitled to *all* the rights and privileges of any other man. There can be no grades of citizenship under the American flag.”

— Representative John Adams Hyman



Shirley A. Chisholm  
U.S. Representative, 1969–1983  
Democrat from New York

“The black man must step forward, but that doesn’t mean that black women have to step back.”

— Representative Shirley A. Chisholm



Parren James Mitchell  
U.S. Representative, 1971–1987  
Democrat from Maryland

“If you believe in fighting racism, you make a commitment for the rest of your life. There’s no getting off that train. You can’t say, ‘I’ve put five years in fighting racism and now I am finished.’ No, you are not finished. Our job is to fight it every day, to continue to shove it down and when it rises up to shove it down even harder.”

— Representative Parren James Mitchell



Augustus Freeman (Gus) Hawkins  
U.S. Representative, 1963–1991  
Democrat from California

“The leadership belongs not to the loudest, not to those who beat the drums or blow the trumpets, but to those who day in and day out, in all seasons, work for the practical realization of a better world—those who have the stamina to persist and remain dedicated.”

— Representative Augustus Freeman (Gus) Hawkins



George Henry White  
U.S. Representative, 1897–1901  
Republican from North Carolina

“This, Mr. Chairman, is perhaps the negroes’ temporary farewell to the American Congress. But let me say, Phoenix-like he will rise up someday and come again.”

— Representative George Henry White