For Immediate Release

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Centre for New Black Leadership's Statement in Support of Judge John Roberts

WASHINGTON, D.C. (August 1, 2005) "We are shocked, just shocked," says Phyllis Berry Myers, President, Centre for New Black Leadership (CNBL), "to learn that Judge John Roberts as a young conservative lawyer serving in a conservative Reagan Administration, would express countervailing opinions to liberal approaches to civil rights issues and enforcement."

"Why wouldn't he then and why shouldn't he now?

"In fact, CNBL shares many of Judge Roberts' opinions and was founded ten years ago to bring such vision and impetus to the national discourse on race.

"Ideas, as the pundits say, have consequences, and polls taken over the last ten years demonstrate a majority of Americans believes the wholesale adoption of racial preferences in hiring, university admissions and government procurement has been a wrong-headed policy for this country. Millions of black Americans believe government policy should not be developed on the premise of 'black victimization,' rather public policy should reaffirm the equal standing of every American before the law; that school choice should be promoted as a means of providing a sound education to low income students and improving urban schools; faith-based institutions have a role in combating the social ills plaguing low-income, low-resources communities; healthy, married, two-parent families should be encouraged and that tax and regulatory barriers, that needlessly hamper the economic development of our communities, need to be eliminated.

"African-Americans should celebrate black achievement as evidence of our dignity, humanity, intelligence and our ability to do for ourselves; not for power to leverage special benefits from the state. That's what a 21st Century civil rights agenda would advocate.

"So, if the traditional civil rights organizations want to use the Roberts' confirmation hearings as a battle over a 1960s – or even a 1980s – civil rights agenda versus a 21st Century Citizens Responsibility agenda, 'bring it on.'"

The Centre for New Black Leadership is a Washington, DC-based research and education organization promoting a market-oriented, community-based vision of public leadership for black communities in America.

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