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Collection Code: **CTRACK**

Staff Name: **SKYLA FREEMAN**

Document Date:

Correspondent:

Subject/Description: **GWB - SIGNED FLAG 1. ANGELICA AND SHAWN BLACK**

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BY
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Cleared for sig.

Freeman, Skyla M.

From: Hedrick, Isma B.
Sent: Tuesday, November 25, 2008 11:16 AM
To: Bennett, Melissa S.; Houston, LaRhonda M.; Yanes, Raul F.; McIntosh, Brent J.; Freeman, Skyla M.
Cc: Hart, Paul A.; Hodges, Matthew P.; Moore, Kelcey A.; Scott, Robbie J.; Hedrick, Isma B.
Subject: Vetting Results: Participant

Below are the vetting results for a proposed Participant.

Please contact us with any questions.

Thanks,
 Ibbie

Isma (Ibbie) Hedrick
 Associate Director
 Office of Presidential Appointments & Scheduling
 The White House
 (202) 456-2345

PARTICIPANTS (1)

Project Prayer Flag (Irvine, CA) <http://www.projectprayerflag.org/>

- **No need to vet public records**
- No problematic news articles found.
 - Press focuses on Organization's
 - In February 2008, it was reported that, "Hundreds of volunteers across the country will make sure troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan feel loved on Valentine's Day. Project Prayer Flag, a California based troop-support group, will host four packing parties Feb. 9 to put together 'Patriot Packs.' Two will take place in the group's home state, a third will be in Hawaii, and the fourth in Wisconsin. Patriot Packs contain cloth American flags and now include hand-made valentines. 'We are excited to see volunteers from Hawaii, California and Wisconsin simultaneously working together for the first time to help our troops,' said Tina Mueller, Project Prayer Flag's new Hawaii director. 'We encourage everyone in Hawaii, the Southern California communities and Wisconsin to come out to serve our troops.' Project Prayer Flag is a supporter of America Supports You, a Defense Department program connecting citizens and companies with service members and their families, serving at home and abroad." (*Defense Department Documents, 02/05/08*)
 - In December 2007, it was reported that, "The groups listed at www.americasupportsyouth.com do everything from providing financial assistance to sending care packages to setting up scholarships for military children. We could give to Bowlers for Veterans, Dog Tags for Kids, Operation Candy Cane, Project Prayer Flag, Home of the Brave Quilts and more, along with household names like the American Legion and USO." (*Messenger-Inquirer, 12/01/07*)
 - In October 2007, it was reported that, "Once again, volunteers from throughout the United States will participate in Operation Christmas Care. Thousands of volunteers, families and others will have the opportunity to assemble and send a Christmas care package to a U.S. service member serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Volunteers from the sponsoring group,

Project Prayer Flag, live throughout the United States. The volunteers receive a service member's name and then 'adopt' the service member throughout his or her deployment overseas. The volunteers assemble and send a Christmas care package to the military member, an annual effort to support U.S. troops during the holiday season. Operation Christmas Care runs from Oct. 27 through Dec. 4, 2007. Project Prayer Flag's founder, Shawn Black, returns from Iraq, Dec. 23, 2007, for a month of rest and relaxation. When he returns to the United States, he hopes to present President George W. Bush with the Project Prayer Flag's military appreciation plaque. The plaque contains the group's 220,000th American flag and volunteer support letter, as given to more than 220,000 American troops serving Iraq and Afghanistan. Each soldier carries the American pocket flag and letter as a reminder of support from Americans. The group wishes to recognize President Bush for his leadership and unwavering support of U.S.

soldiers." (http://www.americasupportsyoud.com/AmericaSupportsYou/press_releases/200710)

- o In April 2007, it was reported that, "Since 2002, Project Prayer Flag's goal has been to put an American flag into the pocket of every American service member fighting in the global war on terrorism. 'For us it's very simple,' Shawn Black, founder of the Irvine, Calif.-based organization, said. "We've shipped over 220,000 (flags) now to service members.' Those miniature American flags come as part of the 'Patriot Packs' the group sends to service members, Black said. The packs also include a letter or a thank you card. Project Prayer Flag is a member of the Defense Department's America Supports You program, which highlights how Americans and the corporate sector are supporting the nation's service members. The idea for the Patriot Packs started shortly after September 11, 2001, when Black was serving as an undercover federal air marshal. A colleague was deployed to Afghanistan and Black wrote him a letter. But he also remembered the small American flag his grandfather, a veteran of the battle of Normandy, carried with him and had handed down to Black's father. Project Prayer Flag has since started Operation Christmas Care, a program that has a family adopt a unit and send a personalized care package at the holidays. The adopting family is encouraged to keep up correspondence throughout the service member's tour. Those tours are a little more pleasant thanks to some Major League Baseball teams and Project Prayer Flag's Operation Grand Slam. Black initially contacted the Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim baseball team with a request for a donation of baseball equipment for the servicemembers fighting in the global war on terrorism. After not making much headway, he turned to Louisville Slugger, a major baseball bat manufacturer. With that move, he was batting a thousand -- \$10,000 worth of gloves and bats, to be exact. The Colorado Rockies sent thousands of dollars worth of baseball gear recently, and the Atlanta Braves have expressed interest in getting on board with Operation Grand Slam, he said. Black, however, gives a majority of the credit for the program's success to the more than 400 volunteers that make it tick." (*Defense Department Documents and Publications*, 04/04/07)
- o In June 2006, it was reported that, "While military service members await deployment, some will find inspiration in their mailbox, courtesy of 'Project Prayer Flag,' a grassroots group that sends service members pocket flags and letters of prayer and encouragement. Project Prayer Flag is a member of the Defense Department's America Supports You program, which showcases Americans' efforts to support service members and their families. It all began when the couple sent a card and a small cloth flag to a friend in the Marines. They had no idea how such a small gesture would resonate with military members and Americans alike. Black and his wife began sending kits with pocket flags, bookmarks with one of five Bible verses and a letter or card from the public. Some volunteers began donating sunglasses and other useful gifts to include in the kits. But the couple realized that troops rotate in and out of the deployed areas, so there was a constant need. Soon the organization spread by word of mouth. Commanders began requesting kits for their troops.

For instance, Black said, the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force recently requested 23,000 kits. Since Project Prayer Flag began, the group has sent 144,000 kits to military members overseas and those facing deployment, surpassing their initial goal of 138,000. As deployments continue, there is a need to keep troop morale levels high, Black said. 'It's the greatest feeling in the world because it affects the troops and their morale when they know that they are receiving letters and care packages,' he said. Project Prayer Flag continues to garner support from communities, nonprofit groups, faith-based organizations and businesses. Every few months, the organization sponsors a 'Patriot Party' at a community center. Each all-day event draws about 200 volunteers, ranging from Boy Scouts and civic leaders to families and retired military veterans. 'It doesn't matter what their affiliation is, they all come together with one purpose, and that is the troops,' Black said. Volunteers sit at tables and stuff various items inside the kits. After the items are packaged, Project Prayer Flag ships them to the troops. Project Prayer Flag has also joined forces with country singer Neil Ford. Commanders have received DVD copies of Ford's music video 'Don't Give Up On Me' inside Project Prayer Flag kits to show to their troops overseas. The organization offers two outreach programs, 'Operation Christmas Care' and 'Adopt a Vet.' Operation Christmas Care affords individual families an opportunity to send holiday care packages directly to troops overseas. Adopt a Vet allows people to adopt individual service members by sending care packages as well as offering spiritual and emotional support throughout a deployment. Schools often participate in these outreach programs. Sarah Ternes, a junior-high teacher at Calvary School of Westminster, Calif., rallied behind the troops with her students at her side. The class adopted a Marine. Her class sent three packages during the Marine's deployment. The Marine corresponded with the class twice before he returned home in May." (*US Fed News, 06/13/06*)

- o In April 2005, it was reported that, "Project Prayer Flag is an effort started by a husband-and-wife team of veterans who saw support for our military declining. This project will allow troops to receive small American flags, handwritten prayers, and letters of support from people back home. Many of them would appreciate having a pen pal with whom to share their experiences and emotions." (*Post-Tribune, 04/04/05*)

Mrs. Karen Keller
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Date: November 1, 2008

Dear Mrs. Keller,

My wife Angelica and I wish to thank you for your service and tireless devotion to President Bush. Your job is so very important and we thank you for your personal touch and care into all the unseen details that involve our Country.

In 2002, my wife and I founded a grassroots non-profit Military Support Organization called-Project Prayer Flag. Today we have been fortunate to have sent over 500,000 U.S. Troops their own personal American Pocket Flag and thank you card. I have enclosed two for you. We are so grateful for the opportunity to serve the Military and their Families with Support.

As the President is leaving office, we would like to ask if there would be some way for the President to sign our Flag. We have hoped for several years to thank him in person; however we realize his busy schedule.

Once again, I thank you for your service and we have all been Blessed to have served under President Bush and to have such devoted servants such as yourself.

Thank you for your time and we wish you a happy and wonderful Christmas and Holiday season.

Sincerely,



Shawn Black
108 Clearbrook
Irvine, Ca
92614



MAY YOU CARRY THIS FLAG
AS A REMINDER OF THE
SUPPORT AND PRAYERS OF
MILLIONS OF AMERICANS WHO
SALUTE YOUR DEVOTION TO
FREEDOM. WE PRAY FOR YOUR
SAFETY AND HONOR YOUR
SACRIFICES FOR THE MANY
WHO HOPE AND REACH FOR
THE PROMISE OF LIBERTY.

*For the LORD is good; His
mercy is everlasting, and
His truth endures to all
generations.*

Psalm 100:5

MAY WE HOLD FAITH AS OUR
GUIDE, FREEDOM AS OUR
CHARGE, AND LIBERTY AS
OUR LIGHT.

Given to you by the friends and supporters of
"Project Prayer Flag"

WWW.PROJECTPRAYERFLAG.ORG





THE WHITE HOUSE

Staff Sec - Please
send packet directly
to Phil Droege so
he can extra flag
to the library
collection w/ the
background info.
Signed flag is
obviously to be
mailed.

Thanks!
Ashley