Reading Number 27
From Black Faces in the Mirror
by Katherine Tate

p. 174, ¶ 1– “In this book, I address the question of whether or not the racial composition of
government is relevant to the political representation of Blacks.”

p. 175, ¶ 2– “While the perception of Black legislators is that they are not very successful in winning
passage of the bills that they sponsor, I establish... that the opposite is true.”

p. 176, ¶ 1– “In 1969, thirteen Blacks were serving in the House during a period of rising Black
militancy.”

Ibid.– “As a means of launching their counter offensive, the thirteen Black House-members first
formed the “Democratic Select Committee,” but in 1971 it was renamed the Congressional Black
Caucus (CBC).”

Ibid., ¶ 2– “Early on, the CBC’s organizational style was characterized as combative.”

Ibid., ¶ 3– “While the CBC was descried as a ‘concrete manifestation of black political power’ within a
short period of time, many Black legislators, including some of the CBC’s original founders became
critical of the organization.”

p. 177, ¶ 2– “Beneath all of these issues was obviously a larger conflict between the organization’s
interests in representing Black interests and member’s own political goals.”

Ibid., ¶ 3– “It is instructive that the motto of the CBC is ‘Black people have not permanent friends, no
permanent enemies... just permanent interests.’”

Ibid., ¶ 3– “The CBC’s political approach... was not premised on a ‘balance of power’ equation
whereby Black members would position themselves in between the two major parties and vote
depending on which group’s legislation promised the most by way of benefits for Blacks.”

p. 178, ¶ 3– “As the membership ranks of CBC grew and as members achieved greater seniority, their
allegiances transferred increasingly to that of the party.”

p. 179, ¶ 2– “While some scholars have suggested that the increasing numbers of Blacks in the House
would undermine the political solidarity of Blacks as they brought into Congress diverse views and
perspectives, the apparent division is less the manifestation of growing ideological disunity than
crosscutting allegiances and a matter of political strategy.”

p. 180, ¶ 1– “Without Black members taking part in the legislative process, the symbolic interests such
as the congressional medals to Rosa Parks would not be there.”