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How Is America Doing 30 Years After the Kerner Report?

On March 1, thirty years ago, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders submitted its report to President Lyndon Johnson. Also known as the Kerner Commission Report, for its chairman, then Illinois Governor Otto Kerner, the document, issued in the wake of devastating riots in Detroit and Newark, was a stinging indictment of America. Its summation, "Our Nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white—separate and unequal," was like a police photograph taken at a crime scene. It was shocking.

Why am I bringing up the Kerner Commission Report at a time when the nation is enjoying its greatest prosperity in a generation? The economy is booming, unemployment and inflation are down, and the federal budget is balanced. Furthermore, we're at peace—the Cold War is over. America's sons are not returning home in body bags as they did after the Tet offensive launched by the Viet Cong in 1968. And inner-city neighborhoods are no longer charred from firebombing, nor do they reek of the acrid smell of tear gas.

But the photograph taken of America today is not a full-color spread of peace and prosperity for everyone. When we enlarge the picture and take a closer look, we see that millions in this country enjoy little of the abundance we read about in newspapers and see on television. That view of America is captured in a 30-years-after report, "*The Millennium Breach*," published by the Washington-based Milton S. Eisenhower Foundation and authored by former U.S. Senator Fred Harris, one of the original members of the Kerner Commission. Others who participated in compiling the Foundation report were distinguished scholar Roger Wilkins and Black Leadership Forum executive director Yvonne Scruggs. This new report acknowledges the gains made over the last three decades, including the explosion of black elected officials from about 300 to nearly 10,000 today, as well as the dramatic growth in the number of high school and college graduates and the expansion of the black middle class.

Nevertheless, black joblessness remains twice the national average, and underemployment is also twice as high among African Americans. *The Millennium Breach* report charges that the social and economic gaps between whites and blacks are widening. These are some of its findings:

- Since the Kerner Commission, the U.S. has had the most rapid growth in wage inequality in the Western world, with racial minorities suffering disproportionately.
- From 1997 to 1998, the incomes of the richest one percent in America increased by 120 percent and the incomes of the poorest fifth in America *decreased* by 10 percent.
- Today, the child poverty rate in the United States is four times the average of Western European countries.
- America's neighborhoods and schools are resegregating. Two-thirds of African American students and three-fourths of Hispanic students now attend predominantly minority schools—one-third of each group in intensely segregated schools.

The next time we read that the Dow Jones average has broken another record on its way to 10,000 points, we should remember some of the other indices of how the country is doing. President Clinton has taken the lead in mapping out strategies to share the nation's abundance with the less fortunate with his education initiatives and plans to extend health coverage to the children of the working poor. More should be done and the Congress should join in these efforts as a full partner. If our nation steps up to the challenge of spreading our wealth more evenly, perhaps 10 years from now, this space will be used to describe a different picture of America. ■



PRESIDENT

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Stakes Are High for Blacks in '98 Campaign

African Americans Will Help Decide Many Governorships and Perhaps the Composition of the Congress in This Year's Elections

by David C. Ruffin

The 1998 election season is well underway, and although this is a midterm year, in many races the stakes for African Americans will be high. Several special elections have already taken place, and more are scheduled this spring to fill seats vacated by some of the most respected members of the U.S. House of Representatives. Rep. Ron Dellums (D–Cal.) resigned in February after 14 terms. A special election to fill Dellums' seat will be held April 7. Six-termer Floyd Flake (D–N.Y.), who resigned last November, was replaced by Gregory W. Meeks of Queens in a February 3 special election (see February/March *Trendletter*). And Philadelphia Democrat Thomas Foglietta, the last white member of the House to represent a majority-black congressional district, also resigned in November. An election to replace him will be held on May 19. In Illinois, three black candidates ran for statewide office in a March primary, including incumbent U.S. Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun.

This is a prelude to the general election in November when all seats in the House are up, along with a third of the Senate and nearly three-quarters of the governorships. The two major parties will be wrangling over control of Congress. The GOP will be fighting to retain the majorities it won in both houses in 1994, a goal that will be easier to achieve in the Senate, where Republicans control 55 seats to the Democrats' 45. The Republicans' hold on the House is more tenuous and could be lost with a net shift of just a dozen seats. Nevertheless, if history is any guide, the chances for the Democrats regaining control in either house are slim. In only one midterm election since the Civil War, 1934, has the party controlling the White House added to its seats in Congress.

Going After Open Seats

The biggest determinant of how either party fares in November is the number of open seats available. Open seats are easier to capture than those where the incumbent is running again, due to the strong name recognition incumbents normally enjoy in their states or districts. Incumbents also have better-established campaign organizations and funding bases. Moreover, the longer a legislator has been in office, the more services he will have been able to provide to his constituents, generating more loyalty. But in an open seat, any viable candidate with sufficient financial backing has at least an even chance to prevail.

GOP congressional additions will at least be more modest this year because there won't be as many open seats as there were in '94 when the Republicans won all nine Senate seats vacated by Democrats. At press time, 31 House members had announced that they were either retiring or running for another office (16 Republicans and 15 Democrats). One of those seats is currently held by Rep. Louis Stokes (D–Ohio), who announced that he will retire at the end of this term. First elected to the House in 1968 and a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Stokes represents a majority-black district in East Cleveland. He will certainly be succeeded by another African American.

Republican-turned-Democrat Mike Parker from Mississippi's 4th congressional district is also leaving the House. The 4th, with its 37 percent black voting-age population, will be contested by at least two black candidates. There are four open Senate seats so far, with three Democrats and one Republican announcing their retirements. In the coming weeks, more seats will become vacant as more members of Congress announce decisions to move on.

Judging Voters' Mood

Much harder to predict is the mood of the voters. Some polls show the public generally satisfied with the economy and the direction of the country, certainly good news for incumbents. But there are also indicators that the public is unimpressed with what many perceive as a "do nothing" Congress. The latter element, however, is probably not significant enough to rouse masses of voters to pull the lever for change.

More will be decided in November than just the composition of Congress. Thirty-six gubernatorial elections will also be held, many of them in states where African Americans make up a large proportion of the electorate. With state governments exercising more and more control over federal block-granted funds to support social and economic programs, gubernatorial elections will have an even greater impact on the interests of minorities and low-income citizens than in years past. Furthermore, governors elected this year will approve legislative redistricting maps that will be redrawn in their states after the 2000 Census. That means the winners of this year's governor's races will ultimately help decide the political make-up of congressional and state legislative delegates. Black votes will be decisive in many of these gubernatorial elections, particularly in Alabama, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, and Ohio. Black votes could also tip the balance in the reelection bids of vulnerable U.S. Senate incumbents Carol Moseley-Braun (D–Ill.), Barbara Boxer (D–Calif.), Alfonse D'Amato (R–N.Y.), Lauch Faircloth (R–N.C.), Paul Coverdell (R–Ga.), and Christopher Bond (R–Mo.).

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Mr. Ruffin is the editor of *FOCUS*.

Elections

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Bare-Knuckle Senate Fight

Of all these contests, the Illinois race for the U.S. Senate has the most historical significance, because Carol Moseley-Braun, the first black woman to be elected to that body, is being challenged by right-wing Republican State Sen. Peter Fitzgerald. The conclusion of the state's March 17 primary, one of the earliest in the season, ends the first round of what promises to be an expensive, bare-knuckle fight over the seat held by Moseley-Braun, a first-term Democrat. Elected to the Senate in 1992, she was unopposed for her party's nomination to the seat this year. Fitzgerald, 37, spent $7 million of his share of his family's banking fortune to defeat moderate Illinois Comptroller Loleta Didrickson in the state's GOP primary.

Moseley-Braun, 50, is the first woman to serve as a permanent member of the powerful Senate Finance Committee. She is also a member of the Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs. She began her political career as an assistant U.S. attorney and later served in the Illinois State Assembly (from 1979 to 1988) and as recorder of deeds for Cook County. During her tenure in the U.S. Senate, her advocacy of issues that affect women and children has led her to sponsor legislation to repair aging public school buildings and to introduce the Women's Pension Equity Act. Moseley-Braun also championed the successful measure that now requires health insurers to cover at least 48 hours of hospital care for mothers and infants after natural child births.

Although Fitzgerald won the Republican nomination, he was not his party's chosen candidate. GOP leaders in the state had first hoped the popular Gov. Jim Edgar would run, and when Edgar declined, they backed Didrickson, a big-tent moderate who favors a woman's right to abortion. Fitzgerald cast himself as an anti-abortion, anti-gun control, candidate on a crusade for conservative ideals and appealed to the same true believers who nominated Ronald Reagan for president in 1980.

By opposing Fitzgerald, GOP regulars hoped to avoid a repeat of what happened two years ago, when conservative Al Salvi upset his moderate rival for the GOP nomination to fill the seat of retiring Democratic Sen. Paul Simon. Salvi was badly beaten in the general election by the Democrats' liberal nominee, Richard J. Durbin. Governor Edgar and former Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole actively campaigned for Didrickson, but Fitzgerald's millions left her buried in an avalanche of television ads.

Knocking out Moseley-Braun in November may not be easy. Like Salvi, Fitzgerald may prove to be too extreme for many of Illinois' women and mainstream voters. Furthermore, the incumbent will be able to compete with Fitzgerald's campaign war chest by making use of strong backing from organized labor and womens' groups. Political strategists are projecting that the two candidates' combined spending may exceed $20 million.

Burris Out of Governor's Race

In the gubernatorial primary, black Democrat Roland Burris, 60, a former attorney general and state comptroller, lost his second bid to be Illinois' first African American governor. Five-term Rep. Glenn Poshard, 52, won the four-way race for the Democratic nomination. Although Burris's campaign was underfunded and he had not held a major public office in four years, his strong name recognition gave him an early lead in the polls.

Until 1994 Burris, who held statewide office for 16 years, has been the most successful black political figure in Illinois history. He was elected state comptroller three times and served as attorney general for one term. When he was first elected state comptroller in 1978, he became the first African American to be elected to statewide office in Illinois. As attorney general from 1990 to 1994, Burris created the Women's Advocacy Division, which assists women who are victims of stalking and domestic violence. In 1993, he established a Children's Advocacy Division, which focuses on the prevention of child abuse by educating high-risk families. After losing the 1994 Democratic gubernatorial primary, Burris declared that he was retiring from politics, but within a year he broke that promise to challenge incumbent Richard Daley in a race for mayor of Chicago, losing in a lopsided defeat.

The Democratic primary victor, Poshard, who hails from Illinois' southeastern coal mining and agricultural region, was the most conservative among the party's gubernatorial candidates. He opposes abortion and is unsympathetic to regulating gun-ownership. Nevertheless, Poshard enjoys strong labor support, and he has placed a limit on donations to his campaign, saying he would refuse contributions from corporations. Other candidates in the race were former U.S. Justice Department official John Schmidt and former U.S. attorney Jim Burns. Poshard received 38 percent of the vote, Burris 30, Schmidt 25, and Burns 6.

In November, Poshard will face Secretary of State George H. Ryan, who won the Republican nomination with 86 percent of the vote, defeating Chad Koppie, an airline pilot.

In another statewide race, the Cook County recorder of deeds, black Democrat Jesse White, won his party's nomination for Illinois secretary of state. White, who will go up against Republican Al Salvi, served 16 years in the Illinois General Assembly and boasts an unusual background. A former paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division, he later played professional baseball for the Chicago Cubs. In 1959, he founded the Jesse White Tumbling Team, which offers a positive alternative to gangs and drugs for the youth in Chicago's severely distressed Cabrini Green and Henry Horner public housing projects. More than 3,500 young men and women have performed with the team.

Although the 1998 campaign season is still young, important special elections and primaries are already taking place. If black voters turn out to cast their ballots in large numbers in these contests, they will help decide the political hue of the 106th Congress and choose governors who are becoming more and more instrumental in the policies that affect their lives. ■

Giving At-Risk Youth a Place to Excel

A Free, Public New Jersey Boarding School Offers a College Preparatory Academic Program and a Safe Haven to Poor Urban Students

by Hillary Weis

Jonathan's circumstances were painfully familiar. He was a black seventh grader from an inner-city neighborhood whose chances for a successful and happy life were dim. A homeless child raised by a drug-addicted single mother, his suspension from school for disruptive and disorderly behavior was sadly unremarkable. But Jonathan's story did not end there. After his indefinite suspension from school, Jonathan, who has since been assessed as gifted and talented, was accepted as a student in the innovative Samuel DeWitt Proctor Academy Charter School in West Trenton, a public boarding school for urban at-risk youth. In just a few months, his prospects changed dramatically. His status has changed from that of a lost child from a school with few success stories, to a star in a unique academic environment that also provides him with the social and emotional support he so desperately needs.

When the Proctor Academy opened last September, it became the first free charter public boarding school in the country and marked the launch of a national Children's Academies for Achievement (CAA) network of public residential schools that give at-risk children an opportunity to reach their full potential.

The Birth of the CAA and Proctor Academy

CAA grew out of a research project by two MBA candidates at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. The two researchers, Deborah Miller and Carmen Caneda, expanded on a previous study by Miller that investigated the feasibility of converting decommissioned military bases into public residential schools for disadvantaged children. They studied various models for the schools, as well as financial viability and a variety of curriculum designs. For assistance with policy issues, they turned to the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

During their research they came across an article describing creative approaches to education in *The New York Times* by Samuel DeWitt Proctor, a well-respected African American education scholar. Proctor's article advocated a program that appealed to Miller and Caneda. They contacted Proctor, who offered them his assistance.

In May 1994, Miller and Caneda devoted themselves full-time to transforming their idea into reality and established Children's Academies for Achievement in New York as a not-for-profit organization dedicated to creating a national network of public residential schools for at-risk youth. Beginning with a zero budget, the two first devised an aggressive fundraising campaign to raise the money needed to establish their first school.

Later in 1994, Caneda and Miller approached the New Jersey Department of Education to discuss the possibility of opening a residential school in the state. State officials embraced the idea and helped CAA secure a site at the Marie Katzenbach School for the Deaf in West Trenton, New Jersey. With the assistance of Juanita Joyner, a local community leader who joined the effort, CAA obtained a charter from the state of New Jersey to open and operate the academy, named in honor of Dr. Proctor, on the Katzenbach campus.

As a charter school, Proctor Academy operates under the authority of a state-issued charter that permits a private sponsor to operate a public school outside the jurisdiction of the surrounding district. With the exception of basic health, safety, and educational standards, the academy is autonomous with respect to curriculum, personnel, scheduling, and financial administration. The school also receives a percentage of the state's per-pupil expenditure.

Proctor's First Class

On May 3, 1997, the State of New Jersey selected the academy's first students through a lottery, as mandated by the charter legislation. Because of the financial limitations imposed on Proctor, the academy's initial student body could not exceed 48 students, although they had received more than 90 applications for the limited number of available places. The students, equally divided between boys and girls, were selected for the academy's inaugural seventh and eighth grade classes. The school will eventually provide classes through high school.

Many of the students are from hard-working, low-income families and applied to the academy to escape the pressures that too many inner-city youth are confronted with, such as gang activity and the stigma that frequently accompanies academic success. Several students were sent by grandparents overwhelmed by the demands of raising an adolescent, while others came from the foster care system. For the most part, potential students were nominated by their teachers, coaches, guidance counselors, or social workers, or by religious leaders in their communities. The academy will add a class of approximately 24 students each year until the school reaches its full financial capacity of 150 students.

On September 2, 1997, Samuel Dewitt Proctor Academy Charter School opened its doors. For many students, it immediately became a safe haven from the dangers that

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Ms. Weis is a program associate at the Children's Academies for Achievement in New York.

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plague their home neighborhoods. One male student from a community rampant with drug dealers was an almost permanent fixture on campus during the summer, working in the school office as an assistant. Gary Reece, the academy's director, commented, "I can only speculate as to how this bright boy was coping on the streets. From his nearly daily presence on campus all summer, I guess that he needed a sanctuary like Proctor to survive."

Spanish, Steinbeck, and Anne Frank

There is no bell to signal the end of the school day at Proctor Academy, where instructors and residential advisors work with students around the clock. Reece notes, "Here, there is no school year, no school day." Each student is thoroughly immersed in a comprehensive learning environment that fosters both emotional and scholastic development. The academy promotes discipline, self-respect, and a sense of responsibility to one's community.

Through collaboration with university consultants from the University of Pennsylvania, Yale University, and the College of New Jersey, the school has developed an interdisciplinary college preparatory program unlike that offered by most traditional public schools. The curriculum has six primary components: Civilizations and Societies, Creative Expression, Languages and Cultures, Literature and Literacy, Questions and Quantities, and a traditional mathematics component.

Courses in the Civilizations and Societies component include history, anthropology, and psychology. Students gain a clear perspective of the flow of history with an emphasis placed on their own role in events, knowledge of the history of their local community, and the use of history as an anchor for the human record. Creative Expression includes writing and arts classes, such as drama and music. To help students identify with the conflicts and dilemmas of tragic characters, they act out parts of Lorraine Hansberry's play, *Raisin in the Sun*.

Through the Languages and Cultures component of the curriculum, students learn two foreign languages: Spanish and Latin. In an innovative approach to learning, the teachers use few standard text books. Princeton-educated language teacher Anna Cabrera applies the immersion technique in teaching Spanish, and her students are compiling their own Spanish-to-English dictionary to help them think in Spanish. Sign language instruction is also made available so that students can make friends with the deaf students on the Marie Katzenbach School campus, where the academy is located.

English instructor Jennifer Geoghan selects books for the Literature and Literacy component that combine excellent writing with vivid historical context. For example, *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank gives the students a context for the second World War and the Holocaust. *Warriors Don't Cry*, about the Little Rock Nine, offers a look at the beginnings of the modern civil rights struggle. The *Titanic* disaster, described in *A Night to Remember*, will be read later in the term. Students are encouraged to read such books as *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck independently. Questions and Quantities is the science and technology component of the academic program. Students ask questions, seek solutions, and gain knowledge of those pioneers who engaged in quests to learn about the physical world.

There are six full-time teachers and five residential advisors on staff at the academy. The instructors have a mix of experiences teaching in both private and public school settings throughout the Northeast. As part of the process of selecting faculty, candidates were asked to demonstrate their teaching skills by conducting sample classes before administration, parents, and students.

Students live in single-sex dormitories with a full-time staff of residential advisors. The academy enforces mandatory study periods to help students develop effective study techniques and self-discipline. Students perform household chores and have access to a kitchen they may use on the weekends. The academy has an agreement with a nearby prep school, The Lawrenceville School, that allows Proctor students to use its athletic facilities for ice hockey, swimming, and golf lessons.

Students are both challenged and stimulated by the school's curriculum. Members of the faculty routinely spend time after classes and on weekends with students, serving as mentors and teachers to their pupils. Most students have demonstrated marked improvements in their scholastic performance, and many have experienced dramatic academic transformations. For example, one female student, who had never read a full-length book before coming to Proctor, was converted to an avid reader after reading *The Diary of a Young Girl* in English class.

Costs Less Than Prison

Yearly tuition, room, and board for each Proctor student costs approximately $17,000. As mandated by its charter, the academy receives an allocation of $7,000 per student from the State of New Jersey. The remaining $10,000 needed to educate each student is raised through private contributions. As a residential program, Proctor's costs of educating its students are higher than public day schools'. The academy has a longer school day as students participate in evening workshops and study halls, as well as Saturday classes and activities. In addition, Proctor's 230-day school year is 50 days longer than the average New Jersey state public day school.

Although $17,000 may seem high, this figure is much lower than the per-pupil expenditures of many private boarding schools in the Northeast. Furthermore, student tuition at Proctor pales in comparison to the cost of incarcerating a juvenile offender, which often exceeds $30,000 a year.

To date, the academy has received donations of money, equipment, and services from numerous corporations, foundations, and individuals. Bell Atlantic has donated 65 computers, and United Auto Group has donated a van for

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Senate Affirms Minority Set-Aside Program

Federal Program to Provide Disadvantaged Business Owners with a Share of $214 Billion in Transportation Contracts Is Retained in Key Vote

by David C. Ruffin

On March 6, a bipartisan Senate majority voted down an amendment to S. 1173, the omnibus Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1997 (ISTEA II), that would have eliminated the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) set-aside program. The amendment offered by Sen. Mitch McConnell (R–Ky.) was rejected by a vote of 58 to 37. Through the 16-year-old DBE program, minority- and women-owned businesses have secured billions of dollars in transportation construction contracts. Support for retaining the set-aside was organized by the Congressional Black Caucus, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, a coalition of civil rights organizations, and women's groups such as the American Association of University Women. Fifteen Republicans joined all but one Senate Democrat in voting to retain the program. Ernest Hollings of South Carolina was the lone Democrat to vote against it.

The Senate's clear rejection of the McConnell amendment may force conservative House and Senate Republicans to reassess plans to introduce a measure in Congress this year that would reverse national affirmative action policy. The defeat also indicates that support is limited for undoing a policy that many agree has been a successful remedy for the effects of discrimination. Just last November, a bill that would have essentially banned affirmative action in all federal contracting and hiring, sponsored by Rep. Charles T. Canady (R–Fla.), was killed in the House Judiciary Committee.

Congressional passage of ISTEA with the DBE program in tact means that women and minority entrepreneurs will continue to have opportunities to bid on billions of dollars in transportation construction contracts. ISTEA authorizes $214 billion for the construction of highway and mass transportation projects over the next six years. The bill will provide $171 billion for surface transportation and highway programs, $41.3 billion for mass transportation programs, and $1.8 billion for transportation safety programs. The measure represents a $59 billion (38 percent) increase over the previous ISTEA bill enacted in 1991.

The Goal of Expanded Participation

The DBE program sets a goal of 10 percent participation by minority- and women-owned firms on federally-funded transportation projects. The program is necessary because discrimination in awarding construction contracts remains a serious and widespread problem. A look at the participation of minorities and women in such contracts prior to the establishment of the DBE program shows that without procurement goals, women and people of color are virtually excluded from government construction contracts. That exclusion from government contracts is common today in cities and states that do not have set-aside programs.

The Clinton administration's position of "mend, don't end" affirmative action was developed in response to the 1995 Supreme Court *Adarand Constructors* v. *Peña* decision. In that case, Adarand Constructors, a white-owned highway construction company lost its bid to put up highway guardrails on a federally-financed Colorado highway project in the San Juan National Forest in 1990. The contract went to an Hispanic-owned company, Gonzales Construction Co., which submitted a higher bid. The ruling stipulates that race-based programs must meet the strict scrutiny standard. That is, the government must show that the use of race as a factor in awarding contracts is "narrowly tailored" and is necessary to meet a compelling state interest. So that procurement procedures meet the requirements of the *Adarand* ruling, the Department of Transportation recently published proposed changes to the DBE program.

The proposal requires that race neutral measures such as outreach and technical assistance be employed to meet contracting goals before using any race- or gender-based approaches. Further, goals should be based on the proportion of DBEs in the market to ensure that the goals reflect the availability of qualified firms in the industry. The new rules also make it easier for white male-owned firms to qualify as DBEs. State departments of transportation and mass transit agencies will be allowed greater flexibility in meeting goals and may apply for waivers if they believe that there are circumstances that impede them from achieving their goals.

Since the inclusion of women in the DBE program in 1987, U.S. Department of Transportation procurement dollars going to women-owned businesses have increased 175 percent. In 1994, the DBE program generated $3.4 billion in contracts for minority- and women-owned firms and created approximately 146,000 jobs. The program is a model for other federal agencies to use to improve the percentage of their contracts going to minority- and women-owned firms.

The fight to preserve the DBE program is not over, however. Opponents of the program are expected to introduce an amendment to eliminate it from the House of Representatives' version of the bill when the ISTEA bill is debated on the floor of that chamber this month. ■

Mr. Ruffin is the editor of *FOCUS*.

Youth

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use during field trips and other school-sponsored events. The J.M. Kaplan Fund has donated funds that will pay for a comprehensive evaluation of the academy. In addition, CFI, Inc., a Newark, New Jersey, furniture merchandiser, donated furniture for the academy's dining room, dormitory rooms, and recreational common areas.

Given the considerable public discussion of school choice in recent years, it is important to note that charter schools, such as Proctor, must be distinguished from voucher programs. Charter schools must meet the same rules and standards as other public schools; that is, they must remain nonsectarian and free to all students and most are not permitted to use admission criteria during the enrollment process. At charter schools, students receive a certain percentage of the state's per-pupil expenditure, and the remaining tuition is usually covered by contributions from private sources, including individuals, foundations, and corporations. Voucher programs, on the other hand, permit parents to use public education dollars to send their children to private and parochial schools. With voucher programs, tuition at a private school may well exceed the public school dollars allotted to each student, requiring the student and parent to cover the remainder of the tuition.

Establishing Academies in Other States

The overwhelming need for free, public residential schools to serve at-risk youth has been widely acknowledged by parents and educators alike. This need is further evidenced by a waiting list for Proctor Academy that far exceeds the school's capacity. Clearly, public academies that offer academic excellence and accessibility to students from low-income families, as well as a refuge from the perils of inner-city streets, are in high demand. Coupled with a political climate favorable to residential schooling, this demand has inspired Children's Academies for Achievement to expand into other states.

Children's Academies for Achievement founders selected Mariano Guzmán as the organization's president and its advocate for the establishment of residential public schools across the nation. Guzmán is a highly respected educator in New York. He has had 24 years of experience as a teacher, school administrator, and executive director of the Center for Educational Programs—an organization that provides scholarships, guidance, and support to young people, particularly disadvantaged youth, as they make the transition from high school through college. Early in his career, Guzmán founded the Schomburg School in East Harlem, one of the first two-way bilingual/bicultural elementary schools in New York City, and served as the school's director for six years.

In the coming months, Guzmán will focus his attention on New York and Pennsylvania as fertile areas to establish new CAA schools. Shortly after CAA's inception, its founding members were appointed to a committee formed by Senator Ivan Itkin of the Pennsylvania Legislature, to draft legislation that would cover the total cost of establishing a residential school in Pennsylvania. CAA sees the introduction of charter school legislation in New York as an opportunity to establish public residential schools in that state. Other states that have expressed interest in opening a CAA school include California, Connecticut, Florida, Maine, and Michigan. ■

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TRENDLETTER

POLITICAL REPORT

by Mary K. Garber

Dorothy Height Passes the Torch

Dorothy Height's retirement at age 85 from the presidency of the National Council of Negro Women concludes 60 years of activism and extraordinary leadership in the arena of civil rights. She will continue to be a major figure on the American scene while serving as chair of the board of directors of NCNW. Meanwhile, she has passed the presidential torch to Jane E. Smith of Atlanta. In 1957, Height became the fourth president of the NCNW. Founded in 1935, the council is an umbrella organization, encompassing 34 national and 250 community-based organizations, representing a total of four million women.

The founder of NCNW was another legendary figure, Mary McLeod Bethune, who founded Bethune-Cookman College and became an adviser to First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.

Under Height's leadership, the council became one of the nation's most important civil rights organizations. Among the national civil rights leaders of the sixties, she was the only woman. Height pressed President Lyndon Johnson to appoint black women to positions of responsibility in the federal government, and she has continued to lobby each successive president to ensure that black women were considered for cabinet and subcabinet-level posts in their administrations. She used the resources of her organization to focus the attention of black women on social and economic issues and on political participation.

These efforts have included the initiation of NCNW food drives, childcare and housing projects, and educational and career training programs. In recent years Height has committed NCNW funds to support programs aimed at strengthening the black family, particularly through the annual Black Family Reunion Celebration. In its eleventh year, the reunion is now held in nine cities across the country.

Height's crusade for social and economic justice reached beyond the borders of the United States. In 1952, she served as visiting professor at the University of Delhi, India. In 1974, she was a delegate to the UNESCO Conference on Women and Their Rights, held in Kingston, Jamaica. The following year, Height was a member of the tribunal at the United Nations' International Women's Year Conference, held in Mexico City.

Over the decades, Height has received numerous awards and honors, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom presented by President Clinton in 1994.

After 40 years, Height leaves the NCNW fiscally sound and headquartered in an historic building on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D.C., between the White House and Capitol Hill. Height reports that the organization, one year into a three-year $30 million capital campaign, has raised about a third of the amount.

Jane Smith Becomes CEO of NCNW

Jane E. Smith faces the daunting task of replacing a legend as she assumes the position of CEO and President of the National Council of Negro Women. Smith has indicated that she will concentrate on economic issues that affect black women, such as pay equity, entrepreneurship, and leadership training.

Smith brings to the position considerable experience with nonprofit organizations. For the last four years, she has been the executive director of The Atlanta Project (TAP), a program of the Carter Center. TAP focuses on uniting Atlanta as a community, empowering its citizens, and improving the quality of life within the city's neighborhoods. Using the problem-solving approach of the Carter Center, TAP's initiatives are based on community priorities.

Smith also has served as the director of development of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change and as a senior administrator at Spelman College and

at INROADS, a corporate and educational career development organization for minority students. Smith holds a B.A. in sociology from Spelman College, an M.A. in sociology from Emory University, and a Doctor of Education in social policy analysis from Harvard University.

Evers-Williams Leaves NAACP in Good Shape

Myrlie Evers-Williams, the widow of murdered Mississippi civil rights activist Medgar Evers, announced February 10 that she had decided not to seek another term as chair of the board of directors of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a position she had held for three years.

The 65-year-old native of Vicksburg, Mississippi, is widely credited with returning the nation's oldest civil rights organization to solvency and respectability after it was plagued by scandal, debt, and disrepute. Evers-Williams says she will continue to serve on the 64-member board. She has been replaced by Julian Bond, who has had a distinguished career as a civil rights activist, politician, and journalist.

Under Evers-Williams' stewardship, the NAACP convinced former Maryland Democratic Congressman Kweisi Mfume to become the organization's president and CEO. In her first year as chair, Evers-Williams' fundraising efforts and fiscal reforms resulted in a surplus of $2.25 million, the first surplus of revenue over operating expenses in five years.

Evers-Williams plans to start an independent civil rights think tank named for her late husband, who was NAACP field secretary when he was gunned down in the family's driveway in Jackson, Mississippi, on June 12, 1963. She took her husband's place as NAACP field secretary, but after the first two trials of Byron De La Beckwith for the murder of Medgar Evers resulted in two hung juries, she moved with her children to California. Evers-Williams persevered in seeking justice, and in February 1991, 31 years later, De La Beckwith was finally convicted of the slaying. "Since my late husband Medgar's death, I have been committed to seeing that his legacy and proper place in history are maintained. It is time for me to once again devote my energies to that task," Evers-Williams commented in an NAACP press release.

Julian Bond Picked to Head NAACP Board

On February 21, the board of directors of the NAACP elected civil rights activist and former Georgia legislator Julian Bond, 58, by a narrow margin to replace outgoing chair Myrlie Evers-Williams. Before the election, Bond had been serving as chairman of the board of the NAACP's magazine, *The Crisis*. Bond, who lives in the Washington area, is professor of history at the University of Virginia and American University.

As chair, Bond affirmed the NAACP's commitment to a program focused on fighting for the rights of people from all ethnic groups. "Colored people come in all colors," he said.

Bond grew up in the company of black intellectuals and civil rights activists. His father, Horace Mann Bond, was president of two historically black universities—Lincoln University in Pennsylvania and Fort Valley State College in Georgia. The elder Bond also was active in civil rights, working to integrate public accommodations in Oxford, Pennsylvania (the community near Lincoln University) and successfully participating in a court challenge to the county's segregated school system with his son Julian as one of the plaintiffs. Horace Mann Bond also helped write the NAACP's brief for the landmark U.S. Supreme Court case, *Brown* v. *Board of Education*, which resulted in the outlawing of segregation in the nation's public schools.

In 1960, while a student at Morehouse College in Atlanta, Julian Bond cofounded the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which was a major force in the desegregation struggle. During the same period, he was instrumental in establishing a black newspaper called the *Atlanta Inquirer*. He wrote for the paper and later became its managing editor. In 1964, Bond won election to the Georgia House of Representatives. However, the Georgia legislature refused to seat him, citing his endorsement of SNCC's stated opposition to the Vietnam War. In December 1966, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously reversed a federal district court ruling and found that the Georgia legislature had violated Bond's right of free speech and ordered that he be seated. In 1968, Bond was co-chair of a delegation to the Democratic National Convention put together by the Georgia Democratic Party Forum to challenge the right of the overwhelmingly white delegation to be seated. Bond's group eventually won nearly half of Georgia's delegate slots at the convention.

In 1974, Bond won a seat in the Georgia Senate, which he held until 1987. In 1986, he lost his bid for a seat in the U.S. Congress to his longtime friend and SNCC associate John Lewis. Following the traumatic loss of that race, Bond moved to Washington and concentrated on teaching, lecturing, and writing. He narrated PBS' acclaimed series on the civil rights movement, *Eyes on the Prize*, wrote a nationally syndicated newspaper column, "Viewpoint," and hosts the television show "America's Black Forum." ■

ECONOMIC REPORT

by Cecilia Conrad and Malinda Lindquist

The Federal Budget, Families, and Youth

President Clinton's fiscal year (FY) 1999 budget proposal contains new childcare and education initiatives of special concern to African American families. These programs may benefit those African Americans struggling with the high cost of childcare and poor performing urban schools.

Childcare

In January, the President unveiled a major $20 billion initiative to improve childcare for working families. The initiative would increase funding for Childcare and Development Fund block grants, expand the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit, and establish the Early Learning Fund. More than 4 million preschoolers are in some form of paid childcare arrangement—11.9 percent are African American, and 10.0 percent are Hispanic preschoolers. Fifty-two percent of African American and Hispanic preschoolers whose mothers are employed are in some paid childcare arrangement. Among these preschoolers, 366,000 live in families with incomes at or near the poverty level (below $14,400 a year). At an average weekly cost of $74 per child, childcare can become quite expensive. Many families with employed moms and poverty-level incomes spend one-fourth of their income on the care of a preschooler.

Prior to welfare reform, the federal government subsidized childcare for low-income families either through the Childcare Programs of Title IV-A of the Social Security Act or the Child Development Block Grant program (CDBG). The Title IV-A programs provided childcare subsidies primarily to recipients of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (AFDC) who were moving from welfare to work. The CDBG program disseminated monies to states, territories, and American Indian tribes to help low-income families access quality childcare.

The 1996 welfare reform measure, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act, merged all federal childcare assistance into a single, state-grant program—the Childcare and Development Fund (CCDF). With funds from the CCDF, states subsidize low-income families' childcare costs, either by contracting with providers or by issuing certificates to parents to pay for the services of legally operating childcare providers. The CCDF, which made available $3.1 billion to states in FY 1998, currently provides subsidies to approximately one million poor and near-poor children. Because there are 8.2 million poor and near-poor children altogether who are potentially eligible for these funds, President Clinton is proposing to increase funding by $7.5 billion over the next five years. According to the White House, the additional funding, by the year 2003, would more than double the number of children served.

The FY 1999 budget, which goes into effect on October 1, 1998, also includes $5.2 billion over the next five years to expand the Child and Dependent Care tax credit. This credit allows families to reduce their income taxes by varying amounts depending on their income and the number of qualifying dependents. Families that owe no taxes would receive no subsidy from the program. Under the current law, the maximum credit for a family with one dependent and taxable income of $10,000 a year or less is $720. For families with incomes between $10,000 and $28,000, the credit ranges from $720 to $480. A family with one dependent and a taxable income of $28,000 or higher can claim a maximum credit of $480. Under the President's proposal, a family with one dependent and taxable income of $30,000 or less would be able to claim a maximum credit of $1,200. For single dependent families with incomes between $30,000 and $59,000, the maximum credit would range from $1,200 to $504. The maximum tax credit for families with incomes greater than $59,000 would be unchanged.

In addition, the President's initiative would establish the Early Learning Fund, which would provide grants to communities for activities that improve the quality and safety of childcare for children under five, such as funds for parent education.

Education

The centerpiece of Clinton's proposed FY 1999 education budget consists of a seven-year, $12 billion class-size reduction initiative; a ten-year, $10 billion school construction program; a five-year, $1.5 billion fund for Education Opportunity Zones; and a five-year, $350 million program to improve teacher preparation.

The past 25 years have witnessed an ongoing debate about the effectiveness of class-size reduction. Opponents of reducing class size contend that it does not have a significant impact on academic performance. Those in favor of class-size reduction point to Tennessee's Student Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) project. Evaluations of project STAR have found that compared to larger classes, smaller classes have fewer behavioral problems, increased student participation in classroom

activities, and more in-depth instruction. Moreover, according to a study by Frederick Mosteller, professor emeritus at Harvard University, "the effect of small class size on the achievement of minority children was initially about double that observed for majority children."

As of the 1993–1994 school year, the average elementary school classroom comprised 24.1 students. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the two factors that appear to influence class size the most are school size and minority student enrollment. Schools with student populations of 750 or more had an average class size of 26.1. Schools where more than one-fifth of the students were minorities also had larger class sizes on average (24.5).

Clinton's class-size initiative aims to reduce the average class size to 18 students for first through third graders by hiring 100,000 new teachers. Under this initiative, the federal government would disseminate funds to the states. States with the largest numbers of 5- to 17-year-old youth who are either poor, eligible for public assistance, in foster care, delinquent, or neglected would receive the most financial support. School districts would be responsible for providing matching funds to participate in the initiative. This amount would be determined on a sliding scale and high poverty districts would be required to contribute the least. Local districts could use these funds to recruit and pay teachers needed to lower class size.

Currently, it is unclear whether this level of funding is adequate to lower class size significantly. California has allocated $1.5 billion to lower its average class size to 20 students. Under Clinton's proposal, California would get an additional $123 million in federal funds. While this may help California attain an average class size of 18, it is apparent that states unable to commit the substantial state resources that California has invested may struggle with making measurable changes in class size.

The true success of the class-size reduction initiative, however, may depend on the adoption of Clinton's school construction program. As schools lower their class size, they will need more classroom space. The administration would finance this program with $22 billion in bonds. Buyers of these bonds would receive tax credits in lieu of interest. The funds from the school construction program would allow schools to accelerate the rehabilitation and modernization of schools. Clinton included a similar, smaller initiative in last year's budget proposal, but failed to muster enough congressional support to have it incorporated in the FY 1998 budget agreement. (See February/March 1997 *FOCUS*.)

Three smaller programs are also targeted to meet the special needs of urban schools. First, Education Empowerment Zones would provide three-year grants to 50 high-poverty, low-achieving urban and rural school districts that are implementing significant educational reforms. School districts that showed the most improvement would be eligible for an additional two years of funding. Second, Clinton's teacher preparation program would focus a portion of its funds on preparing teachers to fill positions in urban and rural districts. Third, the budget would create a $10 million program to establish Community Computer Centers in low-income neighborhoods.

Because President Clinton has proposed a balanced budget for FY 1999, any new spending programs must be offset by an increase in revenue. Funds for portions of the education and childcare initiative depend upon projected receipts from pending tobacco legislation. Hence, these laudable programs face two legislative hurdles. Not only must Congress approve the programs, but Congress must also approve an increase in the tobacco tax to finance them. ■

Education and Childcare Initiatives

Program	Source of Funds	New Funding for FY 1999 *In millions of dollars*
Education Initiatives		
Tax Incentives for School Construction	Reduction in Tax Receipts	$215
Class Size Initiative	Receipts from Tobacco Legislation	$1,100
Education Empowerment Zones	Discretionary Budget Authority	$200
Teacher Recruitment and Preparation	Discretionary Budget Authority	$65
Childcare Initiatives		
Childcare and Development Fund	Receipts from Tobacco Legislation	$1,155
Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit	Reduction in Tax Receipts	$256
Early Learning Fund	Mandatory Budget Authority	$600
Childcare Provider Scholarships	Discretionary Budget Authority	$50

Note: Discretionary budgets must be periodically re-authorized by Congress. Under the mandatory budget authority, the spending level is fixed by law. Congress can change spending only by amending the authorizing legislation.

Source: Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 1999