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FOCUS

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'86 Elections Are Critical for Blacks

At stake: black candidates, Senate control and judicial appointments, South Africa policy

Unique Coalition Awaits Outcome of Test Case

Green Light on Affirmative Action

Wealth Data Puts Black-White Gap in Sharp Focus

JCPS Political TrendLetter

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New Government Role Will Boost Voter Registration

In our democratic society we give a lot of lip service to the importance of registering to vote. All too often, though, we do very little to make it easy and convenient for citizens to register. But the times may be changing. There appears to be the beginning of a new trend towards getting state and local governments actively involved in encouraging and facilitating voter registration.

Last month, for example, a California Superior Court judge ordered workers in Los Angeles County social service and other offices to actively solicit the registration of voters while conducting regular business. If this decision is upheld on appeal, as many as 20,000 county employees may soon be deputized to reach out to unregistered Californians.

This ruling, the first in the nation to order government workers to solicit voter registration, should boost registration among minorities and low income residents whose registration rates are substantially below those of whites and other higher income residents. In his ruling, Judge Jack Newman acknowledged that a "substantial and identifiable class" of poor and minority people was underrepresented on the voter rolls.

The California decision is but the latest in a number of judicial, executive, and legislative responses to the need to make registration easier and more convenient. Last year, the New York Court of Appeals upheld Governor Mario Cuomo's 1984 executive order requiring state workers to solicit voter registration while carrying on their official duties. However, unlike in California, New York state workers cannot actually collect and turn in completed registration forms.

For the past 10 years, the state of Michigan has been conducting a voter registration program in its motor vehicle offices. When someone applies for a driver's license, he or she can also get a form to register and vote. It makes a lot of sense. And, of course, for some time now the legislatures of Michigan, Georgia, and several other states have authorized the deputizing of school officials to register high school students. Such actions have contributed to the dramatic success of Jesse Jackson's appeal to students to graduate with a diploma in one hand and a voter registration card in the other.

Black Americans should welcome these innovative measures and encourage other state and local governments to adopt them. These measures, coupled with vigorous enforcement of the Voting Rights Act and a growing determination by blacks to exercise their political clout, have led to a sharp increase in black voter registration.

In the 1982 mid-term election the black-white registration gap was only 6.5 percentage points, down from 11.4 points in 1966. In the 1984 presidential election the gap was only 3.3 points, down from 9.2 points in 1968.

Continued growth in black voter registration is a prerequisite to the full exercise of our political clout, and we should support any measures which open wider the doors to the voting booth. The rest is up to us.

Eddie N. Williams

PRESIDENT

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Unique Coalition Awaits Outcome of Test Case

by M. Carl Holman

Before very long we will know whether both houses of Congress are going to pass—and whether President Reagan will sign—new housing legislation which would significantly increase the power of public housing tenants to control their lives and the places where they live.

The fate of the legislation will also test the effectiveness of a most unusual ad hoc alliance of black and white conservatives, liberals, and moderates—some of them politicians and some of them leaders of national and local community-based organizations.

Seeking Common Ground

Last December, a small group of blacks who do not normally come together spent several hours in my living room seeking some patches of common ground on which they might meet in trying to help poor blacks improve their life chances. The group included Robert Woodson, chairman of the Council for a Black Economic Agenda and president of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, along with three other members of the Council—Robert Hill, Kujaatele Kweli, and Paul Pryde. Representing the National Black Leadership Roundtable were myself; Congressman Walter Fauntroy of the District of Columbia, chairman of the Roundtable; and Evelyn Moore, executive director of the National Black Child Development Institute.

The meeting I hosted had two objectives: to clarify points of consensus and disagreement on some of the Council's proposals for meeting the needs of low-income blacks, and to reduce the likelihood that the largely dysfunctional personal attacks and counter-attacks that followed Woodson's first meeting with President Reagan would be repeated.

The exchange in my living room was at points a good deal warmer than the December weather outside—especially on such issues as educational vouchers—but never hostile. While most of the members of the Council do not wholly discount the need for government intervention, they strongly support self-help as the basic answer to the predicament of the black underclass. Though most members of the Black Leadership Roundtable are pledged to the support of their "Black Family Plan" with its heavy emphasis on self-determination, most leaders of the 150 organizations in the Roundtable would also insist on much stronger and much more positive action by the federal government than is now in vogue.

Cooperative Action

Before our meeting was over, we agreed that the one issue on which we could and should cooperate was mobilizing support for the then-pending resident management provisions of the 1986 Housing Act. Representatives Fauntroy and Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.) thereafter met with groups of tenant leaders convened by Woodson and agreed to serve as cosponsors of each other's amendments. Members of the Roundtable, the Black Leadership Forum, and the Council for a Black Economic Agenda—along with others across the political and organizational spectrum—were provided with information designed to help generate that "arithmetic of power" of which Fauntroy so often speaks.

But it was the kind of arithmetic provided by the public housing tenant leaders from Washington's Kenilworth-Parkside development and from Boston, St. Louis, and elsewhere that enabled the coalition to form so readily around this issue.

> ***The one issue on which we could agree to cooperate was mobilizing support for the then-pending resident management provisions of the 1986 Housing Act.***

It is, after all, rather hard to gainsay their achievement of six-figure surpluses in rent collections, lower operating costs, a 50 percent decrease in the number of residents on welfare, programs that have enabled youngsters to choose college over dropping out, and continuing campaigns that have lowered teenage pregnancy, crime, vandalism, and drug abuse.

The alliance, so far, is holding. But there is considerable concern that external factors—budget deficits, White House opposition to any housing legislation, congressional priorities—may deny poor people in public housing the modest victory so many of them have richly earned. ■

The author is president of the National Urban Coalition.

Wealth Data Puts Black-White Gap in Sharp Focus

by William O'Hare

The Census Bureau's recent revelation of the scant amount of wealth controlled by black Americans dramatically illustrates the continuing sting of past racism. As shocking as it is to note that white household wealth is 12 times that of blacks, these gross figures mask a frightening racial disparity that will continue into the 21st century.

Of the many indicators commonly used to measure the economic gap between blacks and whites, the most illuminating may be the data on wealth inequality. To be sure, average income and the poverty rate are useful, but they overstate the gains made by blacks. The data on wealth differences—recently released by the Census Bureau—show much more clearly that blacks still lag far behind whites in gaining a fair share of the American economic pie.

These numbers are particularly disturbing because wealth is a better measure of economic status than income or poverty levels.

While the median wealth of white households is *12 times* that of black households, white income is "only" double black income, and the poverty rate for whites is "only" a third the black rate.

The startling fact is that over half of black households have less than $5,000 in accumulated assets. For these families there is no economic cushion for hard times.

Even blacks with greater assets are not cushioned from economic shocks. Three quarters of black wealth consists of equity in a house or car, compared to only half of white wealth. Thus, whites can more readily convert assets to cash by withdrawing savings or selling stocks, but blacks' assets are not so easily convertible.

Because net worth measures assets that have been accumulated over a lifetime (such as equity in a house or car, savings, stocks etc.), this index is a vivid reminder that past discrimination has a major impact on current economic well-being. For example: a 60-year-old black man in the 1980s probably entered the job market (in the 1940s) at a time when 94 percent of black households had earnings below the poverty line. In 1950, when this hypothetical black man was in his prime earning years, only one-fifth of black males aged 25-29 had finished high school. By the late 1960s, when the civil rights gains were opening up society to blacks, our hypothetical black man was about 40 years old and probably entrenched in a low-paying marginal job. Over the course of this man's lifetime he had precious few resources with which to accumulate assets.

But what about younger blacks? Though their prospects are better than those of our hypothetical 60-year-old man (the black poverty rate had "declined" to 40 percent by 1980), there are numerous reasons why the wealth gap will remain large for the forseeable future:

- Only one of six black households has any discretionary income, compared to one of three white households, and when such discretionary income does exist, it is lower among black households (discretionary income averages $8,555 in black households and $10,661 in white households);
- Fewer young blacks than young whites will inherit any assets from their parents. The impact of past discrimination is perpetuated in this way, as new generations of whites inherit the benefits of the economic advantages their parents enjoyed;
- The wealth gap is also likely to be perpetuated through ongoing and pervasive residential isolation. Most blacks still live in all-black neighborhoods where the primary demand for black-owned homes is from other blacks, who typically have below-average incomes. Black-owned homes, thus, are not likely to appreciate as rapidly as white-owned homes, which are sought by other whites and higher income blacks. The consequence is a diminution of the equity in black-owned homes (between 1979 and 1984, the average equity in black-owned homes dropped from $36,611 to $29,914, while the equity for whites rose from $50,939 to $51,939).

These numbers are particularly disturbing because wealth is a more stable and comprehensive measure of economic status than income or poverty levels. Income may vary from week to week or year to year, but wealth accurately reflects economic status and the availability of resources. ■

The author is associate director of research at JCPS.

August 1986

JCPS

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

In This Issue

- **Wayne County Executive WILLIAM LUCAS defeated millionaire businessman DICK CHRYSLER in the Michigan Republican gubernatorial primary by a 44-34 margin. If Lucas wins in November, he'll become the nation's first black governor.**
- **Georgia's 5th district will elect a black Congressman—most likely JULIAN BOND or JOHN LEWIS.**
- **ALTON R. WALDON, JR., was sworn-in as the new U.S. congressman from New York's 6th congressional district to complete the term of the late JOSEPH ADDABBO.**
- **Black "firsts" continued to make history in elections in Alabama, New York, Virginia, Michigan, and Mississippi.**
- **MARTIN LUTHER KING III is seeking his first political office—a seat on the Fulton County Commission.**
- **In Louisiana's 8th congressional district primary race, black attorney FAYE WILLIAMS is running a strong race against four white males.**

Michigan Republicans Choose Lucas for Governor

Wayne County Executive **WILLIAM LUCAS** moved **one step closer to becoming the nation's first black governor** after a come-from-behind win over millionaire businessman **DICK CHRYSLER** in the Michigan Republican primary. Lucas, who **had trailed by as much as 12 percentage points just last month,** won 78 percent of the vote in Wayne County and also led in downstate cities like Kalamazoo and Bay City. **Exit polls showed he got 41 percent of the white Republican vote and 66 percent of the black Republican vote**—compared to Chrysler's 35 percent and 24 percent, respectively. The polls also showed Lucas benefited from press disclosures of an unemployment compensation scandal involving employees of Chrysler's auto customizing firm; of the voters who made up their minds in the last week of the campaign, one-third said they had favored Chrysler but voted for Lucas. . . . **Lucas, a fiscal conservative and abortion foe, is a former Democrat who switched to the Republican party in May 1985.** His candidacy has **been endorsed by a wide spectrum of Republicans,** from television evangelist and presidential hopeful **PAT ROBERTSON** to former Governor **WILLIAM MILLIKEN.** . . . In the November general election **Lucas will face the popular incumbent, Governor WILLIAM BLANCHARD, who easily won the Democratic primary by a margin of 94 percent to 6 percent.** Blanchard is expected to campaign on the theme that during his governorship the state budget went from a deficit in 1983 to a modest surplus in 1986. For Lucas to win, he must receive the traditional conservative support won by gubernatorial candidate **RICHARD HANDLESS** in 1982 and split the Wayne County vote. Though **Blanchard seems certain to have the edge at this time, the Republican's chances cannot be discounted;** in 1982 Blanchard had a big early lead but wound up winning with just 51 percent of the vote.

Old Friends Now Foes in Atlanta

Democratic voters in Georgia's 5th congressional district are set to make the **difficult choice between civil rights veterans JULIAN BOND and JOHN LEWIS**—which prompted Atlanta Mayor **ANDY YOUNG** to say, **"whoever wins, the district cannot lose."** Young continued, "This is what the movement was all about, to choose from the best of us." . . . **Polls show Bond with a lead** of between 10 to 30 points, perhaps enough to avoid a runoff, **but the hard-working Lewis cannot be counted out of the race:** he is reportedly walking across the entire 5th district talking, shaking hands, and spending the night at constituents' homes. . . . **Other candidates in the Democratic primary race**—who might receive enough votes to force a runoff—are businessman **CHARLES JOHNSON** and social activist **JAN DOUGLASS.** Johnson has pitched his campaign toward affluent whites and black professionals; his only endorsements are from local business groups. Douglass has been endorsed by national feminist leaders **GLORIA STEINEM, SHIRLEY CHISHOLM, and MAXINE WATERS. . . . On the Republican side, black newspaper woman PORTIA SCOTT faces former Atlanta policeman DAVID YOOD** (who is white). Scott is the favorite among Republicans, but most observers say she would face an uphill struggle to defeat the Democratic nominee in this urban, 65 percent black, Democratic district.

Black Political "Firsts"

Several blacks made history in June and July by **winning offices never before held by black Americans.** In **New York's** 6th congressional district (Queens), 49-year-old attorney **ALTON R. WALDON, Jr.,** has already been sworn in as the district's **first black U.S. congressman,** temporarily becoming the 21st member of the Congressional Black Caucus. Waldon, who narrowly won a special election, will complete the term of the late **JOSEPH ADDABBO.** Waldon, elected to the New York State Assembly in 1982 and again in 1984, must now win the September 9 Democratic primary, where he will be challenged by three black candidates: **SIMEON GOLAR, HULBERT JAMES, AND REV. FLOYD FLAKE.** The victorious Democrat must face Republican **RICHARD DIETO** in the November general election.

In the Democratic primary election for commissioner of **Lee County, Alabama,** former Boy Scout Master **ALBERT CHAMBERS of Opelika, Alabama, defeated former Auburn (Ala.) Councilman LINDBURGH JACKSON.** Chambers will have no Republican opposition in the general election and will become **Lee County's first black commissioner.** Lee County is 24.4 percent black. . . . Also in Alabama, **the whites-only era on the state board of education is about to end. WILLIE PAUL,** a retired Air Force officer who headed Montgomery's Head Start program, won the Democratic nomination in District 5 (a Black Belt district with a 56 percent black population), and **ETHEL HALL,** a professor at the University of Alabama, won the Democratic nomination in District 4 (in Jefferson County, black population 45 percent). Both defeated white opponents, and neither faces Republican opposition in the general election. They will become the **first blacks on the board of education since the 1870s.**. . . In Decatur, Alabama, **RUSSELL PRIEST** has been appointed to the city council. He is **Decatur's first black city councilman.**

In **Newport News, Virginia** (31.5 percent black), councilwoman **JESSIE RATTLEY** became the **first woman and first black mayor. . . . Suffolk,** Virginia (47.7 percent black), also elected its **first black mayor, JOHNNIE MIZELLE; its first black school superintendent, MACK BENN, JR.; and, for the first time, elected a majority of blacks to the city council.**

In **Southfield, Michigan** (a Detroit suburb with a 9.1 percent black population), sales executive **ERIC COLEMAN became the first black elected to the board of education.** Coleman won a four-year term with a two-to-one margin over his nearest opponent.

In **Drew, Mississippi, CLEVE MCDOWELL,** a lawyer and the state field director of the NAACP, is expected to become the **first black elected to the board of aldermen.** McDowell is unopposed in the November general election.

Across the Nation

Alabama

HANK SANDERS, a black state senator (District 23), **won his reelection bid against challenger ANDREW HAYDEN,** black mayor of Uniontown. **Sanders sponsored legislation that changed the method of electing commissioners and school board members in five counties from at-large to single-member district elections.** Hayden's support among whites was very strong; he was heavily financed by white businessmen. All he had to do was capture one of every four black voters in this 69 percent black district, but that was a mountain he couldn't climb. **Sanders carried seven of the eight counties in the senatorial district,** losing only Hayden's home county by 552 votes.

District of Columbia

At-large Councilmember **CAROL SCHWARTZ, a white Republican, is poised to challenge two-term black Mayor MARION BARRY** (D), who has only token Democratic opposition, in his reelection bid. Other candidates have entered the race, but **Schwartz is expected to be Barry's only major competition.** Barry is heavily favored to win (registered Democrats outnumber Republicans 10 to 1 in Washington, D.C., and blacks make up 70 percent of the population); yet **Schwartz cannot be counted out. In 1982 she upset veteran Councilman JERRY MOORE,** a prominent black minister and popular Republican.... **Not all white politicians in D.C. are underdogs,** however. In the race for council chair, a *Washington Post* poll shows incumbent D.C. **Council Chairman DAVID CLARKE holding about a three-to-one lead over former Councilmember DOUGLAS MOORE,** who is black. Clark has a lead of more than two to one among black voters.

Georgia

MARTIN LUTHER KING III, son of the late civil rights leader, **is making his first bid for political office,** seeking a seat on the Fulton County Commission from District 1, which includes Atlanta. His opponent, incumbent **MILTON FARRIS,** is an 80-year-old white veteran of politics who has served in elective office for more than 30 years, and the district is majority white. **Consequently, most political observers report that King has an uphill fight on his hands—nothing new to the King family.**

Illinois

Chicago Mayor HAROLD WASHINGTON has captured control of the city council through the victory of four council candidates he backed in special elections. (The wards were redrawn to increase black and Hispanic voting strength.) The result was a **25-to-25 tie between the Harold Washington camp and that of his archrival Alderman EDWARD R. VRDOLYAK** (chairman of the Cook County Democratic Central Committee), **with Washington holding the deciding vote.** Since gaining control of the council in May, Washington has tightened his hold on the city government in a number of ways, including reorganizing and restaffing council assignments, city boards, and commissions.

Louisiana

In the 8th congressional district primary race, attorney **FAYE WILLIAMS is strengthening her bid to join Congresswoman CARDISS COLLINS** (D-Ill.) and become one of only two black women in Congress. **Williams has received endorsements from several prominent organizations, including the Women's Campaign Fund, the Congressional Black Caucus, the National Black Leadership Roundtable, and several AFL-CIO affiliated unions.** Her campaign has raised more than $125,000. Williams, whose campaign theme is "Send a Friend to Congress," is **contending with four white males.** The polls show her running third overall but first in one-third of the parishes. Most political observers say this is still anybody's race and that **Faye Williams has a good chance of fighting her way into a November runoff election** (showdown between the two top vote getters) **if blacks register and vote for her in large numbers.**

Continued on next page

Maryland

Gubernatorial candidate **STEPHEN H. SACHS objected to a *Baltimore Sun* poll** because the key voter preference questions did not include the names of the candidates' running mates. **SACHS said his running mate, Congressman PARREN MITCHELL, was "central" to his campaign, and "not to ask voters' reaction [to him], you might as well be measuring a race for Governor of Kansas."** *The Sun* canceled publication of the poll, but denied that their methodology was improper.... **WENDELL HOLLOWAY,** a black lobbyist for Ford Motor Company, **is competing with six white Democrats for the 8th congressional district seat** being vacated by Representative **MICHAEL BARNES.** Holloway contends that his experience as an aide to former black Congresswoman **YVONNE BURKE** makes him the only candidate who knows what it takes to be a congressman. Although **political analysts** rate Holloway over his opponents in their political debates, they **speculate that he lacks the financial resources needed to win** this district, which is only 10 percent black.

Massachusetts

In the 8th congressional district (Boston), black State Representative **MEL KING fell from second place in March to third place in June,** according to a Harrison-Goldberg poll. **JOSEPH KENNEDY II,** son of **ROBERT,** is still leading, with State Senator **GEORGE BACHRACH** now in second place.

North Carolina

Former Congressman **JAMES BROYHILL** (R), who was appointed recently to fill out the term of Republican Senator **JOHN EAST** (who committed suicide), is in a tight race against former Governor **TERRY SANFORD** (D) to hold on to the seat. Both candidates are white, but **the race may be decided by black voters.** A June *Charlotte Observer* poll shows Sanford ahead by 46 percent to 40 percent, but the poll did not sample a large enough number of blacks to predict how they will vote. At the **North Carolina Black Leadership Caucus's 10th annual conference last month, several blacks expressed frustration with Sanford and the Democratic Party** for their lack of support on a number of issues important to blacks in the state. **JESSE JACKSON endorsed Sanford,** however, and reminded his audience that Sanford had been moderate on racial issues when most Southern governors were staunch segregationists. **Other speakers said Broyhill's positions on judicial nominations and South Africa were against black interests. Broyhill's black staff and supporters hope their candidate's "economic development" message will help him win black votes.** Most observers conclude that despite tensions between blacks and the Sanford camp, the great majority of blacks will support him, and that Jackson's endorsement increases that likelihood.

South Carolina

Veteran public servant **JIM CLYBURN lost his bid for the Democratic nomination for secretary of state in the June 10th primary, shattering the chance for a black to be nominated for a statewide office in South Carolina for the first time this century.** The winner was the incumbent **JOHN CAMPBELL,** who won 53 percent of the vote to Clyburn's 47 percent. The margin of victory was only 4,500 votes. Clyburn concluded that it was "just too much to beat a century-old tradition."

Compiled by:
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Green Light on Affirmative Action

All Justices Favor Race-Conscious Remedies

by Rory K. Little

Amid 17 separate opinions spread among four U.S. Supreme Court decisions on affirmative action this term, a somewhat astonishing result has gone unnoticed: the court has *unanimously* affirmed the lawfulness of non-victim-specific, race-conscious remedies under the Constitution. The variously stated limitations on this general holding will be, without doubt, the subject of future litigation. But the Court's singularity of opinion on the constitutional questions marks a significant turning point in affirmative action litigation.

By definition, affirmative action plans are those that allocate some benefit to members of a racial minority in situations where that benefit would, but for race, go to a member of a racial majority. The beneficiaries under affirmative action have generally not been identified as actual victims of past racial discrimination; instead, they are members of a class, their racial minority group.

Because of the lengthy gap between violation and remedy [Editor's note: 12 years in *Wygant*, 11 years in *Local 28*], the actual victims of specific discriminatory acts either have moved on or are virtually impossible to identify. Yet, huge imbalances—all-white workforces, for example—persist as a result of past discrimination. Class-based affirmative action plans, while admittedly an imperfect mechanism, are the best available remedies to address these realities.

Affirmative Answers

The judicial imposition of race-conscious affirmative action plans raises hard constitutional issues:

- While obviously repugnant, does past racial discrimination justify race-conscious action in reverse?
- May a race-conscious plan be ordered or adopted without judicial findings or admissions of past discrimination by one of the parties?

Many legal challenges to affirmative action plans should be dropped. . . . The realistic view is that race-conscious plans will be analyzed with a presumption of validity.

- May persons in the racial majority who are themselves innocent of any proven discrimination become no longer preferred in favor of individuals of the racial minority, due solely to past discrimination by others?
- May race-conscious relief be extended to people not proven to have been victims of discrimination in the past?

Decisions rendered in four cases this term answer all of these questions in the affirmative. The result, broadly stated, is that race-conscious plans implemented pursuant to solid evidence of past discrimination will be upheld, so long as they are not permanent or overly rigid, are tailored to meet some rational measure of compliance (i.e., the percentage of minorities in a relevant labor pool or community), and do not force innocent persons to lose *existing* property interests (jobs, apartments, and the like).

As a consequence, many legal challenges to affirmative action plans should be dropped. Although as a matter of legal theory, race-conscious remedies remain "inherently suspect," the realistic view is that race-conscious affirmative action plans will be analyzed with a presumption of validity, and challengers will have to demonstrate that certain restrictions stated by the Court have been exceeded. In Justice Sandra Day O'Connor's words, "As in any other suit, it is the [challengers] who must bear the burden" of proof.

The four decisions are *Wygant v. Board of Education*, 84-1340; *Local 28, Sheet Metal Workers v. EEOC*, 84-1656; *Local 93, Firefighters v. Cleveland*, 84-1999; and the less publicized but important *Bazemore v. Friday*, 85-93. When the dust of front-page publicity settles, it is likely that *Wygant* and *Sheet Metal Workers*, the lead constitutional and Title VII cases, will emerge as two of the most significant decisions of any recent term.

[Editor's note: Not all affirmative action issues have been resolved. In two recent actions, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear two additional affirmative action cases in the next term, and ordered the reconsideration of a Fourth Circuit opinion upholding a minority set-aside plan.] ■

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'86 Elections Are Critical for Blacks

At Stake: Black Candidates, Senate Control and Judicial Appointments, South Africa Policy

by Eddie N. Williams

In the ongoing drama of black political advancement, the stage is again set for black voters to test our political strength, to use the ballot to change policy, and to elect candidates who support our interests. The next act of this political drama takes place in just a few months, in the mid-term elections of 1986.

Mid-term elections usually are the doldrums of American politics. Registration and turn-out decline sharply and public attention flags. This year the political pundits are already lamenting what they believe will be an especially dull, off-year election, lacking in major national issues to command public attention.

Blacks, however, cannot afford to let their political guard down this year. The stakes for us are very high. A lot of major issues command our attention. We have an opportunity not only to elect more blacks to office, but to help determine which party will control the U.S. Senate. We have a chance to influence U.S. policies toward South Africa and, more broadly, to influence the character and direction of future social and economic policies. The challenge for us is to fully mobilize the black electorate to register and to vote on November 4.

This is not just another mid-term election year. Here are a few thoughts about what is at stake and what blacks can accomplish in the November elections.

1. We can and must ensure continued progress in winning elective offices. I need not persuade you of the importance of strengthening black voices in the seats of power at the local, state, and national levels. While our progress so far is encouraging and a source of great pride, we have a long way to go in order to approach equitable representation among elected officials.

The Joint Center recently announced that during the past year the number of black elected officials increased 6.1 percent, from 6,056 to 6,424. However, we still hold less than 1.5 percent of the elective offices in the country, and the current gains represent only a fraction of the political clout at our disposal. We must marshall a lot more of that clout.

This year an unprecedented number of black candidates are running for Congress—64 by our most recent count, 21 more than in 1984 and almost twice as many as in 1982. The 20 members of the Congressional Black Caucus are expected to win reelection. At least two additional black candidates will win congressional seats, and the number could be as high as three or four.

In addition, there are two major gubernatorial candidates (Tom Bradley in California and William Lucas in Michigan) not to mention the hundreds of other candidates seeking state and local offices. They all deserve our best efforts to get more blacks registered and available to support their candidacies.

Blacks still hold less than 1.5 percent of the elective offices in the country—a fraction of the political clout at our disposal.

2. The Senate races this year are another very important concern of the black community. One-third (34) of the Senate seats are being contested, and the control of the Senate is up for grabs.

The Senate races are of unusual importance to blacks. If President Reagan is to be denied a completely free hand in reshaping the federal judiciary in his image, we need a Senate that can be a restraining force.

The author is president of the Joint Center and chairman of the board of directors of the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation. This article is an abridged text of his plenary address at the National Urban League Convention in San Francisco on July 22, 1986.

The administration's record of judicial appointments to date is one of the gloomiest aspects of the Reagan era for blacks. Partly because President Carter was unsuccessful in making several appointments to the federal bench in his final weeks in office, President Reagan has had an unusual opportunity to appoint judges. So far he has appointed 262 judges—about one-third of the entire federal judiciary. Before leaving office, he could have a chance to appoint more than half of all federal judges. We face the real danger that a conservative federal bench, hostile to civil rights and oblivious to the needs of the poor, will be entrenched for years after this administration leaves office.

To protect our interests, we need to scrutinize the candidates for the 34 Senate seats being contested this November. The black vote could be critical in a number of these elections because of its size and the closeness of the races. For example, North Carolina, Alabama, Louisiana, Florida, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Missouri, and California have vigorously contested Senate races in which a large black voter turnout can be decisive.

We face the real danger that a conservative federal bench, hostile to civil rights and the needs of the poor, will be entrenched for years after this administration leaves office.

We need to know where these candidates stand on our issues and how they will appraise judicial appointments. Don't be put off by vague responses like "Well, I'll have to see who is nominated" or "Now, understand, I'm going to vote on the merits." We must demand to know where candidates stand on specific issues and what specific criteria they will use in assessing judicial appointments.

By the way, *all* candidates, whether for the Senate, the House, or state and local offices, should be held to this standard. Even if they cannot vote for national policies or judicial appointments, they can influence congressional votes and executive decisions through the political clout they wield and the public opinion they can mobilize.

3. The 1986 elections also provide an opportunity for blacks to use their votes as a "two-by-four" to get the administration's attention appropriately focused on South Africa. The House of Representatives did just that last month when it passed Ron Dellum's bill to clamp a comprehensive trade enbargo on South Africa and to require all American companies to leave that country within six months of its passage. A similar bill has been introduced in the Senate and momentum is growing for its consideration.

The South Africa issue also lends itself to domestic electoral politics. In addition to protesting against apartheid and against the administration's coddling of the racist regime in South Africa, we should back up our words with our votes in the 1986 elections.

In November voters can make a clear, strong statement about U.S. South Africa policy. All candidates who get our votes, regardless of their post or level of office, should be committed to the imposition of tough sanctions against South Africa.

All candidates who get our votes should be committed to the imposition of tough sanctions against South Africa.

We can indeed demonstrate real clout if we dramatically increase the level of black voter participation. This year the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation is seeking to register 1.5 million new voters and to assure that at least 9 million black voters turnout on November 4. These may appear to be modest goals and indeed they are, given the dimensions of the problems we seek to address. But achieving these goals will not be easy. They would be the highest levels that blacks ever reached in a mid-term election. They would come close to equaling the white rates in 1982.

While we must not underestimate our political potential, we also must not underestimate the task of fully achieving it. Surely, now is the time for us to draw upon all of our individual, collective, and institutional strengths to fully mobilize the black vote. Surely, now is the time for us to marshal the resources needed to strengthen the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation, the National Urban League, and all other organizations actively involved in voter mobilization.

Special attention must be given to mobilizing the young and the poor. While we understand the circumstances that lead to their political disillusionment and apathy, the stakes are too high in 1986 and 1988 for us to excuse anybody who can fill out a registration form and mark a ballot. We must develop creative strategies to involve the young and the poor more actively in our quest for political empowerment.

Our leaders and institutions must find ways to motivate our people to register and vote today as intensely as they marched and protested in the sixties.

This is an enormous challenge, but we are equal to it. We can use our political power massively and ingeniously as an effective instrument of self-help.

Our own initiative and determination may well become the spark that ignites a national response to the distressing problems of poverty and joblessness. In any event, by our own initiative and determination we will continue to be true to our history, our values, and our own moral purpose. ■

JOBLESS RATE FOR BLACK GRADS RISES TO PEAK IN 1982, DROPS

by Lynn Burbridge

Even the good news on black unemployment trends is now turning sour. College-educated blacks used to be rapidly absorbed into the labor force and provided a silver lining to an otherwise gloomy cloud. For instance, in 1980, their unemployment rate was "only" 4.4 percent, compared to the overall black rate of 13.4 percent. Moreover, their unemployment rate dropped to 4 percent in 1981, while the rate for college-educated whites rose from 1.9 percent in 1980 to 2.3 percent in 1981.

Beginning in 1982, however, educated blacks' silver lining started to lose its gleam. The unemployment rate for blacks with four or more years of college jumped an incredible 108 percent, from 4 percent to 8.3 percent, according to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Even worse, while the unemployment rates for all other groups (black and white) peaked in 1983 and have since declined to their 1981 levels, the rate for college-educated blacks came down to only 5.8 percent in 1985—still above the 1981 level.

What explains this alarming turn of events? Though no definitive answers are available, the likely explanations are that:

1) black college graduates had less job seniority and were thus more vulnerable to being bumped in a layoff during the 1981-83 recession;

2) blacks are more dependent on government employment and were disproportionately harmed by the cutbacks which occurred at the national and local levels; and

3) given the Reagan administration's antipathy to affirmative action, businesses may have felt less pressure to hire young blacks into the better paying jobs. ■

The author, until recently a research associate at the Joint Center, is now an economist at the Urban Institute.

SENATE CONSIDERS FISCAL SAFETY NET FOR NEEDY COMMUNITIES

General Revenue Sharing is slated to expire at the end of FY 1986, but Senator David Durenberger (R-Minn.) has introduced S.2037, a bill to create a new need-based general purpose fiscal assistance program called Targeted Financial Assistance (TFA). According to Senator Durenberger, "The national government can no longer afford to share its revenues with wealthy cities and communities, but neither can it afford to neglect communities crippled by federal aid cuts . . ."

In his testimony on S.2037, Dr. Milton D. Morris, director of research at the Joint Center, was generally supportive of the TFA proposal but raised two main concerns. His first was that the budget for revenue sharing was $5.7 billion while TFA called for expenditures of only $2.3 billion—"the very minimum that can qualify as a reasonable response to the problems we seek to address."

His other concern was that the bill's current sponsors— mostly farm-state senators—not neglect the plight of millions of chronically poor urban dwellers: "America simply cannot afford to tolerate the unchecked growth of [the urban] underclass permanently cut off from the opportunity structures of the society."

[Editor's note: A copy of his testimony may be obtained by calling JCPS at (202) 626-3500.] ■

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