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FOCUS

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TRENDLETTER **PERSPECTIVE**

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Welfare Bill Should Have Been Vetoed

This month, over the objections of a broad range of organizations, President Clinton signed H.R. 3734, a bill that dramatically restructures the welfare system. In an attempt to reform the welfare system, the measure eliminates the federal guarantee of welfare benefits to the nation's poor, cuts $61.1 billion from anti-poverty programs over the next five years, converts the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program into a block grant to the states, and shortens the period for which the poor may receive benefits. Prominent among the groups that opposed the bill was the Black Leadership Forum, of which the Joint Center is a founding member, and which urged President Clinton to veto the legislation in an August 1 letter that read as follows:

Dear Mr. President,

The Black Leadership Forum's (BLF) board of directors represents major leadership within the African American community. It is our very strong position that you should veto the Welfare Reform bill and we vigorously and passionately urge you to do so.

The member organizations of the Black Leadership Forum constitute strong, established, and powerful civil rights institutions in this country. A disproportionate number of our constituents are poor and economically disenfranchised. Historically, on behalf of these very constituents, we have petitioned our federal government and its presidents for fulfillment of the promise of American democracy—to protect the weakest and the least fortunate among us. Clearly these include children, their under- and unemployed parents, and the disadvantaged elderly, who indeed will be the inevitable victims of the current "welfare reform" legislation making its way to you for signature.

We implore you to ignore exhortations by those who believe that Congress' tenacity in agreeing to certain compromises after many months of negotiation should be rewarded by your signing the bill. Lengthy deliberation is not by itself any measure of substantive fairness, and in this case, has not guaranteed compassion nor has it improved the quality and equity of the proposed solution. The current welfare reform bill still is cruel, its victims still are the most defenseless and its intention still is transparent: that poor people, children, legal immigrants, the jobless, and the unskilled all of whom will pay a price for their condition. While the vast majority of those affected will not be African Americans, disproportionate number of those in targeted groups will be black.

Mr. President, we petition you to veto this welfare bill. If, as it has been reported, you are confident that appropriate adjustments to protect the bill's victims can be made in the next congressional session, then we ardently insist that these corrections be made before you sign. We urge you to continue in the spirit of your promise of leadership for all Americans, including the least fortunate, the youngest, the oldest, the most economically infirm and the newest Americans among these. As you so aptly have observed, one cannot make an eagle out of a pig by adding wings. The welfare reform bill remains a pig which does not fly morally, ethically, or economically.

As we indicated when we wrote to you on June 7, 1996, we await the confirmation of an appointment to meet with you at the earliest possible time. We look forward to the constructive potential of such a meeting.

Very sincerely yours,

[Signed by Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, Chairman of the Black Leadership Forum and 15 other members of the Forum]

FOCUS
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Assault on Breast Cancer

Pressure From Activists Has Generated More Resources for Research and Treatment of a Killer That Disproportionately Afflicts Black Women

by Katherine E. Heck

"Breast cancer for generations among black women has been a personal problem, not to be discussed, and a lonely disease," said Zora Brown of the Breast Cancer Resource Committee at a Senate subcommittee hearing in 1991. "This mind-set, when coupled with the lack of information, fear of what examination might reveal, and limited exposure to the advances made in the fight against breast cancer, has kept black women all too vulnerable to the ravages of this disease."

Although breast cancer has traditionally been regarded as an extremely private disease, in the early 1990s activist organizations such as the National Breast Cancer Coalition emerged to bring the issue into the public sphere. They raised awareness of this common and often deadly condition and were able to more than quintuple research funding through advocacy. Black women in the United States, disproportionately affected by breast cancer mortality, have shown dramatic increases in screening rates during the last few years, partly as a result of improved funding for screening programs. Much research remains to be done, but the increased concern about the growing problem of breast cancer has encouraged progress.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer to strike American women; about 184,000 are expected to be diagnosed with the disease this year. Of that total, roughly 44,000 cases will prove fatal. It is the most frequent form of cancer among women in every ethnic group except Vietnamese. (About 1,000 men are diagnosed with breast cancer each year as well.) African American women are slightly less likely than white women to be diagnosed with breast cancer, but once diagnosed, they are more likely to die, for a variety of reasons. According to the National Cancer Institute, statistical projections show that fully 8.8 percent of black women will be diagnosed with breast cancer at some point in their lives, and about 3.3 percent will die of the disease; 4,779 black women in the U.S. died of breast cancer in 1992 alone.

An Illusive Killer

Breast cancer incidence and mortality rates had been rising for many years, until 1992. Although research is advancing, the causes and prevention of breast cancer remain elusive. Women are, on average, more likely to contract this disease if they are older, have a family history of the disease (particularly if a mother or sister had it), are childless or bear their first child later in life, begin menstruation earlier than average, or experience menopause later.

More controversial research suggests that there may be higher risk among women who drink alcohol, have high-fat diets, did not breastfeed their children, and exercise less than average. Overweight women have a higher risk for premenopausal breast cancer, the more deadly form of the disease. In addition, some researchers believe that certain toxins in the environment, particularly pesticides such as DDT, might increase the risk, although the hypothesis is hotly debated; exposure to these toxic substances may be greater among women living in poor communities.

Meanwhile, a substantial proportion of women who are diagnosed with breast cancer have none of the identified highest risk factors. And unlike lung cancer or heart disease, no one knows how to prevent breast cancer: all that is known is how to find it and treat it, and the treatment is not always successful.

A recent favorable trend is the rapid increase in the proportion of women who are screened for breast cancer: screening rates more than doubled between 1987 and 1992. Mammography screening, which involves an x-ray of the breast, is one of the best methods for finding breast lumps and has been proven to save lives among women aged 50 and older. The National Cancer Institute recommends that women in this age group be screened every one to two years, and that they receive a yearly breast examination by a health-care provider.

Lower Black Survival Rates

Because of heightened public awareness, African American women are now screened for breast cancer as frequently as women of other ethnic groups. This new development could improve mortality rates in the future. Black women, particularly those of lower socioeconomic status, have tended to be diagnosed with breast cancer at a later stage of the disease, when the cancer may have spread and been harder to treat.

Socioeconomic status plays an important role in deciding who survives breast cancer. Poorer and less well-educated women tend to have poorer quality health care or less access to health care, and therefore a less successful record of treatment. Mammography screening provides the best chance of catching the disease at an early stage, but low-income African American women are less apt than other women to get such check-ups because of unawareness of the need to be screened, the expense of the

Katherine Heck is a postgraduate fellow at the National Center for Health Statistics in Hyattsville, Maryland.

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procedure, or fear of the procedure. Other obstacles include the difficulty of finding the time or transportation.

An additional problem is mistrust of the health-care system. Health care may be provided in a culturally insensitive manner. Medical research too often has excluded women or African Americans from participating in clinical trials and other types of research, so that less is known about illness among these populations.

African American women may face special challenges when dealing with the aftermath of breast cancer. Ingrid Parris-Hicklin, a breast cancer survivor who lives in Virginia, recalls that when she first went to buy a breast prosthesis after her cancer surgery, "the prostheses were all for white females." She eventually found an appropriate one, but it was clear to her that there were needs specific to black women that were not being met.

Activists Target a Deadly Disease

In 1991, the federal government spent about $90 million on breast cancer research. Many viewed the funding as inadequate at a time of rising incidence rates, so breast cancer victims, their family members, and other activists began organizing to demand more funding for research, screening, and treatment. The activists found a model in ACT-UP and other HIV-related health advocacy groups. They raised awareness of breast cancer through petitions, lobbying, letter writing, and fundraising.

The National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC), an alliance that today represents more than 350 member organizations nationwide, was formed in 1991 and soon delivered more than 600,000 letters to Congress and the President urging greater funding for research. The NBCC's surge in activism was well timed, since it coincided with the launch of the Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues' campaign to increase women's health research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The group charged that women had long been excluded from many clinical trials undertaken at NIH. NBCC found an ally in Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), who lost two sisters to breast cancer. Awareness among senators in general increased regarding matters affecting women, following the barrage of criticism concerning the 1992 Clarence Thomas—Anita Hill hearings.

The activists demanded an increase of $300 million in funding for the National Cancer Institute (NCI), a component of NIH. As a result of the lobbying, funding for breast cancer research skyrocketed, including a grant of $210 million to the U.S. Army for research. The portion of the annual federal budget that is dedicated to breast cancer research increased to about $501 million in 1996. The NBCC is currently seeking petition signatures to ask for a $2.6 billion appropriation for breast cancer research between now and the year 2000. It is also asking all political candidates to sign a ten-point platform demonstrating support for increased funding for breast cancer research, as well as universal access to health care and patient involvement in research decision making.

Government Responds

The problem of breast cancer has become a newly recognized government priority. In 1992, the Mammography Quality Standards Act was enacted to establish guidelines that mammography centers must follow to ensure excellence in the quality of this essential diagnostic technique. A panel created by President Bush had assembled earlier to study the issue and called for expanded research. In 1993, President Clinton declared October 19 to be National Mammography Day. On that day, to encourage check-ups, women nationwide received reduced-price mammograms. During the past few years, most states have passed laws requiring mammograms to be included in private health insurance plans. Medicaid now covers them in most states, though payment sometimes requires a doctor's order. One recipient of the new breast cancer funding is the Specialized Programs of Research Excellence (SPORE), which directs about $17.5 million of NCI monies toward programs focused on breast, prostate, and lung cancer. Many of the SPORE grants involve local breast cancer activists in clinical research.

Another recipient of the increased federal funds is the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, a program of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In 1991, to administer this project, the CDC began a partnership with organizations in every state; included were federal agencies, state and local health departments, the YWCA, the American Cancer Society, and the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged, as well as other groups. In 1995, the program was funded at $100 million. It attempts to increase breast and cervical cancer screening rates by, in some states, building the capacity to screen, and by providing free or reduced-cost tests for low-income women in other states. These efforts have succeeded in increasing the proportion of women screened for breast cancer. From 1991 through 1994, the program provided 177,393 mammograms, resulting in a diagnosis of breast cancer for 752 women. State programs helped to secure treatment for many of those found to have the disease. Without such expanded efforts, the disease in many of those cases might have gone undetected.

Community-based, culturally-sensitive programs encouraging African American women to receive breast cancer screening are underway in several parts of the country. For example, the Save Our Sisters program targets 2,600 African Americans in rural North Carolina and trains "natural helpers," black women in the community who encourage others to seek mammograms. In a similar program, Maryland county health departments employ outreach workers from local communities to recruit women from such sites as churches, low-income housing developments, and nursing homes for mammography screening.

During the 1990s, breast cancer has come out of the closet, due largely to the political movement. "We can't ever sit back again and think, 'They'll take care of us,' " says Ingrid Parris-Hicklin, who has joined the National Breast Cancer Coalition. "We need to lobby... There needs to be a public outcry about this disease." ■

AUGUST 1996

TRENDLETTER

POLITICAL REPORT

Congressional Report Card, 1996—*Second Session of the 104th Congress*

by David C. Ruffin

The second session of the Republican-controlled 104th Congress was not dominated by a sweeping legislative agenda the way the GOP's "Contract With America" dominated the first session. The Republican leadership of the House and Senate stepped back from proposals contained in the Contract that would dramatically slash funding for Medicare, Medicaid, and school lunches and give wealthier Americans large tax breaks. Moreover, responding to pressure from constituents, about a third of House Republicans voted for the president's proposed increase in the minimum wage.

Nevertheless, a Republican-backed bill to dismantle the welfare system as a safety net for the poor was passed, as was a bill to repeal the ban on assault weapons.

The roll call votes in the following Congressional Report Card focus on 10 different domestic issues, including raising the minimum wage, radically restructuring welfare, and limiting women's rights to reproductive choice. Each of the 101 U.S. representatives in the report card is from a congressional district with a black constituency of 15 percent or more.

As in the past, the Democratic members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) generally voted to preserve programs designed to extend social and economic equity to poor and disadvantaged Americans. The House's two black Republican members, **GARY FRANKS** of Connecticut and **J.C. WATTS** of Oklahoma, were less supportive of such programs. Franks voted with CBC Democrats on only three of the ten roll call votes. Watts failed to vote with the CBC on any of the roll call votes in the report card.

All but three of the 26 GOP representatives in the report card (Reps. **MICHAEL CASTLE** of Delaware, **JACK QUINN** of New York, and **FREDERICK HEINEMAN** of North Carolina) voted contrary to the CBC on at least nine of the items in the report card. Eight white Democrats, all from Southern states, cast at least four votes contrary to the CBC (mostly involving increased funding for the homeless and anti-discrimination enforcement, support for crime prevention, and repeal of the ban on assault weapons).

Mr. Ruffin is the editor of FOCUS. Jade Smith, an intern at the Joint Center and a senior at the University of California at Santa Barbara, assisted in the compilation of the data contained in this report card.

Key Votes in the Report Card

1. Increasing Minimum Wage

A measure introduced by Rep. **FRANK RIGGS** (R–Cal.), would increase the minimum wage by 90 cents per hour over two years, from the current rate of $4.25 per hour to $4.75 per hour, on July 1, 1996, and to $5.15 per hour on July 1, 1997. There are 3.66 million workers with incomes at, or below, the current minimum wage of $4.25. Roll call vote No. 192, May 23, 1996, passed 266–162. A vote **for** was consistent with action by the majority of the CBC. *Present status: The minimum wage measure was incorporated into the Small Business Jobs Protection Act (H.R. 3448), which was signed into law on August 20.*

2. Dismantling Welfare

The House voted on passage of the Budget Reconciliation–Welfare Overhaul bill (H.R. 3734), which would end the federal guarantee of welfare benefits to the nation's poor, force welfare recipients to find employment within two years of receiving benefits, and impose a lifetime limit of five years on adult recipients of cash assistance. Funding for Aid to Families with Dependent Children would be converted to a block grant to the states. The bill includes a dramatic cut—of $61.1 billion—from spending on anti-poverty programs between fiscal years 1997 and 2002, by slicing food stamp benefits and eliminating aid to legal immigrants. Roll call vote No. 331, July 18, 1996, passed 256-170. A vote **against** was consistent with action by the majority of the CBC. *Present status: H.R. 3734 was signed into law on August 22.*

3. Funding Education and Training

An amendment to the fiscal year 1997 appropriations bill for the departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education (H.R. 3755), introduced by Rep. **DAVID OBEY** (D–Wisc.), would

increase funding for education and training by $1.2 billion. Programs that would receive additional funds include Dislocated Worker Training, Summer Youth Training, Head Start, Safe and Drug Free Schools, and Title I (compensatory education programs in elementary and secondary schools). Roll call vote No. 303, July 11, 1996, rejected 198–227. A vote **for** was consistent with action by the majority of the CBC.

4. Terminating AmeriCorps

An amendment to the fiscal year 1997 appropriations bill for the departments of Housing and Urban Development, and Veterans Affairs (H.R. 3666) by Rep. **JOHN HOSTETTLER** (R–Ind.) would eliminate all of the $367 million earmarked to support the AmeriCorps National Service volunteer program, and thus kill the program itself. Roll call vote No. 276, June 26, 1996, rejected 183–240. A vote **against** was consistent with action by the majority of the CBC.

5. Making Health Insurance Portable

A substitute amendment to the Health Coverage Availability and Affordability Act (H.R. 3103) by Rep. **JOHN DINGELL** (D–Mich.) would ensure the portability of a worker's health insurance from one job to another and prohibit insurance companies from canceling or refusing coverage based on an employee's health status. The measure does not provide for medical savings accounts but would increase to 80 percent the tax deduction allowable for the health insurance costs of self-employed individuals. Roll call vote No. 104, March 28, 1996, rejected 192–226. A vote **for** was consistent with action by the majority of the CBC. *Present status: H.R. 3103 was signed into law on August 21.*

6. Supporting Reproductive Choice

An amendment to an omnibus appropriations bill (H.R. 3019) by Rep. **NITA LOWEY** (D–N.Y.) would strike language from the bill that would have permitted states to refuse to pay for abortions with Medicaid funds even in cases of rape or incest. Roll call vote No. 51, March 7, 1996, rejected 198–222. A vote **for** was consistent with action by the majority of the CBC. *Present status: The appropriations bill was signed into law on April 26; by the time it was signed, the provision to allow states to refuse to pay for abortions in rape and incest cases had been deleted in the House/Senate conference committee.*

7. Funding Anti-Discrimination Enforcement

Rep. **PATRICIA SCHROEDER** (D–Colo.) introduced an amendment to the fiscal year 1997 appropriations bill for the departments of Commerce, Justice, and State (H.R. 3814) to add $13 million to the budget of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and to reduce by $14 million the $2.8 billion earmarked for federal prisons. The EEOC is the primary federal agency that enforces Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which bans employment discrimination. Roll call vote No. 343, July 23, 1996, rejected 159–265. A vote **for** was consistent with action by the majority of the CBC.

8. Supporting Aid for the Homeless

An amendment sponsored by Rep. **JOSEPH KENNEDY** (D–Mass.) to the fiscal year 1997 appropriations bill for the departments of Housing and Urban Development, and Veterans Affairs (H.R. 3666) would increase by $297 million the $823 million in funding for homeless assistance. The increase in homeless aid would be offset by an equal decrease in funding for the Human Space Flight program. Roll call vote No. 270, June 25, 1996, rejected 138–277. A vote **for** was consistent with action by the majority of the CBC.

9. Diverting Prison Funding to Crime Prevention

Rep. **ROBERT SCOTT** (D–Va.) proposed an amendment to the Commerce-Justice-State fiscal year appropriations bill for 1997 (H.R. 3814) to transfer $497.5 million in funding for federal grants to states for prison construction and to reallocate those funds to juvenile justice programs aimed at crime prevention among at-risk youth. Roll call vote No. 344, July 23, 1996, rejected 99–326. A vote **for** was consistent with action by the majority of the CBC.

10. Repealing the Assault Weapons Ban

The House voted on passage of a bill (H.R. 125) to repeal the ban on several semiautomatic assault-style weapons and to eliminate the restrictions against their sale or manufacture. The bill would also repeal the ban on large-capacity ammunition magazines. Roll call vote No. 92, March 22, 1996, passed 239–173. A vote **against** was consistent with action by the majority of the CBC. *Present status: The bill is under consideration by the Senate Judiciary Committee. No further action has been taken.*

How to Read This Report Card

The chart below indicates how members of the House with black constituencies of at least 15 percent voted on the 10 roll-call votes described above. The votes occurred between March 7 and July 23, 1996. A plus sign (+) indicates a vote consistent with the position taken by the majority of the Congressional Black Caucus; a minus sign (-) indicates the reverse; and a question mark (?) indicates that the legislator did not vote.

African American representatives are in boldface type. GOP representatives Franks and Watts, whose districts are just 5 percent and 7 percent black, respectively, do not appear in the chart. House rules have barred **ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**, the Democratic delegate from the majority-black District of Columbia, and **VICTOR O. FRAZER**, the Independent delegate from the Virgin Islands, from voting on the floor of the House. ■

House Votes (see description above)

State	Dist.	Representative	Party	Black Pop.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Alabama	1	Callahan	(R)	26	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	Everett	(R)	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	Browder	(D)	24	+	-	+	?	+	-	-	?	-	-
	5	Cramer	(D)	14	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
	7	**Hilliard**	(D)	64	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Arkansas	1	Lincoln	(D)	15	+	?	?	?	+	+	?	?	?	+
	2	Thornton	(D)	15	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
	4	Dickey	(R)	24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
California	7	Miller	(D)	15	+	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
	9	**Dellums**	(D)	29	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	32	**Dixon**	(D)	40	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
	35	**Waters**	(D)	44	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?
	37	**Millender**	(D)	34	+	+	+	+	▼	▼	+	+	+	▼
Delaware	At-large	Castle	(R)	15	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	+
Florida	2	Peterson	(D)	21	+	+	+	?	+	+	+	?	-	-
	3	**Brown**	(D)	51	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	11	Gibbons	(D)	15	+	+	?	+	+	+	+	-	+	?
	17	**Meek**	(D)	54	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
	23	**Hastings**	(D)	46	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	+
Georgia	1	Kingston	(R)	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	**Bishop**	(D)	52	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-
	3	M.Collins	(R)	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	5	**Lewis**	(D)	58	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	8	Chambliss	(R)	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	10	Norwood	(R)	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	11	**McKinney**	(D)	60	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Illinois	1	**Rush**	(D)	68	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	2	**Jackson**	(D)	66	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	7	**C. Collins**	(D)	60	+	+	+	+	?	+	?	+	?	?
	12	Costello	(D)	15	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-
Indiana	1	Visclosky	(D)	19	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
	10	Jacobs	(D)	27	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Kentucky	3	Ward	(D)	16	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Louisiana	2	**Jefferson**	(D)	56	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
	3	Tauzin	(R)	20	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
	4	**Fields**	(D)	63	+	+	+	+	?	+	+	+	+	+
	5	McCrery	(R)	20	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
	7	Hayes	(R)	18	+	-	?	+	-	?	-	?	-	-
Maryland	3	Cardin	(D)	16	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+
	4	**Wynn**	(D)	56	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	5	Hoyer	(D)	18	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+
	7	**Cummings**	(D)	68	+	+	+	+	*	*	+	+	+	*
Massachusetts	8	Kennedy	(D)	20	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Michigan	9	Kildee	(D)	16	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+
	14	**Conyers**	(D)	65	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	15	**B. Collins**	(D)	68	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	+	+	+
Mississippi	1	Wicker	(R)	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	**Thompson**	(D)	58	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
	3	Montgomery	(D)	28	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-
	4	Parker	(R)	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	5	Taylor	(D)	18	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-

State	Dist.	Representative	Party	Black Pop.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Missouri	1	**Clay**	(D)	48	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	+	+	?
	5	McCarthy	(D)	21	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
New Jersey	1	Andrews	(D)	15	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+
	10	**Payne**	(D)	57	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
New York	4	Frisa	(R)	15	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	6	**Flake**	(D)	55	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	10	**Towns**	(D)	59	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	+
	11	**Owens**	(D)	72	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	15	**Rangel**	(D)	47	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	16	Serrano	(D)	42	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	17	Engel	(D)	40	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	30	Quinn	(R)	15	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	+	+
North Carolina	1	**Clayton**	(D)	53	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	2	Funderburk	(R)	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	Jones	(R)	20	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	4	Heineman	(R)	19	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
	7	Rose	(D)	17	-	+	+	?	+	+	+	?	+	-
	8	Hefner	(D)	21	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-
	12	**Watt**	(D)	53	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Ohio	1	Chabot	(R)	27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	Hall	(D)	16	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	+
	11	**Stokes**	(D)	55	+	+	+	+	?	?	+	+	+	?
	12	Kasich	(R)	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
Pennsylvania	1	Foglietta	(D)	50	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	2	**Fattah**	(D)	58	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	14	Coyne	(D)	16	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
South Carolina	1	Sanford	(R)	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	2	Spence	(R)	23	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	3	Graham	(R)	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	4	Inglis	(R)	18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	5	Spratt	(D)	28	+	+	+	+	+	+	?	-	-	+
	6	**Clyburn**	(D)	58	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
Tennessee	5	Clement	(D)	21	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
	8	Tanner	(D)	17	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
	9	**Ford**	(D)	54	+	+	+	?	+	?	+	?	+	+
Texas	1	Chapman	(D)	16	+	+	+	+	+	?	-	-	-	-
	2	Wilson	(D)	15	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	?	-	-
	5	Bryant	(D)	15	+	+	+	+	?	?	+	-	+	+
	9	Stockman	(R)	20	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	11	Edwards	(D)	15	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+
	18	**Jackson-Lee**	(D)	49	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
	24	Frost	(D)	18	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-
	25	Bentsen	(D)	25	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+
	30	**Johnson**	(D)	47	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
Virginia	1	Bateman	(R)	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
	2	Pickett	(D)	16	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-
	3	**Scott**	(D)	61	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
	4	Sisisky	(D)	31	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	?	+	-
	5	Payne	(D)	23	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-
Wisconsin	5	Barrett	(D)	29	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

▼ Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald (California 37) was not a member of Congress when this vote was taken. She won a special election to succeed Rep. Walter Tucker who resigned from office.

⁂ Rep. Elijah Cummings (Maryland 7) was not a member of Congress when this vote was taken. He won a special election to succeed Rep. Kweisi Mfume who resigned to head the NAACP.

Black Business: Crossroads or Crisis?

Despite Their Significant Growth in Recent Years, African American Enterprises Are Threatened by Shifts in Government Policy

by Frank McCoy

This is a time for both celebration and caution for African American business owners. In recent years, the ranks of black-owned business have grown significantly, but so have the impediments to their development that have been imposed by the U.S. Supreme Court, federal and state governments, and some private sector business organizations. Although many black company owners will experience continued but moderate growth, they should also prepare for roadblocks to their short- and long-term business prospects.

The U.S. Department of Commerce report, *1992 Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises: Black,* documents the expansion of black business and provides hard numbers to destroy the stereotype that blacks are reluctant entrepreneurs. Between 1987 and 1992, the number of black-owned businesses grew by 46 percent, and their cumulative revenues leapt 63 percent, from $19.8 billion to $32.2 billion. Two-thirds of those businesses were in service or retail.

Although black businesses have grown sharply, their income still lags behind their white counterparts. In 1992, the revenue of the average black firm was $52,000, or 26.9 percent of the average for all U.S. firms, which was $193,000. In addition, 56 percent of America's black companies had revenues under $10,000, and only 3,000 had annual sales of more than $1,000,000.

A select few black firms led the growth; 10 percent of the companies with paid employees accounted for 70 percent of the gross receipts for black-owned companies, and the 342 firms with more than 100 employees provided $6 billion of the total receipts for black companies.

Timothy Bates, a Wayne State University professor of labor and urban affairs, says that the largest number of college-educated blacks in history are entering the entrepreneurial ranks and are transforming African American business. Bates (author of *Banking on Black Enterprise,* published by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies) says this group, many of whom have had experience in corporate America, will dominate the ranks of black business people in all categories of new businesses. He adds that an examination of industries by skill levels shows that the biggest concentration of college-educated black entrepreneurs are in the most competitive sectors. These mostly service-dominated industries include everything from financial planning to advertising agencies, from computer software to personnel firms.

Bates contends that most of these firms sell goods and services to other businesses and have diverse customer bases rather than relying solely or disproportionately on sales to the black community. Another ongoing trend is that the firms of these educated entrepreneurs are providing more jobs.

The Looming Threat

To many analysts and entrepreneurs, the biggest threat on the black business horizon is the rippling impact of the Supreme Court's 1995 ruling in *Adarand Constructors* v. *Peña,* which challenged the Small Business Act provisions that permit consideration of race when federal contracts are awarded to minority-owned companies.

In that case, the High Court ruled in favor of Adarand Constructors, a highway construction company that sued the U.S. Department of Transportation for reverse discrimination. Adarand's suit focused on the fact that its low bid to put up highway guardrails on a federally financed Colorado highway project was rejected in favor of a Hispanic firm. Although the Court declined to explicitly rule affirmative action programs unconstitutional, it imposed a standard of strict scrutiny, requiring that these programs be "narrowly tailored" to "further compelling governmental interests."

In May, the Clinton administration published proposed rules in the *Federal Register* to reform affirmative action in federal procurement in order to ensure that federal agencies and contractors comply with the *Adarand* decision. The proposal calls for the Department of Commerce to review federal contracting information to determine the extent to which the federal government is underutilizing minority business contractors within Standard Industrial Classifications. Utilization benchmarks will be established, and government agencies will be allowed to consider race in the development of approaches to expand the number of contracts awarded to minorities in those classifications. Race-based efforts will be reduced when agencies reach or exceed the benchmark levels in procurement.

The Census Bureau's *Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises* (SMOBE) is likely to be the primary data source for establishing the capacity of minority firms to participate in government work. This is cause for concern since SMOBE uses administrative data that does not include regular corporations. These corporations tend to be larger than the SMOBE firms and their absence from the database

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Mr. McCoy is the business editor for *Our World News.*

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will lead to an underestimate of black firms' ability to perform government work.

At the local level, the *Adarand* decision may encourage white-male-owned firms to flood lower courts with similar cases, contending that they suffer reverse discrimination in the contracting process. A lot of money is at stake. The federal government buys about $2 billion in goods and services from minority-owned firms.

Strengthened by Adversity

Not every business analyst sees the diminution of government contracts, either at the federal or state level, in completely negative terms. One University of Chicago-trained economist-turned-businessman, William Michael Cunningham, decries *Adarand* and the California anti-affirmative action referendum, but is convinced this adversity will strengthen black businesses. The problem with all affirmative action programs, says Cunningham, president of Creative Investment Research, a Washington, D.C. investment advisory firm, is that they didn't work as desired or advertised. Instead of creating many job opportunities, the programs benefitted a small number of firms, most of whom were well-connected politically or well-capitalized.

The result was that the fate of most African American-owned businesses, which are small and are located in black communities, rose and fell with the greater economy. In the future, Cunningham says the goal of CEOs of larger black-owned companies and black entrepreneurs should be to provide more goods and improved services to an overlooked African American consumer market. White-owned mainstream companies are already increasing business in minority communities as they exhaust their traditional white customer bases.

But can blacks compete if state and federal support for minority businesses declines any further? Cunningham thinks they have no choice; black-owned companies—particularly medium-sized ones—must expand or perish, although finding capital is a perennial problem.

Future Prospects

With these factors in mind, Samuel Carradine, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based National Association of Minority Contractors, sees both growth and retrenchment ahead; business prospects are good for profitability, but bad for employment, as firms slash payrolls to build profits. He also believes the positive aspects of overall economic growth extend to minority businesses as well, which leads him to project that the revenues of minority businesses will increase more rapidly in the near term than in past years. But, mirroring the national trend, he also says the numbers of workers at black firms will continue to drop.

There are several reasons behind this duality of expansion and contraction for minority firms. Carradine says that historically "when there has been a positive economic cycle, they [minority companies] are the last to feel it and often by the time they can seize its opportunity, the cycle has reversed. Also, minority businesses are either strongly involved in the public sector or their business has grown as a result of public policy promoting minority procurement and business utilization. Thus, a reduced government role and, more importantly, a negative political climate has to affect them."

In the opinion of John Robinson, executive director of the New York City-based National Minority Business Council, the biggest issue for minority businesses in the near future will be holding onto their existing customer base. The continued emphasis of American corporations on efficiency and bottom-line growth through cost-cutting (downsizing) will lead to shrinkage of the vendor base of minority suppliers.

The minority businesses that acquired corporate customers late in the game will very likely be pushed out the door first, says Robinson. One example that he says reflects the future in corporate America is the fate of AT&T's minority suppliers now that the company has split into three firms. Robinson says an AT&T vice president of global alignment has confirmed that there will also be a related realignment of its vendor base.

Robinson, however, is not one to despair, for he sees viable options for minority companies. The clearest option, albeit one with high expense on the front end, is for firms to diversify their markets. This means looking to expand a company's range of customers to the next level, whether that is from town to city, city to state, state to national, or national to global. The mechanisms to grow one's business through national trade journals or the Internet are in place: black CEOs just have to use them.

Investment advisor William Michael Cunningham urges black business people, particularly commercial and investment bankers, to get in the forefront of providing equity capital to small and medium-sized black-owned companies by developing new types of equity-creating financial instruments. One way would be for more black financial institutions to create and sell mortgage-backed securities as part of the Federal National Mortgage Company and Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation.

There are also other instruments these institutions could create, including a U.S. Small Business Administration loan pool; black affinity credit cards, which could pay a portion of user fees to a venture capital fund; or an African American stock fund. Black investment banks need to realize it is in their interest to try to bring medium-sized black-owned companies into the public market.

These are a few of the techniques that might be employed to meet some of the challenges that presently confront black entrepreneurs. However, many more creative strategies must be developed to counter the effects of a changing economy and government hostility toward minority business if the growth of viable black businesses is to continue. ■

Affirmative Action Myths and Realities

Charges Like "Affirmative Action Amounts to Reverse Discrimination" or "It Only Benefits the Middle Class" Are Baseless Myths

In 1995, the board of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law formed an Affirmative Action Task Force to develop programs to respond to the attacks on affirmative action made by public figures, political commentators, and the media. The Task Force has been joined in this effort by Americans for a Fair Chance, a consortium that includes the Lawyers' Committee, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Women's Law Center, the Women's Legal Defense Fund, and the Mexican American Legal Defense & Educational Fund. These groups are undertaking a research and education effort to inform the public on the extent to which affirmative action serves the nation's interests and furthers its values. The following summary of some of the myths and realities of the affirmative action debate appeared in the Spring/Summer 1996 edition of Committee Report, *a biannual journal of the Lawyers' Committee:*

Myth #1: Affirmative action is no longer necessary because society has overcome discrimination and the "playing field" is now level for minorities and women.

Reality: Overwhelming evidence shows that racial and gender discrimination continues to be a major barrier for minorities and women in their quest for jobs, homes, a quality education, and a safe environment.

In employment, studies have shown that a person's race or gender is often the sole reason for being denied a job or promotion. The Fair Employment Council of Greater Washington conducted a study in which pairs of black and white testers with identical qualifications, backgrounds, appearances, and aptitudes applied for the same jobs. The study revealed that white applicants received job offers four times more often than African American applicants. White testers were less likely to be diverted to lesser quality jobs and more likely to be told about additional opportunities than their black counterparts.

Affirmative action seeks to remove color-biased decision making by giving equally qualified minorities and women the same opportunities to be interviewed or employed. Affirmative action encourages employers to cast a wide net in the search for qualified job candidates and to advertise for new workers outside of the informal, word-of-mouth networks that are traditionally dominated by white men and which account for 80 percent of all corporate job placements. Affirmative action encourages employers to use public advertisements of jobs to identify qualified applicants who might otherwise go unnoticed. It also encourages employers to set goals and timetables to take a second look at job applicants, and to consider the real reasons they hire and promote job candidates.

As the bipartisan Glass Ceiling Commission found, equally qualified minorities and women are vastly undercompensated in comparison with white men. In 1995, black men earned only 79 percent of the salary earned by white men in the same positions with the same levels of education. Black women with professional degrees and in top management positions earn only 60 percent of what white men earn in comparable positions. In 1989, women with four years of college earned only 69.3 percent as much as similarly educated men.

Myth #2: Affirmative action leads to unlawful "quotas" and "reverse discrimination" on account of race or gender, giving minorities and women unfair advantages over individuals who are more qualified.

Reality: Affirmative action does not give women and minorities unfair advantages, and it does not impose quotas on employers nor require employers to hire unqualified people. Quotas are illegal and are not affirmative action. Affirmative action overcomes discrimination by giving qualified individuals of all backgrounds a fair chance for a good job, a quality education, and business opportunities from which they might otherwise be excluded.

Affirmative action programs have not resulted in a wave of "reverse discrimination." The Department of Labor found that, of more than 3,000 bias opinions in federal district courts from 1990 to 1994, fewer than 100 involved reverse discrimination. Of these, only six cases were meritorious. In 1994 alone, 95,000 discrimination claims were filed with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Of these, less than 2 percent were reverse discrimination claims. The EEOC found that 0.2 percent of these complaints had merit. Women and minorities have filed the vast majority of complaints, legal actions, and meritorious claims regarding unfair employment practices.

Myth #3: Affirmative action stigmatizes minorities and women, and fosters social resentment by taking opportunities away from deserving white males.

Reality: Minorities and women are stigmatized by discrimination, not affirmative action. Affirmative action empowers people by giving them the opportunity to be considered on the basis of their qualifications, not their race or gender. Affirmative action brings hiring practices under scrutiny. Being "qualified" used to mean who you know; under affirmative action, everybody has equal opportunity. Like all Americans, white males can compete for jobs, admissions, and contracts, but they have no right to monopolize the playing field.

Affirmative action programs in education ensure that our nation's colleges and universities reflect the world in which students will live and eventually work. Affirmative action is not limited to women and minorities—veterans and the disabled also benefit from programs that enable them to

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compete on an equal footing for employment and educational opportunities.

Myth #4: Affirmative action benefits only the middle class rather than those who are most in need.

Reality: Affirmative action is designed to combat discrimination, not poverty. Ending affirmative action because it does not stop poverty is like doing away with the polio vaccine because it does not prevent cancer.

The bipartisan Federal Glass Ceiling Commission found that prejudice against minorities and white women is the most significant barrier to their advancement into the executive ranks. Ninety-five percent of all senior level management positions in the top Fortune 1,500 companies are held by white men. Affirmative action benefits all people, not merely the middle class, by ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity to compete for jobs, whether at the lowest entry-level or the highest executive-level position.

The progress made by our nation over the last 30 years in narrowing economic gaps between the races is directly attributable to affirmative action. Today, thousands of police and fire departments, government agencies, and private companies across the country have executives, managers, and employees who are African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American, because of affirmative action.

In many instances, these jobs have given people from impoverished backgrounds a toe-hold into the middle class. Affirmative action in education has given hope to poor children of all races and both sexes to escape poverty, attend college, and become professionals. Affirmative action helps workers of all backgrounds pay taxes, contribute to communities, stimulate the economy, and generate new jobs.

Myth #5: Affirmative action is bad for business and the economy.

Reality: There is a positive correlation between affirmative action and minority hiring practices and stock performance, according to a study of Standard & Poor's 500 largest companies. Companies that have good records of EEOC compliance and minority hiring generated an average return on investment of 18.3 percent as compared to a 7.9 percent return for those companies with poor records in these areas.

Dozens of corporate leaders at Proctor & Gamble, Xerox, Kaiser Health Care, AT&T, IBM, and elsewhere have publicly supported affirmative action as beneficial to their business objectives. They have stated that affirmative action integrates the work force to reflect the consumer base, and stimulates the consumer economy by increasing the purchasing power among women and minorities.

Myth #6: Affirmative action is contrary to our goal of a "color blind" society.

Reality: Most Americans want a society where skin color, national origin, and gender play no role in determining who is considered for a job, attends college, or establishes a business. Affirmative action encourages our nation to reach a condition in which discrimination on the basis of race or gender will no longer exist, and where all qualified individuals will be judged on their ability and potential.

Dismantling affirmative action would result in severe backsliding from the progress that America has made toward ending discrimination. Unfortunately, discrimination based on skin color and gender, having nothing to do with merit, still prevails in too many instances. Individual or institutional discrimination, intentional or not, excludes minorities and women from participating fairly and from contributing fully in many levels of our society.

As long as there is discrimination based on race and gender, our nation has an obligation and an interest to take race and gender into account. Affirmative action is still necessary in order to give all Americans the same opportunities to succeed. As Americans who care about our future and the world that our children will lead, we cannot turn our back on the struggle for fairness when the job is still unfinished. ■

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