


FOCUS

The monthly magazine of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

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Perspective

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Leaving Key Bills on the Table

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A Salute to Nine American Heroes

Last month, on Veteran's Day, we honored Americans who fought with valor and self sacrifice on the beaches of Normandy and Guadalcanal in World War II, at the Choson Reservoir in Korea, and at Khe Sanh in Vietnam. The citizen soldiers who faced the British at Concord and Saratoga helped forge the United States. And those who stood at Shiloh and Gettysburg helped bind the states together as one nation and purchased, with their blood, an end to slavery. What is often said of the brave men and women who distinguished themselves under fire is: "they fought for our freedom."

On November 9, appropriately during the same week that Veteran's Day was observed, the "Little Rock Nine" were awarded the Congressional Gold Medal for their selfless heroism in another important American struggle. This medal is Congress's highest decoration.

In their youth, forty-two years ago, these nine courageous Americans sought to integrate Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas's flagship high school. Academically, Central High was among the top tier of public schools anywhere in the nation. But in 1957, three years after the Supreme Court's landmark *Brown* desegregation decision, Central High and virtually all Southern public schools were still racially segregated.

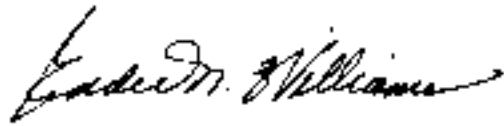
For these youngsters, what should have been a routine act of school enrollment on September 4, 1957, turned out to be more like attempting to storm a fortified citadel. As they approached the school, the six girls and three boys walked into a maelstrom of belligerent whites. They were spat upon and jeered at, rocks and bottles were thrown.

Not only did the police not come to their aid, but Arkansas Governor Orval Faubus ordered state troops to bar them from entering the school. As the days of white rage continued, President Eisenhower decided to send units of the 101st Airborne Division to Little Rock to protect the black students and enforce a court order to admit them. The next year, Faubus closed all public schools in Arkansas to evade the integration order. But he obeyed a federal court order the following year, and opened them to black and white students.

The possibility that these nine youths could have lost their lives for defying the entrenched institution of segregation in 1957 was very real. Several racially motivated murders of African Americans had taken place in other parts of the South just before that September in Little Rock. During the week of this year's Veterans Day, President Clinton cited the Little Rock Nine for their courage and sacrifice to "make the walls of bigotry and prejudice fall in America." He added that, "When they marched up the steps to school—a simple act—they became foot soldiers for freedom, carrying America to higher ground." This squad of foot soldiers, none old enough to be drafted for military service at the time, had an able commander in Daisy Bates. Bates was then the head of the Arkansas NAACP and publisher of the *Arkansas State Press*. She took

the nine students under her wing and helped prepare them for the ordeal, counseling them not to retaliate against their tormentors. Sadly, Bates died this year, just five days before her nine foot soldiers received their Gold Medals. She was 84.

Now middle-aged and graying, the nine black veterans of America's struggle for civil rights are justly honored for their conspicuous gallantry and self-sacrifice in the face of one of this country's most dangerous and enduring enemies—racism. They fought a crucial battle in that struggle to free Americans—white as well as black—from the oppressive yoke of segregation. They are heroes, and a grateful nation salutes them. ■



PRESIDENT



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Leaving Key Bills on the Table

Congress Adjourned at the End of the First Session Without Passing Patients' Rights, Gun Control, or Minimum Wage Legislation

by David C. Ruffin

When Congress adjourned on November 19, it left a lot of business unfinished. The Republican-controlled body didn't complete work on the federal spending bills for FY 2000 until seven weeks into the new fiscal year. Congress again deferred the issue of Social Security solvency. It failed to move on campaign finance reform, leaving a system in place that precludes the congressional candidacy of those who don't possess personal fortunes or don't have access to others with deep pockets. The high financial bar to running for office has particular significance for minorities contemplating a congressional campaign. The legislators also left town without enacting bills on patients' rights, gun control, or raising the minimum wage. Leaving important measures to be resolved in a presidential election year doesn't bode well for their chances of passage. Aside from a reduced legislative schedule because of party nominating conventions and an earlier fall adjournment, the politicization of some issues by the presidential campaign may make them too controversial to be passed.

Patients' Bill of Rights

The Patients' Bill of Rights was introduced primarily to counter abuses by HMOs that health care advocates charge put profits over the care of patients. The measure would ensure that patients have access to more information about their health status and would curb the practice employed by many HMOs of overriding physician-prescribed tests and procedures. It would also expand access to specialists and emergency rooms.

Democratic versions of the bill, sponsored by Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-SD) and Rep. John Dingell (D-Mich.) in their respective chambers of the Congress, called for allowing patients to appeal when health plans deny them care and also for permitting patients to sue their health plans for damages. The right to sue is backed by President Clinton and a broad coalition of patients' rights advocates, physicians' and nurses' groups, consumer organizations, and labor unions. The Democrats have had an important ally in pressing the right-to-sue provision in Republican Charlie Norwood, a congressman and dentist from Georgia, and a collection of moderate GOP legislators.

The Democrats have backed their legislative proposal with a panoply of actual cases that illustrate the horrors of HMO abuse. One such case is that of Barbara Garvey, who

received emergency care in Hawaii while on vacation. Before her condition became stabilized, her HMO stopped payment for treatment until she returned to her home in Chicago for subsequent care because the hospital that was treating her in Hawaii was not in the HMO's network of care providers. Garvey had a stroke during the flight back home and died nine days later. In another case, the recommendation from two doctors that Morgan Smith, a four-year-old cancer patient, receive the care of a specialist was overturned by her family's HMO, which refused to pay for the advanced care. A form of cancer that attacks the smooth muscles in the body later developed into a brain tumor.

Paige Lancaster's HMO authorized doctors' visits and prescription drugs for the 11-year-old, who complained of severe headaches. Over the course of five years, however, the HMO never ordered diagnostic tests such as an MRI, CAT scan, or EEG. After tests were finally administered, a tumor was discovered covering more than 40 percent of her brain. As a result of that discovery, she immediately underwent surgery, but her condition continues to worsen. Had she received proper attention in time, her life chances would be much better.

Status: Each chamber passed its own patients' rights bill. On October 6, the House approved H.R. 2990 by a vote of 227 to 205 and the Senate's S.1344 passed on July 15 by 53 to 47. The House version contains a right-to-sue provision but the Senate's does not. The House bill would apply to more people in a greater variety of health plans, such as state and local government employees. The House bill would cover an estimated 161 million people compared to about 48 million under the Senate bill. So far, no conference committee has been formed to reconcile the difference between the two bills.

Gun Control

Horrifying shootings across the nation have haunted the public psyche in recent years. These include the April 20 incident at Columbine High School near Littleton, Colorado, where 12 students and a teacher were murdered and 23 others wounded. The summer saw racially motivated shootings committed by Benjamin Nathaniel Smith in Illinois and Indiana which included the murder of Ricky Byrdson, a black former football coach at Northwestern University; and by Buford O'Neal Furrow, Jr., who killed an Asian American postal worker and attacked a Jewish

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Contributors to TrendLetter/Political Report: David A. Bositis, Mary K. Garber, Ninette Philips, and David C. Ruffin

Contributors to TrendLetter/Economic Report: Roderick J. Harrison and Margaret C. Simms



**BLACK ECONOMIC
ADVANCEMENT IN THE NEW
MILLENNIUM:
GLOBALIZATION, EDUCATION,
AND TECHNOLOGY**

December 1999

Dear Colleague:

We cordially invite you to attend the Eighth National Policy Institute (NPI-8) to be held January 20–22, 2000, at The Capital Hilton Hotel in Washington, DC. Held every four years to coincide with the presidential election, this conference brings together the nation's black elected officials and other key leaders to identify public policy issues of critical importance to African Americans. This year's conference will explore strategies to introduce these issues into the 2000 presidential election.

The conference theme, *Black Economic Advancement in the New Millennium*, places a timely focus on three areas key to the future advancement of black Americans in the next century: *Globalization, Education, and Technology*. NPI-8 provides the ideal forum to present and discuss these critical issues confronting African Americans. NPI-8 also provides invaluable networking opportunities with elected officials, federal agency representatives, and corporate America.

If you have not already registered for this exciting and substantive conference, please do so now. Space is limited. We sincerely hope you will join us in Washington for the Eighth National Policy Institute. We look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,

Roy C. Brooks
President
National Association of
Black County Officials

James E. Clyburn
Chair
Congressional Black Caucus

Jesse M. Norwood
President
National Conference of
Black Mayors

Morris L. Overstreet
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Judicial Council of the
National Bar Association

Earl Rickman
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National Caucus of
Black School Board Members

James L. Thomas
President
National Black Caucus of
State Legislators

Eddie N. Williams
President
Joint Center for
Political and Economic Studies

Charles C. Yancey
President
National Black Caucus of
Local Elected Officials

Thursday, January 20

10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. **Registration**

Noon-4:00 p.m. **Special Luncheon Session**

"Mobilizing to Fight HIV/AIDS in the African American Community" (Advance Registration Required)

Sponsors: Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. **Opening Reception**

A Salute to African American Elected and Appointed Officials

Friday, January 21

7:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. **Registration**

8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m. **Opening Breakfast Plenary**

"Globalization, Education, and Technology — Securing the Gains of the Past While Building for the Future: Moving Into a Global Society"

A Perspective From the Cosponsors

10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. **Cyber Cafe**

Display and demonstrations of information technology initiatives and opportunities

10:15 a.m.-11:45 a.m. **Workshop Sessions**

1. Learning and Earning: Color Still Matters
2. Overcoming the Undercount: Promoting African American Participation in the 2000 Census
3. Where We Live: Housing and Community Development
4. Promoting Self Sufficiency While Preserving a Safety Net
5. Education: A Lifelong Commitment to Learning

Noon-2:00 p.m. **Luncheon Plenary**

"Lifting the Floor: Economic Empowerment"

Guest Speaker:

The Honorable Jesse Jackson

2:15 p.m.-3:45 p.m. **Workshop Sessions**

1. Skills Development: The Workplace and the Global Economy
2. The IT Revolution: Will It Leave the Underserved Behind?
3. Achieving Economic Parity Through Wealth Accumulation
4. Political Participation: Lessons Learned and Strategies for 2000
5. Black Leadership Forum Lamplighter Think Tank: Economic and Community Development in the New Millennium

4:00 p.m.-5:30 p.m. **An Afternoon With Federal Agencies and Their Programs**

Focusing on New Markets Initiatives; Public/Private Partnerships In Employment and Education; Health Care Access and Affordability; Global Issues; Maintaining the Land: Ownership and Credit; Police/Community Relations

6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Dinner Plenary
 "Removing the Ceiling: Racial Justice
 and Economic Advancement"

Guest Speaker:

Johnnie Cochran, Esq.

**8:00 p.m.-10:00 p.m. Sharing Best
 Practices Over
 Dessert and Coffee
 (3 sessions)**

Showcasing success stories of innova-
 tive projects in: Community Develop-
 ment, Citizen Participation, Education
 Improvement

Saturday, January 22

8:00 a.m.-9:30 a.m. Breakfast Plenary
**9:45 a.m.-11:00 a.m. Town Hall
 Discussion**

An examination of the impact of
*Globalization, Education, and Technol-
 ogy* on proposed strategies and
 initiatives to achieve economic
 advancement for African Americans in
 the new millennium, featuring a
 generational span of leaders.

11:00 a.m. Conference Close

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Eighth National Policy Institute

January 20-22, 2000 • Washington, D.C., Capital Hilton Hotel

**Black Economic Advancement in the New Millennium:
 Globalization, Education, and Technology**

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Indicate registration status (check only one):

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- Individual Corporate Student*

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Elected Official Government, Nonprofit and Individual	\$150.00	\$200.00
Corporate	\$200.00	\$250.00
Student*	\$350.00	\$400.00
	\$75.00	\$75.00

* Copy of your student I.D. is required when you mail in registration

- Yes I will attend the Special Session on Thursday, January 20.

Meal Functions

Please indicate which meal function(s) you plan to attend. (Check all that apply.)

- Thursday, January 20 Luncheon Reception
- Friday, January 21 Breakfast Luncheon
- Dinner
- Saturday, January 22 Breakfast
- Vegetarian Yes No

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 Washington, DC 20036-5794

PHONE:

202-393-1000 (Phone Number)
 1-800-HILTONS (Reservations)

GROUP ID:

National Policy Institute

ROOM RATES:

\$160.00, Single or Double/Per Night
 \$190.00, Tower Single or Double/Per Night
 \$505.00 and up, Suites/Per Night

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Delta Air Lines and US Airways are the official airlines of the Eighth National Policy Institute. Registered participants will receive up to a 10% discount off the lowest available fares (restrictions apply). To take advantage of these discounts, you must contact Henderson Travel Service, the official travel agency. Call toll-free at: 1-800-327-2309 or 301-650-5700 and refer to Meeting ID Code NPI-8.

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We gratefully acknowledge the generosity of The Ford Foundation, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, and W.K. Kellogg Foundation in support of NPI-8 as of November 10, 1999.

Congress

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Community Center in Los Angeles. And just last month, a high speed incident of road rage culminated in former Cub Scout den leader Shirley Henson shooting to death Gena Foster, a mother of three, with a .38-caliber revolver off a highway outside of Birmingham, Alabama.

In 1996, the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms estimated that there were 86 million handguns in the United States. Gun control advocates are hoping that Congress will yield to public outrage over these incidents and pass strong legislation to make firearms safer, limit their access (especially to minors), and stiffen penalties for gun-related offenses. The primary vehicle for legislative action is the Juvenile Justice Act. Each chamber of Congress passed a version of the Act but the Senate's draft includes the stronger gun-control provisions. It calls for: a ban on the importation of large capacity (more than 10 rounds) ammunition clips; child safety locks for every handgun sold in the United States; a minimum mandatory sentence of three years for those who transfer a firearm to a minor knowing that it will be used in a violent or drug-trafficking crime; a ban on juvenile possession (under age 18) of semiautomatic assault weapons, except where permitted under the Youth Handgun Safety Act; a lifetime ban from owning a gun for anyone convicted of a violent crime while a juvenile; and study by the Federal Trade Commission of whether the firearms industry intentionally markets guns to children.

Status: A House/Senate conference committee has been formed, but it failed to draft compromise legislation.

Minimum Wage

The Democratic proposal to raise the minimum wage by a dollar an hour over two years, from \$5.15 to \$6.15, is another piece of legislation that went nowhere in the first session of this Congress. The Democratic plan would raise the wage by 50 cents an hour on January 1, 2000, and by an additional 50 cents an hour on January 1, 2001. The last time the minimum wage was increased was in 1996, when it was also raised by one dollar, phased in over two years. The proposed wage hike introduced in this Congress would directly benefit 11.4 million Americans who are working at the minimum wage and not fully sharing in the nation's extended prosperity. For full-time workers, it would mean a raise of over \$2,000 a year, which would make an enormous difference to working-poor families at the bottom of the wage scale, 40 percent of whom are their families' sole breadwinners.

According to the bill's sponsors, \$2,000 would buy seven months' worth of groceries for a family of four, or five months of rent, or a year-and-a-half of tuition and fees at a two-year college. The sponsors note that most minimum-wage workers are adults (70 percent) and women (59 percent). African Americans (at 15 percent) and Latinos (at 18 percent) are represented among minimum wage workers in greater proportions than among the population as a whole. The greatest beneficiaries of a new wage increase would be the children of these families. Sponsors of the legislation assert that every year it is not increased, the minimum wage continues to lose value and workers relying on it fall farther and farther behind.

Status: A Republican-sponsored measure passed by the Senate would raise the minimum wage over the course of three years and make dramatic tax cuts which President Clinton has already vowed to veto. No action was taken on a House minimum wage bill. ■

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TRENDLETTER

POLITICAL REPORT

by David C. Ruffin

A Call for New Priorities

Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities, a coalition of national organizations and more than 500 business executives, is urging Congress to adopt a Post-Cold War federal budget that would reduce military spending to expand support for education and healthcare. Founded by Ben Cohen, the vice chair of Ben & Jerry's Homemade, Inc., the coalition has launched a national three-year campaign to educate Congress and the public. The group has focused on weapon systems such as the advanced F-22 jet fighter, which would cost \$200 million each to produce.

Among those enlisted by Cohen to join the campaign are current and former CEOs and executives from Time-Warner, Eastman-Kodak, Hasbro, Inc., Phillips Van Heusen, BET, The Calvert Investment Group, Stride-Rite Foundation and Newman's Own. The group receives advisory support from military experts, including Laurence Korb, former Assistant Secretary of Defense under President Reagan, and several former senior military officers. Excerpts follow from Cohen's testimony on "Education Readiness in the 21st Century" before the Senate Committee on Health, Education,

Labor, and Pensions on September 14, 1999:

"We are here today because the education needs of so many American children have been neglected for so long that our nation faces an education readiness crisis of mammoth proportions. For example, according to the National Assessment of Education Progress, nearly 40 percent of America's fourth-graders do not read at the basic level. America's high-school graduation rate has slipped from first in the world to eleventh....

"Our education infrastructure is worse than 'hollow;' it is literally crumbling around our children. According to the Government Accounting Office, it will take an investment of \$112 billion to make needed repairs to our nation's schools before we can even upgrade the condition of our education system to something called 'hollow,' a system that has a sound infrastructure in which to accomplish its tasks....

"The National Center for Education Statistics estimates we will need to invest another \$73 billion for new school construction over the next four years. This investment will upgrade these schools to a condition we could call 'hollow,' because they would finally be structurally safe, but they would remain vastly understaffed....

"We need to accept the fact that kids cannot come to school ready to learn if they are physically sick. Poor

kids who do not have health insurance can't see a doctor unless it's an emergency. It will take an investment of \$6 billion more a year to provide health insurance for the estimated 11 million kids who don't have any....

"Head Start is one of the best programs ever created for breaking the poverty cycle and helping kids to succeed in school. The program is so underfunded that only two out of every five eligible kids can get in. It will take an investment of another \$6 billion a year to fully fund Head Start....

"Kids learn better in smaller classes. According to the Council of Great City Schools, we will need to invest \$4 billion a year just to reduce class size in grades K to 3 to 18 students, which research indicates improves student performance. Right now, the average American classroom has 24 students. These investments add up to \$26 billion a year....

"When our business executives look at the federal discretionary budget, we see a real disconnect between the needs of the country and how our money is spent....

"The analysis of Business Leaders for Sensible Priorities is that, in today's post-Cold War global economy, the competition has shifted from the battlefield to the classroom. The resource needed to survive and prosper is no longer huge military arsenals but a highly educated workforce....

"The problem is that we have not responded to these new realities, and

our country is spending money like we're still fighting yesterday's war. The reality is, we can fund all these education needs—and improve conditions for our troops at no additional taxpayer expense by shifting unneeded Cold War-era expenditures out of the Pentagon budget....

“Our country's security is not measured only by our military superiority; in the next century, it will also be measured by the strength of our economy. Both of those depend on the quality of the education we provide for our children....

“So it is reasonable to ask, where do we find that kind of money? I know some people fear we're talking about big new taxes. On the contrary, we do not have to increase taxes at all; we just have to get our federal budget priorities straightened out. The Sensible Priorities Campaign has a common-sense recommendation, based on an analysis done by Mr. Korb. We are convinced Congress can and should make a major investment in our children by shifting 15 percent of the Pentagon budget—about \$40 billion a year—to meeting the needs of our kids, with a strong investment in education....Mr. Korb believes we can trim that amount from the Pentagon budget, and make changes in our defense spending strategies, and still keep America supplied with the strongest armed forces in the world....

“If we are going to pay for a state-of-the-art military, why would we settle for anything less than state-of-the-art schools? But Congress has been moving in the opposite direction. Since 1980, the federal share of funding for K-12 education has actually declined from just under 12 percent of the total to just under 8 percent last year....Meanwhile, we are planning to phase out the Los Angeles-class attack submarines, the

best in the world, 15 years early, and spend almost \$64 billion to replace them with the new Virginia-class submarine, despite the fact we do not face a deep-water military threat....

“The Cold War is over. We won. The Soviet Union, our prime adversary for almost half a century, the threat we constructed this huge military to meet, only exists in our children's outdated textbooks. Yet we are still spending money like the Cold War is still on....

“When Congress is making its budget decisions, setting its priorities, it should pay heed to a warning issued by President Dwight David Eisenhower, a man who knew something about national security needs. President Eisenhower said, ‘We can never achieve absolute security. The problem in defense is how much you can afford to spend on protecting yourself from without before you destroy what you are trying to protect from within.’”

Time Running Out on Judicial Nominations

As reported in FOCUS in several previous issues, Senate Republicans have delayed the confirmation of many of President Clinton's judicial nominees to the federal bench, sometimes for years. And GOP senators have placed the greatest obstacles in the way of minority and women nominees. The most prominent example was the October 5 rejection of Ronnie White's nomination for a federal district judgeship in Missouri by a straight party-line vote of 54 to 45 vote.

In the last Congress, White's nomination was first submitted to the Senate when a majority of the Judiciary Committee approved it. Since the full Senate failed to take up the nomination, it was resubmitted at the beginning of this Congress. In

July, when the nomination was again favorably voted out of Committee, White's confirmation seemed assured. He had distinguished himself as a Missouri Supreme Court judge, and both of Missouri's Republican senators, Christopher “Kit” Bond and John Ashcroft, appeared to bless the nomination. But during the confirmation process, Ashcroft changed his mind and charged that White was “pro-criminal,” and had “a serious bias against the death penalty.”

The senator cited the case of a black defendant, Brian Kinder, sentenced to death for the murder of a sheriff. When the Missouri Supreme Court affirmed the conviction, Justice White dissented. White had voted to uphold the death sentence on 41 other occasions, but that wasn't good enough for the Missouri sheriffs and the National Sheriffs' Association who opposed his confirmation (even though the Missouri police organization endorsed him). It is generally perceived that the real reason for Senator Ashcroft's opposition was that he is running for re-election next year and wants to look tough on crime.

He was able to convince all of his Republican colleagues to embrace his rationale and reject White for the judgeship. (Sen. Connie Mack (R-Fla.) did not vote.) The rejection was roundly condemned as racially motivated, partisan, and reflective of a consensus among GOP senators to extend unequal treatment to minority and women nominees.

There are currently 57 vacant district and circuit court judgeships. President Clinton has submitted nominations for 34 of those vacancies which the Senate has failed to act on. Seven are African Americans. ■

ECONOMIC REPORT

Smaller Classes for a Quality Education

by Margaret C. Simms

As legislators on Capitol Hill raced to adjourn the first session of the 106th Congress in November, they finally completed work on the FY 2000 federal spending bills. Among the items included in the last appropriations measure to win congressional approval was the second installment of funds for the Class Size Reduction Program (PL 105-277). This program provides funding to school districts that will enable them to reduce class size to 18 students per classroom in the early elementary school grades (grades one through three). In the budget request he submitted in February, President Clinton stated that the program would "provide children in the early grades with the attention and instruction they need to acquire fundamental skills..."

The objective of the program is to place 100,000 new, qualified teachers in classrooms across the United States over the next seven years. For the first year (FY 1999), Congress provided \$1.2 billion for the program. Clinton had sought a \$1.4 billion spending level for FY 2000, but the two sides agreed to split the difference and settled on \$1.3 billion. A compromise was also reached on local control of some of the spending, permitting 25 percent of the funds to be used for teacher training rather than for hiring new teachers, up from 15 percent in FY 1999.

Do Smaller Class Sizes Make a Difference?

The benefits of smaller classes are the focus of a policy debate. Some

policy makers and other influentials have argued that reducing class size is not an effective use of money because the amount needed to make a significant difference would be prohibitive. But according to a number of scholarly studies, smaller classes do have a positive impact on educational achievement. Reducing classroom size was one of the strategies for improving education discussed at a Joint Center conference on November 3 entitled, "Skills Development for Black Workers in the 21st Century." Dr. Cecilia Rouse, an associate professor of economics and public affairs at Princeton University, presented evidence from a select group of studies on several different educational improvement strategies, including class size reduction and school vouchers.

Citing findings from the Tennessee Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio experiment (Project STAR), which began in 1985-86, Dr. Rouse argued that reducing class size is a good approach to improving educational outcomes for African American students. It may also provide an excellent foundation for going on to college. Evaluations of Project STAR show that students placed (by random assignment) in smaller classes (13 to 17 students) scored higher on standardized tests than students in regular sized classes (22 to 25 students), even if the larger classes had teachers' aides. The improvement was greater for African American students and for those in inner-city schools than for others.

The benefits of this strategy appear to be long-lasting. Students who had been in the smaller classes during the early years of elementary school were more likely to take college entrance exams and scored better on them as well. This was more often true for African Americans. Dr. Rouse also exam-

ined data from a Preschool to Grade 5 Grant Program in Milwaukee which required that schools with low-achieving students in poor neighborhoods receiving the supplemental grants maintain relatively low pupil-teacher ratios. There, small class size appeared to result in significant improvements in math scores.

Some participants in the Joint Center conference asked if funding class size reduction in public schools was a cost-effective strategy, since smaller class size generally requires not only more teachers but more classrooms—and building additional facilities is expensive. Dr. Rouse was not able to fully respond to that question, but findings from a recent survey by the Council of Great City Schools indicate that most big-city school districts have been able to hire teachers and find space for new, smaller classes.

Hiring New Teachers, Retraining Veterans

Funds provided under the Class Size Reduction Program are distributed according to a formula based on enrollment and poverty. According to the Council of Great City Schools, a consortium of large urban school districts, approximately one-quarter of the first year's money went to the neediest students in urban schools. In order to determine the impact of the initial funds provided under the Class Size Reduction Program, the Council sent surveys to 54 large school districts. Forty of the districts, many with large African American student populations, responded to the survey.

According to the findings, the 40 districts collectively hired 3,558 new teachers for this school year using federal funds. Seventy-five percent of the districts also used the federal money to provide over 7,700 new teachers and nearly twice as many

teachers already on payrolls with professional development opportunities. In some cases, the districts were able to supplement the federal money with state and local funds for these purposes. In spite of the tight labor market, only three of the responding districts indicated that they had to employ teachers who were not fully credentialed for classroom teaching, and these teachers constituted only 11 percent of the total number of new teachers hired in the 40 districts. Some of the funding can be used for recruitment—advertising, travel reimbursement, and hiring bonuses—and the districts reported that just over \$2 million was spent for this purpose. Just over a third of the money went to providing hiring incentives such as moving expenses and tuition reimbursement.

The Council's report includes summaries of individual district initiatives. Some districts went beyond the regular training programs in order to bolster the skills of their new teachers. For example, the New Orleans Public Schools put together teams of mentors, consultants, and teacher liaisons to provide on-going support for the 109 new teachers hired. The services range from informal observations to highly structured activities such as curriculum and pedagogy skills development programs and specialized training institutes. In Philadelphia, where a lack of classroom space and a shortage of certified teachers were obstacles to achieving the goals of the program, funds were used for a "literacy intern" program. Under this program, 254 recent college graduates (not fully certified to teach) were hired and placed in intensive professional development. It involved team teaching with a veteran teacher in reduced-size classes and participating in a series of summer institutes,

seminars, and mentoring workshops.

It is too soon to determine whether these efforts have made an impact on the achievement of students in these districts, many of whom have the same characteristics as students who have benefitted the most from the experimental class-size reduction programs established prior to the federal program. It is not known if initiatives on such a broad scale as those sponsored by the federal program can be as effective.

Early educational experiences are the foundation on which work skills must rest. If African American participation in the future workforce is to follow a successful path, improving current early education is vital. It is therefore important to find out if the results of the smaller class size reduction efforts documented in the experimental programs are

validated when applied on a widespread basis.

The Council of Great City Schools report, "Reducing Class Size in America's Urban Schools" can be found on their website at www.cgcs.org. Dr. Rouse's paper, "School Reform in the 21st Century: A Look at the Effect of Class Size and School Vouchers on Minority Students," is being revised and will appear in a Joint Center volume on education and training for black workers in the 21st century, to be published in 2000. ■



For more information on this and related topics, visit our website.

Hiring Done With Federal Class Size Reduction Funds, FY 1999, by Grade, in Urban Schools

	Grade One	Grade Two	Grade Three	Other	Total
Number of New Teachers Hired	1,074	431	465	481	3,558
Salary and Benefits Provided by Federal Funds (thousands of dollars)	\$45,004	\$17,859	\$20,367	\$17,451	\$167,789

Source: Council of Great City Schools, "Reducing Class Size in America's Urban Schools, 1999"

Note: Data for 40 large urban school districts in the United States. Individual grades do not sum to total since some districts were unable to provide per-grade breakdown