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FOCUS

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Blacks and the 1988 Elections: Critical Choices

JCPS/GALLUP Poll of Blacks and Whites Reveals that Unemployment, Drug Abuse, the High Cost of Living and Crime Rank Among the Major Issues in this Year's Election

Super Tuesday and the Black Vote

Southern Conservative Democratic Leaders Created a Regional Primary to Increase the Chances for a Conservative Democratic Presidential Nominee; Instead Jesse Jackson and Black Voters May Reap the Benefits

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Perspective

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Selecting A President In A Critical, But Complicated Election

Selecting a president is getting to be a complicated and sometimes bizarre business. Newsweek refers to the 1988 presidential nominating contests as 'Pit-Bull Politics.' Perhaps the most significant development so far has been the introduction of the Super Tuesday elections on March 8. My personal opinion is that this concept will be relegated to a dust bin as an idea whose time has not come.

The nominating process is complicated in other ways. There is the usual gripe that the candidates are not focusing on issues. While Jesse Jackson is often labeled the exception to this charge, he is widely regarded as powerful and influential but unelectable.

As confounding as the presidential election is, it is a critical event. We must choose a new leader, and we have an opportunity to choose new national and international policies. These choices arise because Ronald Reagan isn't running again, a fact which disturbs some, like his right wing supporters, and which causes others, like black Americans, to praise the Lord and the 22nd Amendment.

The choice of a new president and of new policies is important for the entire country, but black Americans, perhaps more than any other group in society, have an extra special interest in this election. It signals the end of the Reagan administration which most blacks strongly oppose.

But opposing Reagan is not enough to guarantee that the next president will be more responsive to the concerns of black Americans. So far, this year's bumper crop of presidential aspirants has not bouyed the confidence of the American people in their ability to confront the nation's future with bold leadership.

Like the rest of us, the candidates sense that the nation is at a critical juncture. The Reagan conservative tide has peaked in the South and is receding everywhere else, but just what should take its place is far from clear. Perhaps that is why most of the presidential candidates in both parties are groping for a program, a theme, a vision that responds to the needs of the nation and that captures the imagination of the electorate.

As dissenters from many Reagan administration policies and as frequent advocates of alternative strategies and prescriptions, blacks are well situated to contribute to the redirection of our nation's paths in 1988 and beyond. We welcome the opportunity not only to participate in the selection of a president, but to participate in the shaping of new policies. Moreover, we demand more involvement in the nation's public policy arena.

In addition to influencing the selection of the next president, black Americans also will help elect the next Congress. This year, all of the seats of the U.S. House of Representatives and 33 Senate seats will be up for grabs. In many ways, the stakes in congressional elections are as high as those in the presidential race. Therefore, blacks must mobilize in this arena as well as on the presidential front. ■

Eddie N. Williams

PRESIDENT

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Blacks and the 1988 Elections: Critical Choices

by Milton D. Morris

As the 1988 presidential campaign moves forward, the American electorate will face some critical choices. Chief among these is the selection of a new president. Much is at stake for American blacks as well as for the rest of the country in making that choice, for the next chief executive will set a policy course that will affect America's domestic health and its place in the world.

The choices of a new president and a new national course are important for the entire country, but especially for blacks. More than any other group, blacks have expressed dissatisfaction with Ronald Reagan's job performance. The extent of black dissatisfaction was reflected in a national survey conducted by the Gallup Organization for the Joint Center for Political Studies last August. According to the survey, a mere 13 percent of blacks approved of Reagan's overall job performance and 79 percent were dissatisfied with the way things were going in the nation. A major source of their dissatisfaction was their perception that the policies of the Reagan administration had not improved the position of blacks in society. In the JCPS survey, only 29 percent of the black respondents thought the situation of blacks had improved in the last five years, compared with 32 percent who thought the situation had worsened and 37 percent who thought it had stayed the same. For the vast majority of black Americans, then, the end of the Reagan era cannot come too soon.

As the election to choose Reagan's successor approaches, the questions for blacks are what roles they will play in selecting a new president and in shaping a policy agenda for the post-Reagan era.

Blacks: A Greater Force

Blacks are likely to participate more extensively in the 1988 presidential election than in any other in the country's history. The factors that should contribute to this increased involvement are Jesse Jackson's campaign for the presidential nomination, the influential roles blacks are playing on several presidential campaign staffs and in the Democratic party nationally, and the impact of black voters.

As perhaps the dominant political force in black America, second-time presidential candidate Jesse Jackson can be expected to attract large numbers of black supporters to the polls and to win more delegates than he did in 1984. Moreover, his candidacy has permitted him to develop and articulate a distinct policy agenda that has profoundly influenced the character of the national debate. And despite the label "unelectable," slapped on him by many in the media, few doubt that he will remain a major force in the nominating process up to the Democratic party's convention in Atlanta and through the general election in November.

Other black political leaders in the Democratic party will also take part in ensuring full black participation in the nominating process and will play key roles in shaping the party's platform. For example, the Democratic National Committee has appointed 16 black elected officials and party leaders to standing committees of the convention, some in key positions. Pennsylvania state Representative and Speaker of the House K. Leroy Irvis will head the Credentials Committee, and California Congressman Mervyn Dymally and Little Rock Mayor Lottie Shackelford will co-chair the Platform and Rules committees, respectively.

In addition, blacks have a stronger presence on presidential campaign staffs. Although they hold few senior positions, the six blacks who do hold key posts (all with Democratic candidates) seem to have more clout than black staffers have had in past elections. There is also a new crop of black young men and women who are cutting their teeth as campaign organizers, press staff, and researchers in influential behind-the-scenes roles.

Finally, the Super Tuesday primaries and caucuses provide an unprecedented opportunity for blacks to influence the choice of the presidential nominee at the ballot box early in the game. They are nearly 20 percent of the population of the Deep South states and 10 percent or more in all the border states that are holding primaries and caucuses on that day. In 1984, blacks were 35 percent or more of the registered Democrats in many of these states (see *Super Tuesday and the Black Vote* article on page 6). And as the nominating process swings to midwestern and northeastern states such as Illinois, Michigan, New York, and Pennsylvania, the voting power of urban blacks will be strongly felt.

Looking beyond the primaries, blacks in these southern, midwestern, and northeastern states could be a decisive factor in electing the president. They are about 11 percent of the U.S. population, and their registration and turnout have increased substantially since 1980, while white registration and turnout have remained relatively constant. In fact, between 1980 and 1986 the gap between the voting rates of blacks and

Dr. Morris is director of research at the Joint Center.

whites decreased from 10.4 percentage points to 3.8 percentage points, according to the 1986 Current Population Survey of the Census Bureau.

Beyond Super Tuesday

The voters have already spoken in the early primaries. Missouri Rep. Richard Gephardt led the field of Democrats in Iowa, and a week later Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis won in New Hampshire. Republican Senate leader Robert Dole and Vice President George Bush divided victories in the two states much the same way. And Jesse Jackson demonstrated that he can hold his own and indeed win the support of white voters.

As the campaign moves South, political observers are speculating on just how blacks, who are heavily Democratic, will use their votes. Indications from the JCPS survey are that the overwhelming majority of southern black voters will support Jesse Jackson's candidacy. A full 74 percent of southern blacks reported that Jackson was their first choice for the Democratic nomination. With such a high level of black support, Jackson could win a plurality of votes in a number of Deep South states and come in second in several others.

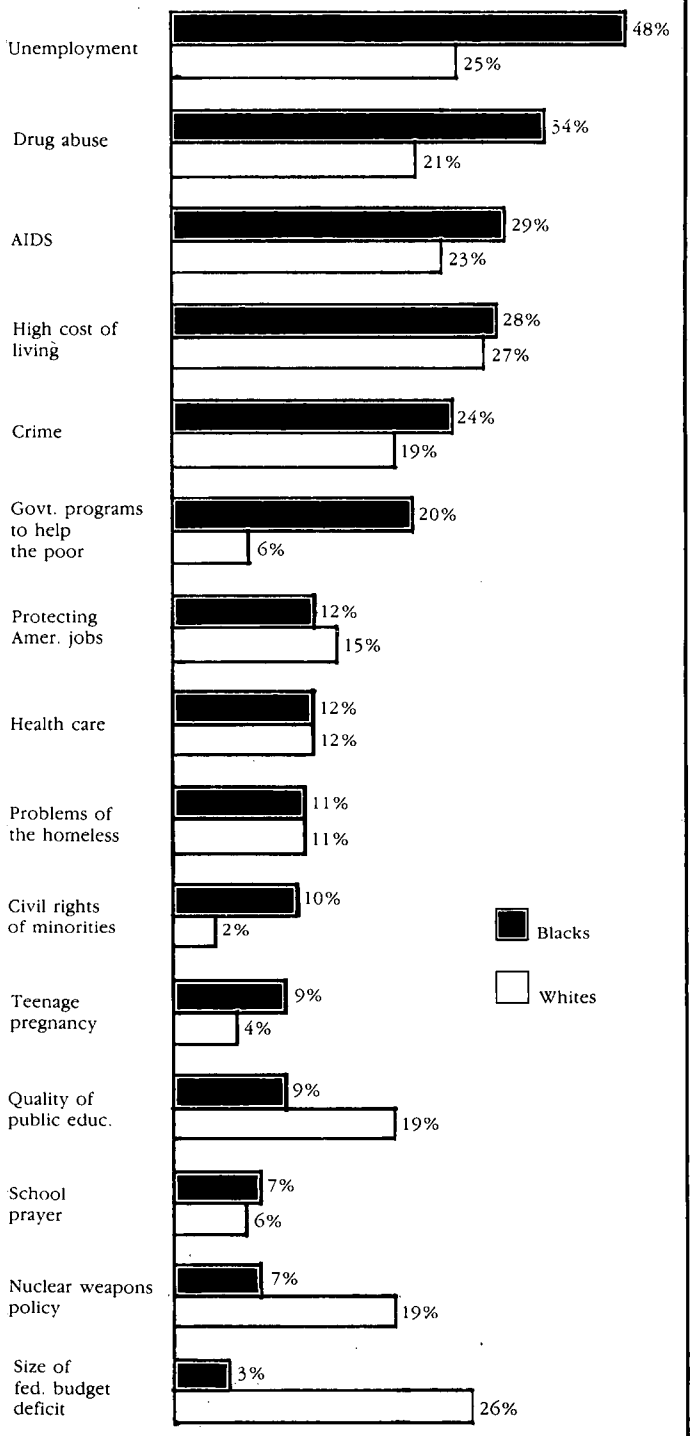
While Jackson may not win many primaries and caucuses after Super Tuesday in large midwestern and northeastern states such as Illinois (March 15), Michigan (March 26), New York (April 19), Pennsylvania (April 26), and Ohio (May 3), he seems poised to win a substantial share of the delegates in each of those states. A substantial increase over 1984 in the number of delegates Jackson is able to take to the convention under his banner, plus the black delegates supporting other candidates could push the number of black delegates at the Democratic convention well above the 697, or 17.7 percent of the total, who were present in 1984. These delegates could be decisive in selecting the party's nominee in a brokered convention, assuming they acted as a cohesive bloc.

The general election in November offers an even greater opportunity for the black vote to be felt. Two factors that are critical in determining the influence of blacks on the final outcome of the presidential race are the size and distribution of black turnout. While blacks are not much of an electoral factor west of the Mississippi (except in California), a strong black vote in the South and in urban centers in populous northeastern, mid-Atlantic, and midwestern states is essential to a Democratic victory. In order for the Democrats to go over the necessary 270 electoral votes in November, blacks in several key states in those regions must make a big showing at the polls.

The potential for a large black turnout at the polls is real. For the first time in the annual JCPS/Gallup surveys, a higher percentage of blacks than whites reported they were registered to vote (77 percent of blacks compared with 72 percent of whites). In addition, blacks and whites were equally likely to say that they had given thought to the upcoming presidential election: 40 percent of both groups reported that they had given "some" or "a lot" of thought to the upcoming presidential election. Yet, blacks were substantially less likely to say they would definitely vote in the presidential election. Fifty-two percent of blacks compared with 60 percent of whites said they would.

(Continued on page 5)

Table 1. The Most Important Campaign Issues, by Race



Source: JCPS/Gallup Survey, August 1987

February 1988

JCPS

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Inside This Issue

- Voters go to the polls: Dukakis, Gephardt, and Jackson are the Democratic frontrunners; Bush and Dole lead the GOP.
- George Bush is the first choice among black Republicans, according to the JCPS/Gallup survey.
- Black voting-age population tops 11 percent for the first time.
- Across the Nation: In California, Speaker of the State Assembly Willie Brown fights dissidents; Chicago's fair hiring threatened; judicial election case in Louisiana; Mitchell brothers sentenced in Maryland; Ed Cole leads Mississippi Democrats.

Iowa and New Hampshire: At Last, Some 'Real' Voters

After months of public opinion surveys reporting which Democratic candidate and which Republican candidates were likely to win the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary, the real electorate finally got its chance to turnout and show who it actually supported. **One of the big winners has been JESSE JACKSON, who demonstrated that he can attract white voters in several of the early contests. He garnered 9 percent of the vote in Iowa, 8 percent in New Hampshire, and an impressive 20 percent in Minnesota, which was topped by his second place finish of 31 percent of the vote in Maine.**

His success in Iowa can be attributed to several factors. First, he campaigned hard in the state. Jackson spent more than 60 days in Iowa this time around compared to only 1½ days in the state in 1984. Second, he committed more money to the campaign in Iowa, spending $175,000 there in 1988 compared to less than $10,000 in 1984. Jackson spent more in Iowa than in any state so far except Illinois, his home state and the location of his national headquarters. However, this was substantially less than the top three vote-getters, all of whom spent more than $700,000 in Iowa. Third, Jackson championed farm issues in the American grain belt before other candidates decided it was politically expedient to do so. That helped him in Minnesota as well. And finally, Jackson used black churches to enhance his organization.

According to **WALTER REED,** Jackson's Waterloo field director, 29 of the city's black churches came together under the leadership of the East Side Ministerial Association led by **REV. THAD THOMAS. The churches reached between 75 and 85 percent of the black community and they focused not only on older voters but also created a Young Adults Division.** The Young Adults Division targeted the lowest voting age population of the community, blacks between the ages of 18 and 24, as well as 14- to 17- year olds to baby-sit, act as counters for the caucus, and perform other get-out-the-vote activities. **The goal of organizing 14 to 17 year olds, according to Reed, was not only to secure their help in 1988, but to educate and prepare them to participate in electoral politics in the years to come.** Jackson also did well among farmers in rural Adair County, the site of his state headquarters, and in the state's academic centers.

Although Jackson's vote in New Hampshire demonstrated a smaller gain than in Iowa, there, too, he expanded his support from 5 percent in 1984 to 8 percent of New Hampshire's population. Jackson demonstrated again his ability to attract substantial numbers of white voters—indeed, he won a larger share of the vote than three of the white Democratic contenders (**ALBERT GORE, BRUCE BABBIT,** and **GARY HART**).

In Iowa there was at least one result the surveys failed to predict. On the Republican side **FORMER TELEVANGELIST PAT ROBERTSON** (with 25 percent of the vote) came in second to **KANSAS SEN. ROBERT DOLE** (37 percent) and well ahead of **VICE PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH** (19 percent). Although Bush was third—8 points ahead of fourth place finisher **NEW YORK REP. JACK KEMP** (with 11

percent of the vote)—Bush was perhaps the biggest loser because as the Republican frontrunner he was not expected to do so poorly in Iowa.

The Iowa caucus is more important for building momentum, getting headlines, and attracting contributors than for winning delegates since the state has only 58 Democratic and 37 Republican delegates, and even these are not decided until May and June at the district and state conventions. By then, the relative standing of candidates will almost surely have changed, so that the sentiment of the delegates finally chosen may be significantly different from the preferences of caucus voters on February 8.

The polls ended up not being good predictors of the Republican contest in New Hampshire as well. While polls conducted the week before the state's primary showed a neck-in-neck race between Dole and Bush, Bush scored a solid victory over Dole.

As in the Republican race, however, New Hampshire produced a different frontrunner among the Democrats. **MICHAEL DUKAKIS,** who from the start was the odds on favorite in his neighboring state, handily won this state's primary. **RICHARD GEPHARDT** clinched second place, while **PAUL SIMON** trailed closely behind. Most political observers believe Simon's future potential for raising campaign finance has been dealt a severe blow.

While the Iowa and New Hampshire results convincingly established two Republican frontrunners (Bush and Dole), these states' results and Gore's decision to focus on the South indicate that in all likelihood there will be at least three strong white Democratic candidates (Gephardt, Dukakis, and Gore) still competitive in the eyes of the electorate on Super Tuesday. If the white vote splits widely among these three whites, Jackson stands an excellent chance to be the winner of the plurality of the vote in the majority of southern states. (See *Super Tuesday and the Black Vote*, p. 6.)

Finally, for black politics, the Iowa results offer another important observation. Concentrated around Iowa's urban centers—Waterloo (11 percent black), Des Moines (7 percent black), and Davenport (6 percent black), blacks make up only 1 percent of the total voting age population in the state. Yet, they composed roughly 2 percent of the participants in the caucus and boosted Jackson's vote. If blacks in other states imitate this model, 1988 could be a record year for black voter participation in the primaries and caucuses and in their support for Jesse Jackson.

On the Presidential Campaign Trail: The Republicans

Last month's *TrendLetter* presented a brief sketch of the Democratic presidential nomination contenders. A comparable look at the Republican candidates who remain in the race is provided this month, again using the analysis of the JCPS/Gallup opinion survey conducted last August. It is often said that the eleventh commandment of Republicans is: "Do not criticize thy fellow party member." It is the Democrats who often have an image of bickering, infighting, and even running kamikaze missions during the primary/caucus season against the candidate who ultimately emerges as the party's nominee. Republicans on the other hand are viewed as being kinder to their GOP opponents and saving their harshest words for Democrats. All this seems to have changed in 1988. **With the two Republican frontrunners, Vice President George Bush and Senate minority leader Robert Dole, stepping up their criticisms of each other and former televangelist Pat Robertson, and with New York Rep. Jack Kemp challenging Bush's victory in the Michigan delegate selection process, Republicans are threatening to outdo Democrats in negative campaigning.** Things have gotten so bitter that Dole was described by his aides as "steaming mad" over charges made by Bush's Iowa campaign chair that he (Dole) is "mean-spirited." Later, Dole demanded a public apology from Bush and said the vice president should "stop lying about his record."

Such rancor is hardly the "right stuff" for winning converts to the party. And, of course, winning converts is just what is needed if the GOP is to expand its abysmal support among black voters in 1988. As late as August 1987, only 7 percent of blacks reported in the JCPS/Gallup survey that they were likely to support the Republican nominee while 77 percent said they would support the Democratic nominee in 1988. Over the course of the year, however, these numbers may change. Given the absence of any moderate Republicans in the race, the proportion of blacks who are likely to vote Republican is small. A full 41 percent of the few black Republicans in the survey did not want any of the current candidate field to win the GOP nomination.

Despite the fact that few blacks in the survey were likely to support Republicans in 1988, the following brief description of the Republican presidential candidates (in alphabetical order) includes data from the 1987 JCPS/Gallup survey about which candidates blacks would like to see the Republicans nominate. (Except where indicated, statistics of black support are based on the total black sample.)

GEORGE BUSH: Vice President Bush is emphasizing his experience in government in general, his foreign policy expertise in particular, and his loyalty to Ronald Reagan for seven years. Bush is fighting

to be the first vice president to be elected chief executive since 1836. Currently the frontrunner in national polls, Bush is not popular with the ultra-right and whether he can hold the Reagan coalition together is questionable. Bush won handily in New Hampshire but didn't even place second in any of the Midwest constests of Iowa, South Dakota, and Minnesota. He is still a favorite in the southern states, however, which hold their primaries on March 8. Since eight of these states have winner- take-all systems, he could rack up a formidable delegate lead early in the game. Bush is also the first choice of blacks when asked which Republicans they wanted to win the nomination; 31 percent preferred Bush in the JCPS/Gallup survey.

ROBERT DOLE: SENATE MINORITY LEADER DOLE is also emphasizing his leadership experience. Having served as Finance Committee chairman and majority leader in the Senate, he points to his knowledge of the legislative process as an indicator of his ability to build smooth relations between the White House and Capitol Hill. **Dole also points to his leadership role in the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act in 1982 and his support for the King holiday bill. But groups such as TransAfrica are quick to point to Dole's failure to support sanctions against South Africa and general conservatism toward the southern Africa region.** Dole has been a winner in the Midwest with victories in Iowa, South Dakota, and Minnesota but came in second behind Bush in New Hampshire. But he was a very distant second among blacks in ranking Republicans to win the nomination. Eight percent of blacks in the JCPS/Gallup survey named Dole as their first choice to win the nomination.

JACK KEMP: NEW YORK REP. KEMP claims that he, not Bush, is the true ideological heir of the Reagan revolution. Kemp was an early advocate of supply-side economics and played a critical role in the passage of Reagan's three-year tax cutting plan in 1981, which many economists blame for producing not only the huge federal deficit but the 1982 recession as well. Running last in primaries and caucuses since **ALEXANDER HAIG AND PIERRE DuPONT** dropped out, **Kemp hopes to win the support of other minorities with his campaign theme: "economic opportunity society."** But he has had little success. Only four percent of blacks in the JCPS/Gallup poll named Kemp as their first choice for the Republican nomination.

MARION (PAT) ROBERTSON: Former televangelist Robertson's campaign revolves around ultra conservative stands on social issues such as capital punishment, school prayer, and opposition to abortion. He has said that God instructed him to run for the presidency in order to put an end to "central government under the religion of secular humanism." In Iowa, his superior organization helped him secure second place, he was also number two in South Dakota and Minnesota. Some observers have speculated that as the past host of the evangelical 700 Club television program, Robertson might prove to be popular with blacks given his religious background. But Robertson has few black supporters, and in the nation as a whole, it will require a big increase in support from the **6 percent of blacks who reported he was their first choice among Republicans in the JCPS/Gallup survey to conclude that Robertson is an attractive candidate to blacks.**

All in all, George Bush was the only Republican presidential contender with substantial black support among those who responded to the JCPS/Gallup poll. But that support will be of little consequence in the Republican nomination process given the small proportion of blacks (7 percent) who say they will vote in the Republican primaries and caucuses.

Record Number of Voting-Age Blacks in 1988

A new report issued by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in early February projects that in 1988 for the first time, blacks will constitute more than 11 percent of the U.S. voting-age population. Blacks will number 20.4 million and represent 11.2 percent of voting-age Americans. In 1984, blacks were 18.4 million, or 10.8 percent of persons of voting age. The regional distribution, according to the census, is that blacks are 17 percent of the voting-age population in the South, 10 percent in the Northeast, 9 percent in the Midwest, and 5 percent in the West. About half of all voting-age blacks live in the South, compared with 20 percent each in the Northeast and Midwest and 10 percent in the West. The District of Columbia has a higher proportion of blacks in its electorate (65 percent) than any state. **The states with the largest black populations are Mississippi (31 percent), Louisiana and South Carolina (27 percent), Georgia and Maryland (24 percent), Alabama (23 percent), and North Carolina (20 percent).**

These projections not only indicate that blacks have the potential to be a larger and more influential part of the electorate, but they also point to new opportunities for blacks to win seats in Congress and state legislatures. For example, data in the report indicate that **Virginia, Georgia, and possibly North Carolina—all states with large black populations—may each gain a congressional seat after the 1990 reapportionment process.** Moreover, some states that already have black members of Congress but that had shown population loss or minimal increase in recent years, such as Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois, made gains in 1987. This trend indicates that the threat of losses in the numbers of black members of Congress from these states might be diminishing.

Across the Nation

CALIFORNIA: **WILLIE BROWN,** the black Democratic speaker of the California Assembly, is in a power struggle with a group of conservative dissidents in his own party known as the "Gang of Five." **The Gang of Five is developing legislation which would limit the power of the speaker to discipline members of the Assembly by making it more difficult for him to remove them from committees by requiring approval of such actions by an ethics committee.** The legislation would also place a six-year limit on the length of time anyone may serve as speaker.

While not to be taken lightly, the legislation is only a part of a larger generational and philosophical conflict raging in the Assembly. There has been a running battle between Brown and senior assemblymen representing urban constituencies, who are opposed by younger legislators (in their 30's and 40's) from conservative suburban and rural districts who are bucking the seniority system. They have also wrangled over numerous social and criminal justice issues such as the death penalty, parental consent for abortions, mandatory AIDS testing of convicted prostitutes, and restrictions on the sale of pornographic materials from vending machines, all of which Brown opposes. Brown who has served as speaker longer than anyone else in the state's history (seven years and four months), removed each of the members of the Gang of Five from committees and stripped them of subcommittee and committee chairmanships.

Since it is unlikely that the Gang of Five will go away, legislative skirmishes will probably continue. But it is unlikely that they will prevail in getting this restrictive legislation passed because they just don't have the votes.

ILLINOIS: In the aftermath of **CHICAGO MAYOR HAROLD WASHINGTON'S** death on November 25, some of his supporters have become concerned that the reforms he put into place are in jeopardy. **A recent Supreme Court decision may signal the return of the patronage system, which became infamous under the political machine of big city boss RICHARD DALEY. In February, a ruling by the Court made the merit hiring system instituted by Washington unenforceable.**

Chicago employment policies have been bound by the Shakman Decree which was named after MICHAEL SHAKMAN who originally sued the city in federal court in 1969 for maintaining hiring practices based on political patronage. Shakman and the others who joined in the suit sought the protection of Federal oversight to ensure a fairly administered personnel system for Chicago's 39,000 municipal workers. Shortly after taking office in 1983, Washington independently agreed to a consent decree which prohibited the hiring or firing of any city employee for political reasons or political activities.

The plaintiffs, who continued their suit after the decree was issued, received a set-back, however, when the Seventh U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in August that they lacked legal standing in the case which essentially voided the decree's provisions on hiring and made the decree unenforceable by the city of Chicago. The plaintiffs appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court, which left untouched the Seventh Circuit's ruling when it declined to hear the case without comment on February 22. **The Court's decision created a vacuum in the enforcement of the Shakman Decree and leaves a barrier between the plaintiffs and federal oversight of the city's hiring practices for now. But the policies on firing were left intact.** The city hasn't seen the end of the matter, however; the plaintiffs will resume struggle this spring before FEDERAL DISTRICT JUDGE **NICHOLAS J. BUA.**

LOUISIANA: In November 1987, city court Judge **FREDDIE PITCHER, JR.,** was elected district court judge in Baton Rouge. He got 42 percent of the vote in predominantly white precincts and 95 percent of the vote in black precincts to become the first black elected to a parishwide office in the 20th century. Ironically, Pitcher's win may hurt efforts of civil rights attorneys who are trying to change the state's parishwide at-large election system of judges to an arrangement in which they are elected in districts that could provide minorities with better opportunities to win.

A suit has been filed by **ATTORNEY JANICE CLARK** in federal district court in Baton Rouge *(Clark v Edwards)* in an attempt to abolish the present system. Plaintiffs argue that since blacks constitute only about one-third of the voters in the parish, a black candidate has to gain a sizeable vote in the white community to be elected and can rarely do that since black voters often have a minimal impact on election outcomes. **The plaintiffs in the case have argued that Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act, which prohibits states from conducting elections that have the effect of diluting minority voting strength, applies to judgeship elections.** Two federal cases have been decided on that point but both went in opposite directions. A Mississippi district judge ruled that Section 2 does apply, but a New Orleans judge (in a case involving the election of that state's supreme court judges) ruled it does not. Voting rights suits in other states have already struck down at-large systems for non-judicial offices where a few blacks may occasionally be elected but black representation does not reach a level that approximates the black proportion in the population.

MARYLAND: **FORMER STATE SEN. CLARENCE M. MITCHELL III** and his brother, **STATE SEN. MICHAEL B. MITCHELL,** were both sentenced on February 5 to 30 months in prison for accepting $50,000 to obstruct a congressional investigation of the Wedtech Corporation. (See January *Political TrendLetter*) In addition, Clarence Mitchell received a 30-month prison sentence stemming from a related wire fraud charge, and Michael Mitchell got 30 months in prison for each of two charges of wire fraud. **U.S. DISTRICT JUDGE NORMAN P. RAMSEY** ordered that the sentences run concurrently. He also ordered Clarence Mitchell to pay $6,000 in fines and Michael Mitchell $7,000. Both will be eligible for parole in 10 months. Upon sentencing, Michael Mitchell was automatically suspended from his state Senate seat.

A Baltimore grand jury has also indicted Michael Mitchell on unrelated charges in connection with the theft of $77,000 from a 3-year-old boy's guardianship fund. It is alleged that Mitchell used for his own benefit an estate that included two life insurance policies intended for the boy. In addition, a jury convicted Clarence Mitchell on charges of conspiracy and obstructing a grand jury investigation into his business ties to a convicted Baltimore drug dealer. Although Judge Ramsey ordered the Mitchells to begin serving their sentences for the Wedtech convictions in 60 days, both report they will continue to pursue appeals of their convictions. The Mitchells maintain that they are victims of a Federal Bureau of Investigation plot to discredit black leaders.

MISSISSIPPI: Blacks in this Old Dixie state have come a long way since the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party challenged the state's segregationist regular Democratic party delegates at the party's 1964 national convention. Today, the regular Mississippi Democratic party is headed by **ED COLE,** 43, a black former administrative assistant to **FAYETTE MAYOR CHARLES EVERS.** The state committee elected Cole chair of the Mississippi Democratic party in November after **STEVE PATTERSON** resigned from the post to run for Congress from the Fourth District.

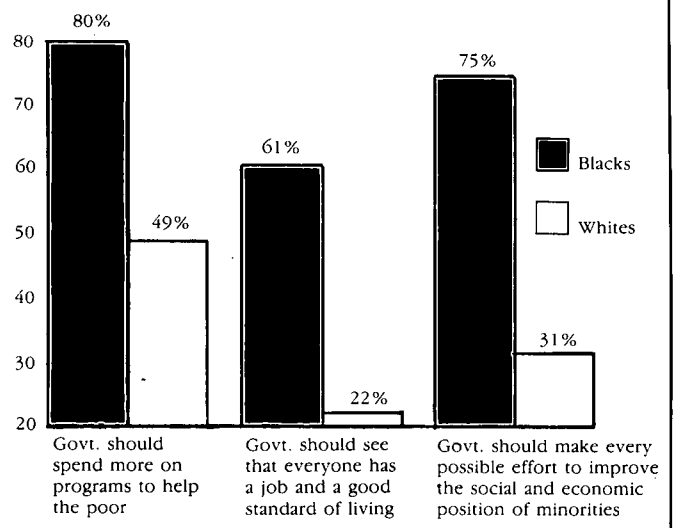
But at the regular election of party officers in April, recently elected DEMOCRATIC GOVERNOR RAY MABUS will try to replace Cole. Mabus is backing a white woman, BILLIE THOMPSON, for the job. Thompson is from Tupelo and is a long- time supporter of the governor. Mabus's opposition of Cole is ironic, given the make-up of the constituency that elected him. According to local newspaper and television exit polls, Mabus's close margin of victory in last November's gubernatorial election was a result of black support. He received only 32 percent of the white vote but was pushed over the top by a 90 percent black vote. Cole, who is currently an aide in **U.S. SEN. JOHN STENNIS'S** Jackson office, reports that he has lots of grassroots support and expects to win reelection.

(Continued from page 4)

Shaping a Policy Agenda

The country is at a critical juncture in its history and is searching for direction in the post-Reagan era. At present, there is no clear national consensus on an appropriate course in the aftermath of the two-term Reagan presidency, which may well represent the peak of a conservative drive to gain power and to reshape the structure, role, and basic operating premises of the federal government.

Table 2. Black and White Attitudes Toward the Role of Government



Source: JCPS/Gallup Survey, August 1987

The conservative effort was successful in instituting tax policies that provide fewer government resources and in restructuring federal spending priorities away from social programs and toward the Pentagon. Domestic programs such as public housing, education, and child development have been decimated by major budget cuts and by repeated questions raised by Reagan administration officials about their efficacy. Civil rights and other equal opportunity programs have been especially undermined through direct attempts to reverse established policies and through conspicuous non-enforcement of laws and policies. These have occurred alongside rapidly deteriorating social and economic conditions for large segments of society.

There is substantial evidence, however, that the conservative drive is now receding. For example, in the 1984 JCPS/Gallup survey, 86 percent of blacks but only 31 percent of whites wanted government to spend more on social programs to help the poor—but by the 1987 JCPS/Gallup survey, when the percentage of blacks favoring more governmental spending to help the poor had declined slightly to 80 percent, the percentage of whites had climbed to 49 percent. Similarly, for both groups the percentage preferring more defense spending had declined: in 1984, 31 percent of blacks and 41 percent of whites wanted government to spend more on defense; in the 1987 survey, those figures had dropped to 25 percent and 35 percent, respectively. Thus, two hallmarks of conservatism—cutting social spending and increasing defense spending—appear to be waning in popularity.

But what will follow this receding conservative tide is far from clear. Most of the presidential candidates are groping uneasily for a program, theme, or vision of the future that responds to the nation's needs and captures the imagination of the electorate. This uncertainty offers black Americans a unique opportunity to contribute to the reformulation of national policy. And the JCPS/Gallup survey indicated that blacks need not venture along that path alone but may be joined by white allies on a number of issues. As Table 1 (see box on page 4) indicates, unemployment, drug abuse, acquired immune-deficiency syndrome (AIDS), the high cost of living, and crime rank high among major concerns for both groups. Thus, in the search for policy direction, blacks and whites have a commonality of interests in many areas which could constitute the basis for alliances.

There are differences between the races, however. Whites were more widely dispersed than blacks in their view of the country's most important issues, whereas blacks, by 48 percent, clearly identified unemployment as their chief concern; and although the federal deficit loomed large as a white concern, it was important for only a small minority of blacks. Similarly, while "government programs to help the poor" were among the top three concerns of a fifth of all blacks surveyed, such programs were important to only a small group of whites.

Blacks and whites remained divided on the role of government in solving the nation's social and economic woes. As Table 2 (see box above) demonstrates, blacks continued to be significantly more likely than whites to favor a strong activist government in social spending and job creation.

This year, for black Americans, having their concerns incorporated into the program of the next administration may be as important as getting out the vote. ■

Picking A President: A Guide to Delegate Selection in the States, 1988, has been published by the Joint Center as a working paper. It details the selection process in each of the 50 states for both parties, reviews rules and timetables, and provides relevant demographic and political information on each state's racial composition, voting age population, registration levels, and critical policy issues. It can be ordered for $4.95 from the Publications Clerk, Joint Center for Political Studies®, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Wash., D.C. 20004; telephone 202-626-3500.

Super Tuesday and the Black Vote

by Linda F. Williams

The long pre-season of 1988 presidential politics, which some call the "invisible primary" in which candidates jockey to discover whether they are viable, has finally come to an end. The formal nomination process has begun, with each candidate facing the reality that his rankings in public opinion polls now mean far less than does his courtship of the delegates. Beginning with the Iowa caucus in February and continuing through the Democratic convention in July and the Republican convention in August, the focal point of presidential politics is the delegate selection process.

The Iowa and Minnesota caucuses and New Hampshire and South Dakota primaries have already given voters, elected officials, and political analysts some clues as to whom the eventual Democratic and Republican nominees might be. Nevertheless, the final results remain in question, as candidates in both parties struggle to stay in the race.

Now the campaign moves south where an even greater weeding out of candidates is expected. And for the first time in the 1988 campaign, the potential impact of black voters comes into play. The first real test of black voting strength in this year's presidential race will come on March 8, the day called "Super Tuesday," on which 14 Deep South and border states will hold primaries and caucuses to select approximately one-third of the delegates that will participate in the Democratic and Republican conventions this summer.

Of the 1,453 delegates who will be chosen on March 8 to attend the Democratic convention in July, 1,173, or four-fifths, of them will come from the South and border states. And with over one-half of the total black American voting age population in these southern and border states, the region is a wealth of potential black voting power. Thus, southern voters, particularly blacks, are expected to play a critical role in determining which Republican and which Democrat will ultimately face each other in November.

Super Tuesday: A Conservative Southern Democratic Strategy

Shortly after the 1984 presidential election, southern Democratic elected officials such as former Virginia Governor Charles Robb embraced the idea of a one-day primary that includes almost every state in the region, plus several border states, for two reasons. First, they believed that a southern regional primary early during the nomination process would give the South more influence in choosing the party's nominee. Second, they believed that in order to regain the White House, the party had to carry most of Dixie in the general election. To do that, they contended, there needed to be a southerner (or at least a moderate) on the ticket in either the first or the second spot in order to appeal more strongly than in recent elections to white southern voters (particularly males). Since 1944, the Democrats have not won a presidential election without someone from the South or a border state being on the ticket. And since the 1948 presidential election, the Democrats have been unable to win the votes of the majority of southern white males.

Thus, victory-hungry southern Democrats planned to use the Super Tuesday regional primary to have a greater impact on the Democratic presidential selection process in 1988 and to seek a ticket that combined electability in the South with acceptability elsewhere. It was thought that with an early regional primary, the field of candidates would still be broad enough to include at least one southerner or another candidate whose position on the issues would be centrist enough to appeal to conservative southern Democrats. Southern Democrats, voting on Super Tuesday, were expected to give that southern or centrist candidate the boost he would need to go on to the convention with a chance to win the nomination or at least have a strong bargaining position there. In short, southern Democrats hoped that Super Tuesday would simultaneously downgrade the "liberal" influence of Iowa, New Hampshire, and other northern states in picking the party's nominee and would upgrade their own influence. In the process, the party would not lose the support of white southerners—who, they reasoned, were necessary for a Democratic presidential victory in November. The southern regional primary was aimed at enhancing the clout of any candidate willing to bring to the political debate "a properly southern" way of doing things.

Yet, this scenario was always full of potential pitfalls. For one thing, it should never be assumed that even as early as March 8 the field would be all that crowded in the eyes of the electorate. Southern voters might be more impressed with the winner in the Iowa caucus or the New Hampshire primary than with a wide array of other candidates, even those with southern backgrounds. And so Super Tuesday could very well end up boosting the influence of Iowa and New Hampshire. A southern background, after all, was not important to southern voters in 1984. Former Florida Governor Reubin Askew and South Carolina Senator Fritz Hol-

Dr. Williams is associate director of research at the Joint Center.

lings might as well have been from Wisconsin as far as southern Democratic voters were concerned. Neither candidate received as much as 10 percent of the vote cast in the southern primaries and caucuses. And in 1984, an early primary date did not in itself ensure a wide array of candidates. Even in the early southern primaries (for example, the March 13 primaries in Alabama, Florida, and Georgia), the race had already narrowed to three candidates (Mondale, Hart, and Jackson), with all the other candidates combined getting less than 25 percent of the vote in the three states.

The second potential problem with the scenario envisaged by southern Democratic leaders is that the South's white conservatives just might not be attracted to the Democratic candidates at all. Southern Republican leaders are already painting all the Democratic candidates as liberals. Moreover, since only 4 of the 14 southern and border states (Arkansas, Maryland, Mississippi, and Texas) are holding their congressional and state election primaries on the same day as the presidential primaries, Democratic voters in the 10 other states could boycott the Democratic presidential primaries but still vote later in the Democratic congressional, state, and local elections. And with a genuinely competitive primary in the Republican party for the first time since 1980, conservative Democrats might very well decide not to boycott the primary altogether but to cast their vote on the GOP side in open primary and caucus states. Doing either would be a bad omen for the Democrats. Thus, it is unclear whether any of the candidates are coming South with the kind of right-of-center issues agenda most popular to conservative southern Democrats. But the brand of politics preached by most of the candidates is populist without distinctly southern overtones.

Ironically It's Jackson

Finally, given the size of the black population in most southern states, the candidate who might benefit most in the South on Super Tuesday ironically is not a centrist, but rather Jesse Jackson. In 1984, Jackson did well in many of the states holding their primary or caucus on March 8. For example, Jackson won 43 percent of the primary vote in Louisiana (where a boycott by white voters boosted his percentage), 26 percent of the vote in Maryland, 25 percent of the vote in Tennessee and North Carolina each, 21 percent of the vote in Georgia, 20 percent of the vote in Alabama, and 12 percent of the vote in Florida. In the caucuses, Jackson won 27 percent of the vote in Mississippi and Virginia each, 20 percent in Arkansas, 18 percent in Kentucky and Missouri each, and 16 percent in Texas. Jackson's overall vote percentages roughly parallelled the proportion of black voters in these states. Blacks comprise 20 percent or more of the total black voting age population in all of the Deep South states, and at least 6 percent in the border states. Thus, Super Tuesday raises the stakes for the potential impact of black voters in 1988 (see box below).

Moreover, the black voter registration and turnout rates in many of these states have been increasing dramatically since 1980. Indeed, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, as a whole, black voter registration in the South rose by 5 percentage points. For example, between 1980 and 1984, black voter registration rates in Alabama rose by 9 percentage points and by 6 percentage points in Georgia. Indicators are that the relative gap in black and white voter registration and turnout has narrowed since 1984. Although turnout for both black and white voters declined in 1986 com-

JACKSON SUPPORT IN 1984 IN SUPER TUESDAY STATES

State	Black Population, 1988	Jackson Vote in 1984	Delegates Won by Jackson in 1984	Total Number of Delegates in 1988	Delegate Sel. 1988
Alabama	23%	20%	9 of 62 (15%)	61	OP
Arkansas*	14	20	7 of 42 (17%)	43	OP
Florida	12	12	3 of 143 (2%)	146	CP
Georgia	24	21	20 of 84 (24%)	86	OP
Hawaii*	2	4	0 of 27 (0%)	25	CC
Idaho	1	2	0 of 22 (0%)	23	OC
Kentucky*	7	18	7 of 63 (11%)	60	CP
Louisiana	28	43**	24 of 69 (35%)	71	CP
Maryland	24	26	17 of 74 (23%)	78	CP
Massachusetts	4	5	5 of 116 (4%)	109	OP*
Mississippi*	31	27	13 of 43 (30%)	45	OP
Missouri*	10	18	16 of 86 (19%)	83	OP
Nevada*	6	1	1 of 20 (5%)	21	CC
North Carolina	20	25	16 of 88 (18%)	89	CP
Oklahoma*	6	4	3 of 53 (6%)	51	CP
Rhode Island	3	9	0 of 27 (0%)	26	OP*
Tennessee	15	25	17 of 76 (22%)	77	OP
Texas*	11	16	36 of 200 (18%)	198	OP&C
Virginia*	18	27	25 of 78 (32%)	85	OP
Washington*	2	3	3 of 70 (4%)	72	OC
American Samoa*	—	—	0 of 6 (0%)	4	CC
TOTAL IN SUPER TUESDAY STATES	14	20%***	222 of 1,449 (15%)	1,453	N/A
NATIONAL TOTAL	11	18%***	466 of 3,933 (12%)	4,160	N/A

*Caucus in 1984; otherwise primary
**Jackson was winner
***Jackson's percentage of total primary vote; does not include caucus votes
BOLD = SUPER TUESDAY STATE IN 1984 (MARCH 13)
OP = Open Primary—Voters may participate in either party's primary
OP* = Open primary to independents, but not to Republicans
CP = Closed Primary—Primary restricted to registered Democrats
CC = Closed Caucus—Caucus restricted to registered Democrats
OC = Open Caucus—Voters may participate in either party's caucus
OP&C = Part of delegates chosen by open primary; part by caucus

pared to 1984 (as is typical in mid-term elections), the gap between black and white turnout in the South was only 1 percentage point, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This was the first time the Census Bureau had reported such a low differential since it began tallying voter participation by race in 1964.

In some southern states (Alabama, Missouri, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia), reported black voter turnout was even higher than reported white voter turnout. Therefore, if black voter mobilization in 1988 continues to grow, as is expected, blacks will play an even more important role in southern politics. Recent surveys indicate that the lion's share of the black vote will go again to Jackson. For example, in the Joint Center for Political Studies/Gallup survey conducted last August (see *Blacks and the 1988 Elections*, p. 3), Jackson was the first choice to win the nomination among 74 percent of southern blacks.

Super Tuesday: Leading to a Brokered Convention

Still, it is not clear just how much of an impact a united southern black vote for Jackson will have on the ultimate outcome of the southern primaries and caucuses. Among a crowded field of three other strong candidates who are actively competing for Super Tuesday delegates, including Michael Dukakis, Richard Gephardt, and Albert Gore (Paul Simon is not campaigning in the South), Jackson should win the plurality of votes in most of the Deep South states and come in second in several border states if he receives massive black support. Jackson's chances of success should be greatest in states where blacks comprise a disproportionate number of total Democratic voters, as they did in Georgia and Louisiana in 1984 when they were over 35 percent.

But, even if Jackson is successful in Deep South states, it is important to keep southern success in perspective in relation to the total number of delegates at stake. In fact, several of the states where blacks comprise large proportions of the total voting age population will yield relatively few delegates to victorious candidates. For example, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Virginia—all states whose populations are 18 percent or more black—will elect a combined total of 515 Democratic delegates to the national convention. The other southern and non-southern Super Tuesday states, however, with smaller black populations (from 1 percent in Idaho to 15 percent in Tennessee) will elect a combined total of 938 Democratic delegates. Therefore, if Jackson were to win the number of delegates equal to the entire proportion of blacks in all the states holding their primaries on March 8, he would only receive approximately 193 delegates—13 percent of the delegates at stake in the states holding their primaries and caucuses on Super Tuesday.

Of course, Jackson is not likely to get the entire black vote on Super Tuesday, but he is likely to get some of the white and Hispanic vote. Most political pundits expect him to get about 90 percent of the black vote and 10 percent of the white vote in the South. Based on these estimates, Jackson could win from 300 to 400 delegates. But there are other factors which will affect his chances, including the number of candidates still considered to be serious contenders, the size of the total voter turnout, the degree to which the white vote is split between the remaining white candidates, and the strength of Sen. Al Gore of Tennessee as a regional candidate. Also to be considered are the delegate selection rules including the threshold percentage of votes necessary to receive delegates. All of these factors figure heavily in the ultimate outcome of how many delegates Jackson or any other candidate wins on Super Tuesday. Beyond garnering delegates, Super Tuesday may do much more by building a burst of momentum for a candidate by generating a shower of media attention and campaign contributions—which can fuel a candidate's victory at the convention. ■

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Joint Center for Political Studies®
1301 Pa. Ave., N.W., Suite 400
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