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Special National Policy Issue

# FOCUS

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

# Can America Solve Its Biggest Problems?

*A Report on Deliberations Among Black Elected Officials and Policy Experts on Health, Education, Drugs and the Economy*

- *Health: No Care for Millions*
- *Education: Schools That Work*
- *Drugs: More Jail Than Treatment*
- *The Economy: A Gloomy Forecast*

**POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®**

**Perspective**

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# Policy and Leadership

This special conference issue of FOCUS, funded by the American Gas Foundation, is devoted almost exclusively to the Sixth National Policy Institute, which was held in Washington, D.C., on January 23-25, 1992. It was sponsored once again by the Joint Center and the seven national caucuses of black public officials, and we all thought it was a great success.

This was the sixth national conference of black elected officials, but the third Institute convened before the onset of the presidential primaries. Convening in a presidential election year ensures that issues of grave importance to black Americans will be injected into the presidential debate. More than 200 black elected and appointed officials from across the country played leadership roles in the Institute. The conference opened with a luncheon salute to black elected officials sponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus. Through a series of workshops and plenary sessions, the 1992 Institute, like its 1984 and 1988 predecessors, provided participants with information and strategies they can use in this election year and over the next five years. Participants focused on four important national concerns: reform of the health care system; economic reform and black economic empowerment; improving education prospects for blacks; and developing effective programs to combat drug abuse.

In 1992, the black community must not only speak out and be heard, but it must make its votes count. That was the message of Jesse Jackson's speech at the Institute's first plenary session, where he issued a challenge to the audience to raise black voter registration by 25 percent.

Two plenary sessions on other important issues took place during the conference. One dealt with some of the problems confronting young black males in our society, and the other closed out the Institute with a candid and hard hitting analysis of the current political situation as seen through the eyes of three prominent journalists: Clarence Page, columnist for *The Chicago Tribune*; Jack Germond, columnist for the *Baltimore Sun*; and Juan Williams, writer for *The Washington Post*.

An Institute "first" proved to be a real winner: a breakfast for high school students from the District of Columbia, called "Can We Talk?" And talk there was—from the platform and at each table. The program was organized to give high school juniors and seniors an opportunity to meet and talk with black elected and appointed officials and others active in public affairs. It was a novel experience for many of the 200 students who came prepared to talk about themselves, their classmates, issues they cared about and the future. Table conversations continued until buses were ready to leave and students departed carrying with them conference materials and a sense of having met people "we don't usually talk to."

Another distinguishing characteristic of the 1992 Institute was the high level of engagement among the participants who listened, commented, argued, exchanged experiences and business cards, and were impatient that there never seemed enough time to "really get into it." The corridors were full of people wanting to continue discussing both issues and strategies. Through the generous support of Philip Morris, Inc., fact sheets and other publications were developed and provided to participants on the four conference topics. Referring to the fact sheet on health care proposals, a city councilman pronounced it more useful than anything he had seen. "I can use this," he said, "the next time we get into an argument about health plans and what they mean." That is precisely what the Institute's sponsors had hoped to accomplish: To help prepare the black community to participate fully and effectively in the political debates and decisions that lie ahead. ■

Eddie N. Williams
PRESIDENT

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# Can America Solve Its Biggest Problems?

## *Black Experts and Elected Officials Debate National Issues*

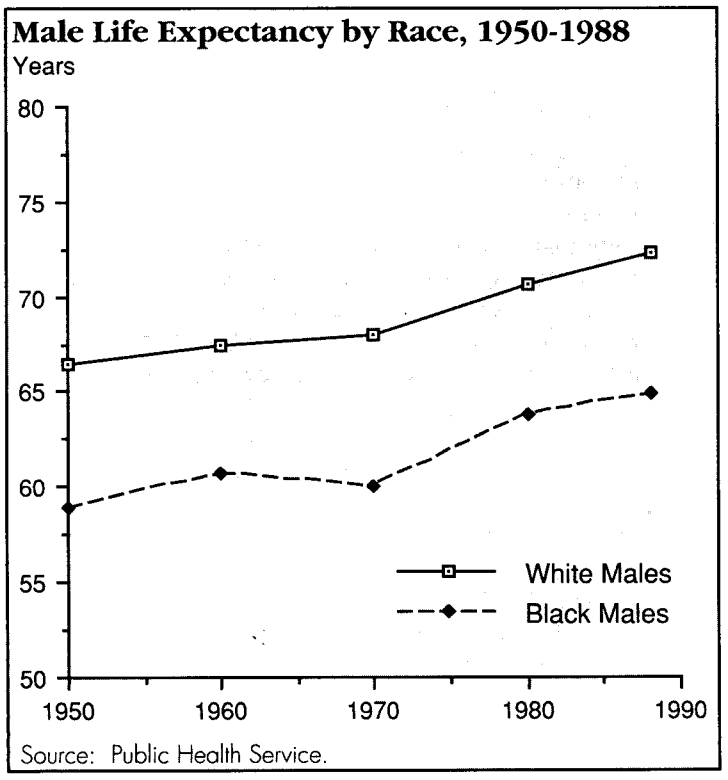
*In January, experts representing a range of disciplines assembled in Washington, D.C., at the Sixth National Policy Institute (SNPI). Participants engaged in a series of workshops and plenary sessions focusing on the most pressing problems facing black Americans today: declining health, inadequate education, drug abuse, and dimming economic prospects.*

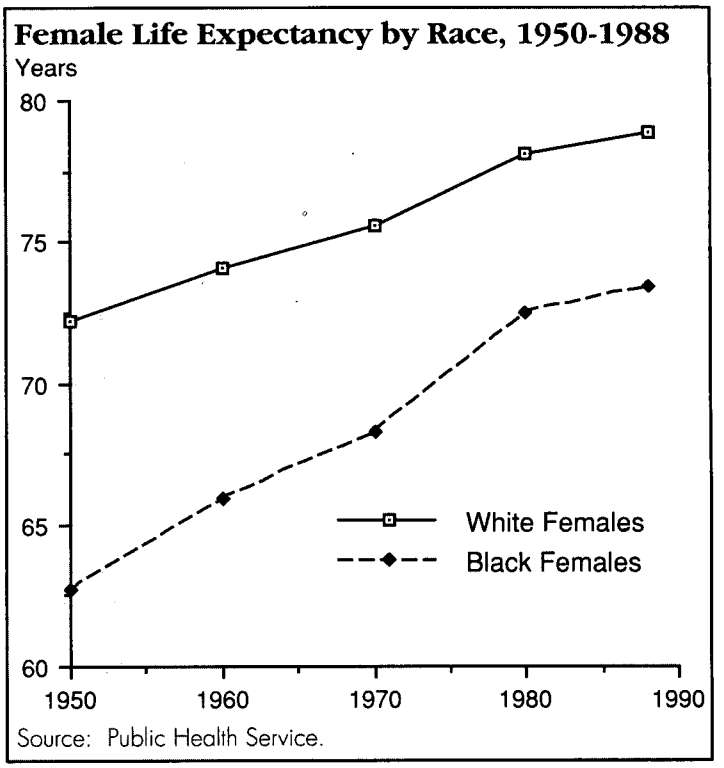
*Each problem comes with an expensive price tag for the entire society. Drug abuse—prominently, crack cocaine—is not only a health scourge of epidemic proportions, but also a leading co-factor in the spread of AIDS in poor black communities. Unhealthy and undereducated citizens are less productive in the workplace. Moreover, despite high rates of arrest and conviction of blacks in the drug trade, drug-related homicides have continued to rise. Solutions to these difficulties are nevertheless making their appearance. Model approaches to education and drug treatment and alternatives to incarceration are being employed in localities across the nation, and they can be replicated.*

## Health: No Care for Millions

The message from experts and analysts who participated in health workshops at the SNPI conference is that the health diagnosis for black Americans as a whole is not good. Several factors contribute to this state of affairs, including racism, poverty, poor education, and high-risk behaviors—most prominently smoking and alcohol consumption. AIDS, which afflicts blacks at a higher rate than other segments of the population, is also a behavior-related disease.

While the health of blacks and Hispanics is deteriorating, their representation among the nearly 40 million Americans who are without health insurance is disproportionately high. To address these issues, national policy makers are engaged in a debate over national health care options.




Access to quality medical care and treatment has decreased for American minority populations over the past 20 years, asserted William H. Turner, visiting scholar at Brandeis University's Bigel Institute for Health Policy. Rueben Warren, assistant director of the Office of Minority Health at the Centers for Disease Control, noted that the problem of decreasing access is made worse by other factors such as racism, low incomes, and poor education. One major reason why many black Americans have been excluded from mainstream health care is that one fourth of the black population is without health insurance. Turner also stated that for the one-third of blacks covered by Medicaid, service is inferior because the average Medicaid physican is

*(Continued on page 4)*

## *Health*

*(Continued from page 3)*

less qualified to practice medicine than other practitioners. This is a conclusion based on the number of such doctors who are Board certified and on their average age and hospital admitting records.

Joseph Liu, senior program associate at the Children's Defense Fund, added that the present system of health care in the United States accounts for disproportionate harm to blacks. Infant mortality is more than twice as high among blacks as it is among whites. Liu blames this disparity primarily on insufficient access to prenatal care, which only one half of pregnant black women receive. Since health care in the United States is primarily employee-based, most black women cannot obtain adequate health care owing to their high rates of unemployment and low-wage employment without benefits. As a result, over 60 percent of black children do not have employee-based health care insurance, and that number is on the rise.

### Unhealthy Habits

David R. Williams, professor of sociology and epidemiology at Yale University, laid out seven personal health behaviors which had been determined to have a major effect on health and morbidity: smoking, drinking (alcohol), inadequate sleep, poor nutrition, lack of exercise, being overweight, and skipping breakfast. Of all these behaviors, smoking, which causes about 400,000 deaths a year, and drinking, which leads to half of all highway fatalities, were high-risk factors for 80 percent of the black population. Health experts have also cited drug abuse and violence as behaviors contributing to health problems among blacks.

Williams refuted the generally accepted notion that tobacco and alcohol use were purely a matter of personal choice unrelated to race or socioeconomic status. He contended that two societal factors have led blacks to increase their use of alcohol: the urge to escape from the stress associated with poverty and joblessness; and the collusion of government and industry in providing greater opportunities for use of alcohol and tobacco by blacks.

As an example, Williams cited surveys showing that there are many more liquor stores in black and poor neighborhoods as compared with other neighborhoods even though their location is licensed by the government. The federal government, of course, had also provided subsidies to tobacco growers for years.

Williams also asserted that the tobacco and alcohol interests wield power over legislative decision-making through political contributions. They seek to influence public opinion, she said, by contributing to charities and programs such as college scholarships and sporting events that help racial and ethnic groups and by extensively investing in advertising in the black media. At the same time, according to Williams, boycotting or rejecting contributions or investments from tobacco companies and breweries has become much more difficult, since these firms have diversified their holdings into processed foods and other products.

Turning to the impact of AIDS on the health of the black community, federal statistics show that about 200,000 people are currently suffering from AIDS, but it is impossible to provide a solid estimate of the number who will develop AIDS in future years since HIV infection is often symptomless and the virus can be present for as long as 10 years before manifesting itself in the form of AIDS. What we do know is that black women and children are at greatest risk of HIV infection and black men are three times more likely than white men to test positive for HIV. J. Lee Partridge, chief of the District of Columbia Office of Health Care Financing, added that post-diagnosis life expectancy for AIDS patients has increased because of the development of more effective, albeit expensive, drugs. Treating AIDS victims for longer periods of time, however, is likely to push insurance costs up.

### Alternative Health Care Systems

Howard Jessamy, president of the District of Columbia Hospital Association, outlined two of the most prominent health care reform proposals under discussion by presidential candidates and national policy makers:

*Universal health insurance* based on the "Canadian System" would guarantee care to all Americans. The program would be paid for by the federal government from tax dollars. The government would control costs by negotiating with the medical profession and setting prices of services and procedures. Under this system, everyone would be covered except for small out-of-pocket expenses.

The *"pay or play"* approach would require all employers to either provide health coverage to their employees or pay a payroll tax to help finance a government insurance program.

The Bush administration wants to stay with the present system but proposes refinements such as health insurance vouchers for the poor, prohibiting insurance companies from refusing to sell insurance to anyone, and reducing costs by removing incentives for waste and inefficiency and by emphasizing "coordinated care" through programs like health maintenance organizations (HMOs).

As the debate about national health programs continues, some experts are concerned that these proposals may not fully address the needs of the poor in urban and rural communities around the country. Jacqueline Simmons, assistant professor at George Washington University Medical School in Washington, D.C., suggested that because the needs of individual communities vary, state and local programs may offer the best opportunities for reforming health-care delivery systems. William Turner of Brandeis University recommended increased federal funding of neighborhood health clinics and mandatory health education campaigns in schools conducted by medical professionals and counsellors.

# Education: Schools That Work

Across the nation, minority students lag behind white students academically. Among the reasons for this disparity is inequitable spending between school systems in mainly white and minority communities. In addition, a growing segment of America's children are slipping below the poverty line and these poorer students bring special problems to school with them.

An enormous amount of pressure has fallen on the shoulders of black education officials and school superintendents to solve these problems. The economic demands to increase teacher salaries and to update textbooks and teaching materials are straining school budgets. Perhaps the greatest challenge for black school officials is to reshape educational institutions to fit the special needs of an increasingly diverse group of students.

Dr. Robert Peterkin, director of the Urban Superintendents Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, charged that of the 15,000 schools in this country, few are instructionally effective among minorities. Overall, black and Hispanic children are making progress, but they are not keeping pace with white children. Most of the problems are in urban areas where most children of color are being educated; black and Hispanic males there tend to be cut off from quality education and training.

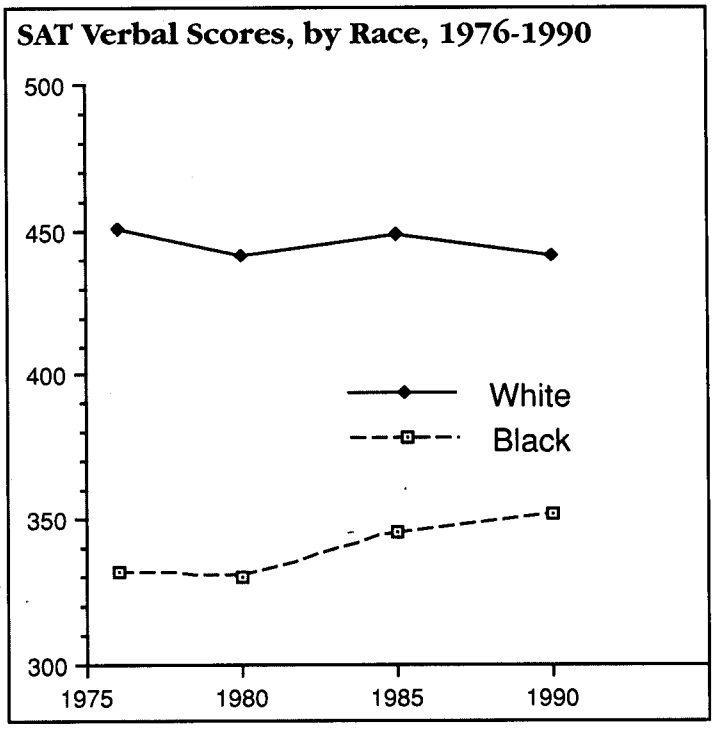
Peterkin criticized the Bush administration's "America 2000" education program. In his view, "America 2000" consigns minority students to learning by repetition, an approach that does not lead to critical thinking.

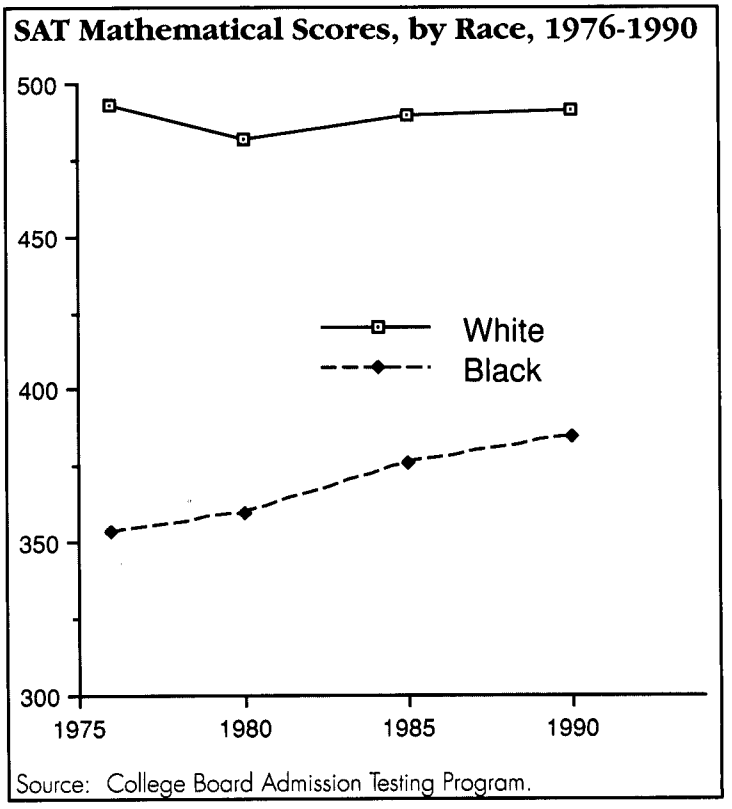
## High Expectations Placed on Black Officials

Former District of Columbia school superintendent Floretta McKenzie, president of The McKenzie Group in Washington, D.C., stressed the tremendous pressure placed on black educational officials today: "The expectations are so high for black officials who have made it to superintendencies and other high positions. Parents and community leaders expect all their problems to be solved now that they have a black superintendent." Unfortunately, black superintendents are often appointed only after a school system is in a state of crisis. "It's almost like driving a car and trying to repair it at the same time," McKenzie said.

Significant demands and pressures placed on black officials today, according to McKenzie, include the following:

- Employers and public officials demand the education of all children, and not just some. This is really an old demand but it is pressing now because the restructured economy, the downsizing of the military, and social and economic trends make it more urgent than ever that all children gain employable skills.
- Parents demand equity in spending on students regardless of the income of their districts. In some cases, McKenzie noted, even equity spending is not enough because some children need more than others.
- Unions make demands regarding teachers' needs. Unfortunately, McKenzie believes, school districts have already reached their limit regarding union concessions.
- The problems of education are exacerbated by growing poverty, especially the poverty of children. McKenzie advocated greater interagency collaboration, saying, "We have to get the health and social agencies and the schools to work together [and]...to plan together."



## *Education*

*(Continued from page 5)*

### Two-Tier Education

McKenzie emphasized how wealthy or middle-class students and parents face entirely different school environments with different budgets and political dynamics than lower-income families face. "We have basically a two-tier system, one that works for the wealthy, who demand the best and often get it," she said. "And if the wealthy don't get what they demand, they abandon the system to those who are powerless." She described one school district where the rich and the middle-class all had lawyers (indeed many of the parents were lawyers) and knew how to demand changes from the schools. So it was suggested that the poor get some lawyers—they did, and it went far toward putting them on a more equal footing.

Another aspect of the two-tier problem is the vast disparity in per-pupil spending—the widely disparate amounts spent on public school pupils in rich districts vs. poor ones. As an illustration, McKenzie described one independent suburban district in the Dallas, Texas, area that spends $10,000 per student annually, while a Dallas urban district pays only $5,000 per student.

### Tailoring the School to Fit the Child

One conference participant said that mainstream teachers in his area don't know how to identify learning disabilities, that "disruptive" children are being pushed out of the system, and that this has caused the black dropout rate to soar. His question: "Should we expand special education or should we retrain our teachers?" McKenzie responded that "We talk about getting children ready for schools but we have to get the schools ready for the children." She added, "This may sound mean, but some of us [on boards] would rather 'employ people' than apply change. We have to be willing to retrain people."

Joseph Blanding, vice president of the Detroit Board of Education, described how auto plants used to throw out a part—such as a car door—if it didn't fit right away on the assembly line; now the automakers have flexible 'boxes' in the design, so that parts can be adapted more easily. "We need to move the teacher to the box [the school or classroom] that fits her style and also move the pupil to the box that fits his or her learning style." He described one school in Detroit that is now divided into two wings: in one wing the students wear uniforms. One might think that few public-school parents would ever put their children in a school where uniforms were required, but, as Blanding described it, "the day that new wing opened more than 500 students were there to fill all the spaces."

Many American school systems are in serious decline. When Blanding joined the school board, the Detroit system was $210 million in debt, it had a declining enrollment, 17 different bargaining units of teachers and others were facing periodic payless paydays, and textbooks had not been renewed in 10 years. The school board's strategy to turn the situation around was not to just talk about "the resources we'd like to have" but rather to work with "what resources we already had—a $1 billion budget, 10,000 teachers, and 20,000 school employees."

In order to make efficient use of resources, the Detroit system shut down underpopulated schools and reassigned personnel. "We moved administrators who had become paper pushers back into the classroom," said Blanding. An electronic monitoring system was installed, whereby the board could get instant reporting from schools on their student achievement. To deal with the textbook problem, while 'Afro-centric' materials were not specifically sought, the board looked for books that were factually accurate. For example, the board replaced a social studies text that said the oldest known evidence of homo sapiens was found in Europe—and never mentioned the far older fossils of early humans uncovered in Africa. The board spent a long time rejecting replacement textbooks because they didn't meet its standards of accuracy.

### Exemplary Programs

Shirley McBay, project director of Quality Education for Minorities Network, in Washington, D.C., outlined an "education that works" plan focused on minority students. The plan includes full funding for Head Start programs and a revision of the pedagogical tracking system that has often excluded minorities from gifted and talented classes. Other effective programs discussed at the conference included these:

- Attorneys in Atlanta have sponsored a mentoring program to reduce truancy;
- The National Science Foundation has begun a program to fund science summer camps for low-income students [NSF contact: David Stoner (202) 357-7350];
- College students are role models and tutors for children in Atlanta housing projects; and
- In New York City and Milwaukee, public schools reach out to parents through workshops and by using parent-family rooms.

There was a consensus that as teachers and school officials seek ways to educate minority students, they must design academic approaches that respect the values and cultures of children from all families. Educators must come to grips with the changing dynamics of family life and its impact on children. Non-traditional family types—single family, dual family, and step-families—are growing. Similarly, teaching should reflect the multicultural and multiracial nature of the American classroom.

It was agreed that the society must accept the grave consequences for not improving the education of minority youth. Poorly educated people are less healthy than others, more likely to be jobless, and they tend to slip into the criminal justice system more frequently. The downstream costs of such neglect—in increased health care, welfare, and the incarceration of more criminals—must be borne by the society. The financial burden is heavy now and it is increasing beyond our means.

# POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

## Inside This Issue:

- Jesse Jackson says that black voter registration must increase by 25 percent this election year.
- A Joint Center chart looks at the results of presidential primaries and caucuses.
- Across the Nation: Georgia gets a new black Supreme Court justice; in Illinois, three black candidates sweep House and Senate incumbents from office; in Maryland, Albert Wynn wins in a new majority-black congressional district and former Reagan official Alan Keyes will oppose Senator Barbara Mikulski; and Alexandria vice mayor William Cleveland makes a bid for Congress from Virginia.

## A Commitment to Values – Rebuild America

*At the opening session of the Sixth National Policy Institute, the Reverend Jesse Jackson issued a call to action. The following are excerpts from his speech.*

"As we enter the coming political season, the leadership of this country faces a great challenge. The nation is in pain. We are in the worst recession since the Great Depression. We have the greatest national debt and deficit in history. There are more poor people, more unemployed, more failed financial institutions than at any time since the 1930s. One quarter of all cities are in fiscal crisis. It is time to move beyond politics-as-usual. It is time for leadership to assume the burden of vision and to be bold enough to address the deep problems that we face. Every American has the right to a job, a decent income, and health care. Every American has the right to vote—Washington, D.C., deserves statehood. We need same-day, on-site voter registration. We need alternatives to welfare, a strong private sector with jobs for everybody, and government based on common sense and compassion."

**The Margin of Hope.** "As African American leaders and elected officials, history has placed a special burden upon us to put the black vote at the center of the moral movement for a better America. There are 20 million African Americans eligible to vote; seven million are unregistered, and nine million did not vote in 1988—the margin of victory for any election. Our vote is not only large, it is strategically concentrated in the South and in California, Illinois, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey. In 1988, Dukakis needed 650,000 more votes in 12 key states to win. The unregistered black vote would have provided it in at least eight of those 12—California, Connecticut, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Pennsylvania, and South Dakota. Dukakis lost by the margin of our non-participation and his preoccupation with the Reagan-Democrats.

"We must raise black voter registration by 25 percent. We have the people and the apparatus to do it, if we have the will. Those two million voters would affect public policy in the entire nation and shift the center of the political debate. Mayor Herenton in Memphis won by 132 votes last year out of 250,000 cast. David Duke was stopped, even as he won 55 percent of the white vote. But when the black vote has done less than its best, we lose. A new governor in Mississippi ran on a platform to repeal the Voting Rights Act. In Michigan, Governor Engler is using a meat-ax approach to cut 90,000 people off public assistance. He won by 17,000 votes, less than the margin of people now abandoned in Detroit alone.

"We still face schemes of disenfranchisement: gerrymandering, at-large elections, annexation, second primaries, inaccessible registration, and 30-day close-outs. We need same-day, on-site, universal voter registration that is known to raise voter participation by 10 to 15 percent. If you are caught speeding, by the time they have written your ticket they have your entire record up on the computer. If we have that level of technology for law enforcement, we can use it to register voters."

**Voting our Interests**. "The African American community has historically voted its interests. And its interests are indistinguishable from the national interests. The black vote has an interest in affordable housing, health care, education, fair taxes, jobs and prosperity in the private sector. We cannot win alone. But in coalition with workers, Hispanics, Native Americans, Asians, women, and youth, we can take back our democracy."

**Statehood for the District of Columbia**. "This year, April 4th, the Rainbow Coalition is organizing a mass demonstration of support for D.C. statehood, ringing the Capitol. The black vote has an interest in statehood for Washington, D.C.—to expand democracy and create two more senators to fight for a plan to rebuild America. Washington has more people than five states, we pay more taxes than 10, and we sent more of our youth to the Persian Gulf than 20 states. Yet we have no vote. Out of 150 elected governments, ours is the only one that disenfranchises the citizens of its capital. D.C. statehood is morally right. It is legally sound and consistent with our commitment to self-determination."

**Alternatives to Violence**. "As we aim to increase voter registration by 25 percent, we must also aim to reduce crime by 25 percent. There are now 177,000 youths under 25 in state and federal prisons. The nation spends over $47 billion on police protection and corrections. In Washington, D.C., Lorton Penitentiary has 13,000 inmates and a $261 million budget. In Connecticut they are laying off teachers and closing schools and libraries, yet they are building 6,000 new jail cells at $85,000 a cell and spending $24,000 a year to incarcerate each prisoner. If we could rescue 25 percent—44,000 youth—from the cycle of violence, and save 25 percent of the violence budget, that could provide $12 billion to invest in the futures of young people. It means that we must vigorously teach alternatives to violence to our children in their formative years. We must end easy access to guns and drugs. We must enlist the aid of entertainers—high-impact educators who influence and transmit values—in a grand drive to reduce crime and violence.

"Registration up 25 percent—new empowerment. Crime down 25 percent—new resources for humane priorities. It's a question of leadership. On the other hand, under George Bush, unemployment went up by 25 percent. And yet we must not be tempted to correlate economic decline with moral decline. The rise in unemployment was a private economic collapse, due to greed, corruption, mismanagement, and hard hearts in high places. But the rise in crime did not come from food riots, or people breaking into libraries to learn. Do not rationalize crime as a companion to economic decline. We must fight both economic violence and moral violence, and rebuild this nation's ethical and moral foundation as well as its economic foundation."

**Corporate Quotas**. "In January, President Bush got on a plane with 23 all-white, all-male multimillionaires to go to Japan. They demanded goals, targets, timetables, market share, and quotas, or they threatened legislative reprisals. They demanded international affirmative action. And yet on that trip there was not one labor leader, one small-business person, one woman, one African American, or one Hispanic. There was not one mayor or one governor or one local official. Instead, Bush took men who made millions while laying off workers, losing market share, and depriving cities of tax revenues.

"The failure of the private sector has created a backlog of desperate people dependent on the government. The top 500 companies *have not produced one new job in 10 years*. We need fair trade at home and abroad. We need the same affirmative action measures from U.S. corporations that they demand from the Japanese—fair access, open markets, and a commitment to real results."

**An Economic and Ethical Revival**. "In the final analysis, the burden for change, the burden for political empowerment, the burden for safe streets, the burden for a more intense commitment to learning and labor, the burden for family stability, rests mainly upon the shoulders of those who need it the most. We must end at-risk lifestyles and address the sinful syndrome of unsafe sex, unsafe guns, unsafe drugs, unsafe study habits, unsafe family values, and unsafe workplace ethics.

"Leadership has the responsibility to step into the breach and move the nation to the moral center. We must be freed from spending tax dollars on jails while teachers are laid off and schools are closed. We must act boldly when 90 million Americans fail to exercise their democratic right to vote. In the final analysis, what is morally wrong will never be politically right, but what is morally right will eventually be politically possible."

# Delegate Count and Black Vote in Democratic Primaries and Caucuses

| | #D | %V | Clinton | | Tsongas | | Brown | | Harkin | | Kerrey | | Uncommitted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | #D | %V | #D | %V | #D | %V | #D | %V | #D | %V | #D |
| (C) Iowa (Feb. 10) | 49 | .2 | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | **40** | | 0 | | 9 |
| (P) New Hampshire (Feb. 18) | 18 | .4 | 9 | | **9** | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 |
| (C) Maine (Feb. 23) | 23 | .2 | 5 | | **9** | | **9** | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 |
| (P) South Dakota (Feb. 25) | 15 | .2 | 3 | | 0 | | 0 | | 5 | | **7** | | 0 |
| (C) American Samoa (March 3) | 3 | 0 | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 | | 3 |
| (P) Colorado (March 3) | 47 | 4 | 14 | | 16 | | **17** | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 |
| (P) Georgia (March 3) | 76 | 31 | **54** | 70 | 22 | 14 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| (C) Idaho (March 3) | 18 | .1 | 0 | | 5 | | 0 | | **6** | | 0 | | 2 |
| (P) Maryland (March 3) | 67 | 24 | 29 | 55 | **38** | 25 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| (C) * Minnesota (March 3) | 78 | 1.2 | 8 | | 15 | | 6 | | **21** | | 6 | | 0 |
| (C) Utah (March 3) | 23 | .6 | 5 | | **9** | | 9 | | 0 | | 0 | | 0 |
| (C) * Washington (March 3) | 71 | 2.4 | 10 | | **23** | | 14 | | 5 | | 4 | | 0 |
| (C) Arizona (March 7) | 41 | 2.4 | **15** | | 14 | | 12 | | 0 | | Kerrey Out March 5 | | 0 |
| (P) South Carolina (March 7) | 43 | 26 | **36** | 77 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 11 | | | 0 |
| (C) Wyoming (March 7) | 13 | .6 | **3** | | 0 | | 3 | | 0 | | | | 6 |
| (C) Nevada (March 8) | 17 | 4.8 | 5 | | 3 | | **6** | | 0 | | | | 3 |
| (C) Delaware (March 10) | 14 | 13.8 | 3 | | **5** | | 3 | | Harkin Out March 9 | | | | 3 |
| (P) Florida (March 10) | 148 | 13 | **87** | 74 | 58 | 14 | 3 | 10 | | | | | 0 |
| (C) Hawaii (March 10) | 20 | 2.1 | **11** | | 0 | | 1 | | | | | | 8 |
| (P) Lousiana (March 10) | 60 | 27 | **59** | 86 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 7 | | | | | 0 |
| (P) Massachusetts (March 10) | 94 | 4 | 0 | | **81** | | 13 | | | | | | 0 |
| (P) Mississippi (March 10) | 39 | 33 | **39** | 78 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 10 | | | | | 0 |
| (C) Missouri (March 10) | 77 | 10 | **36** | | 2 | | 0 | | | | | | 29 |
| (P) Oklahoma (March 10) | 45 | 6 | **38** | | 0 | | 7 | | | | | | 0 |
| (P) Rhode Island (March 10) | 22 | 2.4 | 6 | | **12** | | 4 | | | | | | 0 |
| (P) Tennessee (March 10) | 68 | 15 | **56** | 82 | 12 | 13 | 0 | 4 | | | | | 0 |
| (P) Texas (March 10) | 196 | 11 | **95** | 86 | 28 | 6 | 1 | 4 | | | | | 72 |
| (P) Illinois (March 17) | 164 | 19 | **107** | 70 | 46 | 12 | 11 | 10 | | | | | 0 |
| (P) Michigan (March 17) | 131 | 14 | **74** | 73 | 20 | 9 | 37 | 13 | | | | | 0 |
| | | | | | Tsongas Out March 19 | | | | | | | | |
| **Total Delegates, March 23** | 1680 | | 807 | | 435 | | 156 | | 77 | | 17 | | 135 |

**#D** Number of Delegates

**%V** Percentage of Black Voters (Based on exit polls conducted by Voter Research and Surveys, a company created by ABC News, CBS News, NBC News, and CNN.)

Numbers in bold show the winner with the highest percentage of voters.

* At press time

# Across The Nation

**GEORGIA**: Following through on his vow to appoint minorities to key government positions, Governor **ZELL MILLER** named Fulton County Superior Court Judge **LEAH J. SEARS-COLLINS** to the state supreme court. Sworn in on March 6, Sears-Collins replaced Justice George Smith, who retired. She will have to run for election to a full six-year term this summer. The 36-year-old graduate of Emory University Law School is the first woman and the second black ever to serve on the state's highest court. Prior to her new position, Sears-Collins served as a county superior court judge—an elected position—for four years and as a judge in Atlanta city court for six years; she practiced with a private Atlanta firm for two years. **ROBERT BENHAM** became the state's first black supreme court justice in 1989.

**ILLINOIS**: **MEL REYNOLDS**, a 39-year-old black Rhodes Scholar and attorney from Chicago's South Side won his third bid to unseat the outspoken and often controversial Congressman **AUGUSTUS "GUS" SAVAGE** in the March 17 primary. Reynolds beat the incumbent by a more than two-to-one margin. Local observers say two factors—the addition of suburban areas to the 2nd district during the redistricting process and Reynolds' position as a lone challenger—enabled him to out-poll the six-term congressman this time. The newly drawn district remains predominantly black—68 percent—but several urban wards were subtracted from the district and replaced by suburban areas where Reynolds picked up support among white and middle-class black voters.

In two Democratic primary upsets, Cook County recorder of deeds **CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN** beat two-term U.S. Senator **ALAN DIXON**, while **BOBBY RUSH**, a Chicago alderman and vice chair of the Illinois Democratic Party, defeated Congressman **CHARLES HAYES** who has served in the U.S. House since winning a special election in 1983 (see Across the Nation, December 1991). The losses of both veteran legislators seem to stem in part from the anti-incumbent mood of voters around the country. Braun, a former prosecutor and state legislator, was helped in her race by the candidacy of millionaire lawyer **AL HOFELD** who attacked Dixon in a series of negative campaign ads and siphoned off some of the incumbent's support. Though Braun ran an underfinanced campaign, she was helped by the support of women angered by Dixon's vote to confirm **CLARENCE THOMAS** as a U.S. Supreme Court justice. Braun will face Republican **RICHARD WILLIAMSON**, who has served in the Reagan and Bush administrations, in her bid to become the first black woman in the U.S. Senate.

Bobby Rush, who was a leader in the Illinois Black Panther Party in the '60s, took advantage of the recent revelation that Congressman Hayes is number six on the list of House members who overdrew their accounts at the House Bank with a total of 716 bounced checks. Tapping into voter anger about the scandal, Rush edged out Hayes in Illinois' first congressional district. Both Rush and Reynolds are practically guaranteed House seats since their districts contain large black and Democratic majorities.

**MARYLAND**: In a close race, state senator **ALBERT R. WYNN** won the Democratic nomination for Maryland's newly created majority-black congressional seat by winning 28 percent of the vote, topping a field of 12 candidates in the March 3 primary. Wynn, 40, narrowly defeated Prince George's County state's attorney **ALEXANDER WILLIAMS, JR.**, who had been considered the likely victor throughout the race, fell short with just 26 percent of the vote. Wynn's triumph is attributed to the aggressive campaign he conducted in the 4th district—the nation's first majority-black suburban district—which encompasses sections of Prince George's and Montgomery counties in the Washington, D.C., suburbs (*see* December 1991 TrendLetter). In November Wynn will face black Silver Spring businesswoman **MICHELE DYSON**, the Republican nominee, but in this heavily Democratic district his victory is virtually certain.

**ALAN L. KEYES** captured the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate in the March 3 primary, winning 49 percent of the vote in a field of 15 candidates. He will battle formidable Democratic incumbent **BARBARA MIKULSKI** in the general election. Keyes, 41, failed in his 1988 Senate bid against Maryland's other Democratic senator **PAUL SARBANES**, receiving less than 40 percent of the vote, and he faces an uphill challenge this time. A self-proclaimed conservative, Keyes is a former Reagan administration official who most recently headed Citizens Against Government Waste, an organization that advocates lower taxes.

**VIRGINIA**: Alexandria's black Republican vice mayor, **WILLIAM C. CLEVELAND**, is seeking his party's nomination for the 8th congressional district seat, representing northern Virginia. Opposing him for the nomination are **JOE VASPOLI** and **KYLE McSLARROW**, both white lawyers. If Cleveland wins the June 9 primary, he will face off against first-term Democrat **JAMES P. MORAN, JR**. The 8th district is 13.5 percent black and includes Alexandria, Falls Church, Arlington County and part of Fairfax County.

Cleveland has established a grassroots organization for young black males and works with several youth and drug-rehabilitation oriented community groups. He also helped establish the Alexandria Resident Council on Public Housing which enables residents to purchase housing units.

# Drugs: More Jail Than Treatment

The government's response to the national drug crisis has affected black and white Americans differently. While the overwhelming majority of illicit drug users in the United States are white, most drug arrests occur among blacks and other minorities. Minorities convicted of drug crimes are also more likely than whites to receive mandatory minimum sentences. Unfortunately, as a society, we are better equipped to incarcerate black drug users than to treat their addictions. Minorities without health insurance or the ability to pay must wait up to a year to receive treatment for drug dependency.

"Police intervention is only a small part of the solution to America's drug problem," said David Chavis, director of the Center for Community Education in New Brunswick, New Jersey. Atlanta Police Chief Eldrin Bell agrees. While law enforcement obviously has a place in the war on drugs, Bell said, the role of police should be modified to focus more on the needs of the community. The neighborhood-oriented policing he described requires officers to address the underlying problems contributing to drug abuse and almost to become social workers. Bell noted that the keys to successful neighborhood-oriented policing, which he has instituted in Atlanta, are training and a teamwork style like that common to firefighters. Like firefighters, police officers in Atlanta are being trained to scan, analyze, assess, and respond to each event—with the primary goal of solving a problem or ending a crisis.

Police Chief Isaac Fulwood of Washington, D.C., asserted that in order to fight drugs, state and local governments must make up-front investments in education and health, as well as organizing communities and providing role models. The war on drugs will not be won, he believes, until communities decide to take control away from the drug peddlers. Leon West, director of the National Anti-Drug Campaign for the Congress of National Black Churches, in Washington, D.C., added that churches can serve as a conduit for such efforts.

## Sentencing Alternatives

One of the grim harvests of the national drug crisis is the high incarceration rate it has generated among young black offenders who must often face mandatory minimum prison sentences. John Wilson, chair of the District of Columbia City Council, noted that within the United States there are approximately 1.4 million people in prison, of whom 40 percent are minorities. Within the District of Columbia's prison system, 44 percent were convicted of drug offenses and 56 percent tested positive for drug use when arrested.

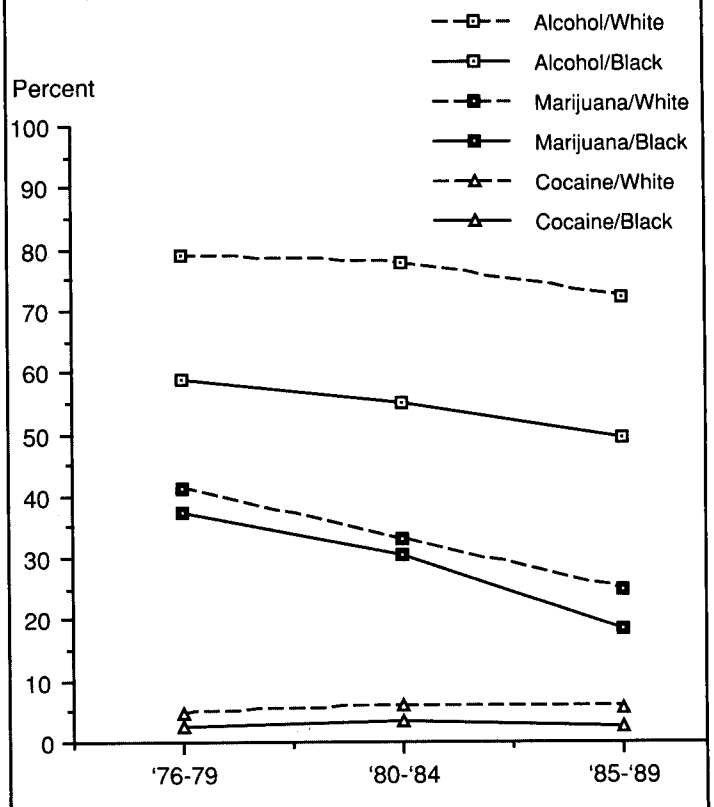
Judge Thelma Wyatt Cummings of the Georgia Superior Court offered this view: "Each day, I am faced with 17- to 23-year-old black males in chains and shackles. Most haven't completed high school, possess practically no job skills, and have no thoughts of what to do with their lives." The following are among the sentences the judge imposes as alternatives to incarceration: those without high school diplomas must work toward GED diplomas or return to school; those with jobs must remain employed; and those with drug problems must receive treatment. Unfortunately, the system is often unable to provide treatment services. According to Cummings, 70 percent of the anti-drug resources in Atlanta are directed toward punishment, with only 30 percent for treatment. The backlog of people waiting for treatment ranges from three months to a year in many American cities.

Cummings recalled that during one jury selection, 20 of the 48 predominantly white prospective jurors reported that they had seen cocaine being used in a social setting. "The people at those cocaine parties aren't arrested," she quipped. "The people brought into the court on charges are 99.6 percent black—the drug runners or dealers—and not the traffickers whose families can afford drug treatment programs. Generally, blacks have no access to treatment, can't come up with bail, and are willing to plead guilty in order to receive a lesser sentence. After a while, for judges, they become 'hopeless and faceless people.'"

## An Arrest Record for Every Black Male?

Jerome Miller, president and founder of the National Center on Institutions and Alternatives in Alexandria, Virginia, believes the majority of people in jail do not belong there. He pointed out that the prison population has ex-

**Drug Use During the Previous 30 Days, Male High School Seniors, by Race, 1976-1989**




Source: Bachman, Wallace, Kurth, Johnson and O'Malley, *Monitoring Occasional Paper 30*, Revised 1991.

## *Drugs*

*(Continued from page 7)*

perienced a dramatic demographic shift since the system began applying mandatory minimum sentences, primarily because of drug convictions.

The chance of being arrested is generally the highest for young black males. Miller cited a 1968 study by Carnegie Mellon University which found that in any given large city, one in every four male residents could expect to be arrested for a felony; among non-white males, that likelihood rose to one in two. Today, more than 20 years later, the situation is worse: in Los Angeles, over the average black male's lifetime, the chance that he will be arrested is 85 to 90 percent.

Miller believes that incarceration is often the society's inadequate way of dealing with social problems—warehousing illiterates, the jobless, and people with drug problems who slip into the criminal justice system. There is no reason for jail overcrowding, Miller believes. He said that men who are out on work-release during the day can be found at the end of the day seated outside of jails waiting for a cell to open. If these people are trusted to wait outside, he argued, the need for their continued incarceration should be questioned. "But there are many alternatives to incarceration," Miller said, "and research shows these alternatives do work."

Aside from inappropriate uses of incarceration, Miller estimates that two-thirds of the people in jail at any one time are awaiting trial. Of those, a further two-thirds remain in jail because they cannot meet the full bail or even the 10 percent that would be required. Miller stressed that we need basic reforms to gain the freedom to pursue alternatives and social-control methods, such as electronic monitoring devices used by parole boards to keep track of the locations of offenders who are under house arrest.

John Clark, assistant director of the Community Corrections and Detention Division of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, said the federal system uses alternatives whenever possible, including probation, parole, boot camps, halfway houses, and community corrections centers. Another alternative described by Clark involves urban work camps. In this approach, convicts are housed for 18 months in halfway houses either at the end of their sentences or in lieu of prison. Clark said that while correctional professionals are willing to try such community-based options, the public is not so willing. Citizens tend to view such alternatives as soft on crime, even though, according to Julie Stewart, president of Families Against Mandatory Minimums in Washington, D.C., alternative sentences are not in fact soft.

Meanwhile, according to Martin, minimum sentences mandated by federal, state, and local statutes—which offer the appearance of being hard on drug offenders and those committing crimes with weapons—create a separate problem. They are antithetical, she believes, to the idea of justice. "Our philosophy of justice posits that both sides are heard with the judge determining the sentence," she said. "With mandatory minimums, this mandate is not achieved." In her argument she raised these points:

- Low-level participants in the drug trade receive mandatory sentences more often than high-level drug importers, since the latter can provide information leading to the prosecution of others in exchange for reduced sentences.
- Small differences in drug weight result in major differences in sentences for drug users. On one occasion, when a judge ordered that the prosecution's evidence (crack-cocaine) be re-weighed, the difference between the original stated weight and the actual weight saved the defendant seven years off his sentence.
- Nonviolent first offenders regularly spend more time in prison than violent criminals. According to Martin, violent felons such as murderers, rapists, and robbers are frequently granted early release to make room for nonviolent offenders serving mandatory minimums.

It will cost billions of dollars to build new prisons and house future drug offenders. District of Columbia councilman John Wilson estimated that to house each inmate costs approximately $22,000 per year. In order to stop this arbitrary use of the criminal justice system, Julie Stewart said we must debunk the myth that the only choices we have as a society are either more prisons or more crime.

Judge Thelma Cummings stressed the need for a strong national policy that makes treatment a priority. The dilemma for judges, especially those who are elected, is that they must not only uphold the law but be responsive to society. Society needs to understand the futility of building more jails and locking people up as a means of solving problems.

# The Economy: A Gloomy Forecast

The recession continues to take its toll on blue-collar and professional workers as well as black entrepreneurs, and economists are not forecasting a strong recovery when the recession is over. Some of the conference participants identified the lack of access to capital and the dismantling of municipal minority set-aside programs as factors that limit minority business development. Others, however, stressed the need to increase our investments in education to expand the pool of skilled workers. Some remedies were proposed. Creation of public-service jobs at the national level was discussed as a way to reduce unemployment. It was also suggested that local investment firms could aid minority business by supporting new start-ups.

In an overview of the current economic status of black Americans, Wayne County (Michigan) Commissioner Arthur Blackwell asserted that while the nation is in a recession, the black community is in a depression. He added that the African-American community has been in a constant state of recession and has always survived. The challenge is to figure out how it can prosper.

The chair of Howard University's Economics Department, Charles Betsey, argued that the current recession is different from other downturns because it was preceded by almost 18 months of economic stagnation. It is likely to be followed by weak growth in the 1.6 to 3 percent range,

compared to a typical 6 percent surge in the first 12 months following recessions in recent years. Betsey blamed this on the federal deficit accumulated during the 1980s which severely weakened the nation's banking and credit system. While low inflation and moderate interest rates are bright spots in the economic picture, the concensus among many economists is that unemployment is likely to remain above 6 percent through 1993.

Despite the anti-recession tonics proposed by Congress and President Bush, Betsey cautioned that there is no quick fix. While a stimulus is needed, he saw no justification for a tax cut for either upper- or middle-income Americans, but said he could make a strong case to reduce taxes on individuals at the bottom of the income scale who suffered the most severe financial setbacks in the 1980s.

Economist Bernard Anderson, president of the Philadelphia-based Anderson Group, pointed to a new twist in this recession: because of corporate downsizing, white-collar workers are being laid off on an unprecedented scale. This is especially bad news for black Americans in an economy that has shifted jobs from the higher paying manufacturing sector to services. The disappearing white-collar positions are precisely the kinds of jobs blacks have aspired to as a means of raising their standard of living.

In the long run, Anderson believes, the success of the economy and of the black community requires two kinds of policies: a fiscal policy that will increase spending on physical infrastructure and a policy that stresses investments in education to increase our capacity to compete internationally.

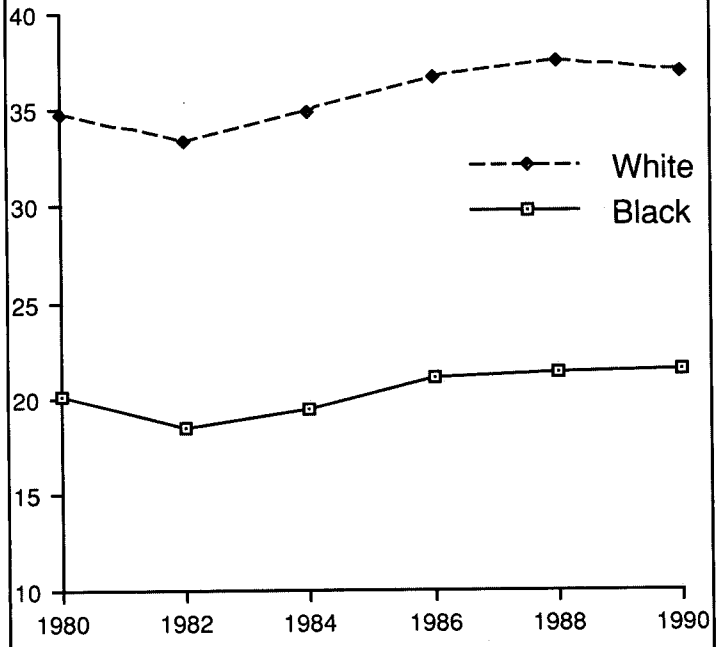
The importance of the latter policy was driven home by the following anecdote. The McDonalds restaurant chain is one of the largest employers of those young people who are slipping through the educational cracks either by dropping out of school or by being graduated based merely on their attendance rather than academic achievement. In order to ensure that all their employees are able to work as cashiers, McDonalds' cash registers now have pictures of food items rather than numbers with dollars and cents symbols on the keys. McDonalds' explanation is that school systems just aren't producing enough young people with a basic education.

Nevertheless, large numbers of well qualified black workers are seeking jobs in an economy that is not producing enough of them. With respect to job creation, Demetra Nightingale, director of Welfare and Training Research Programs for The Urban Institute in Washington, D.C, said that the current recession seems to be creating a climate wherein the issue of public-service employment is once again being considered. There are a number of rationales for the establishment of public service employment: the unemployed are a wasted resource that could add to the net national product; work skills have been shown to deteriorate the longer one remains unemployed; young workers who become discouraged need a safety net to keep them from falling out of the workforce; welfare recipients and retired persons are an untapped resource; and finally, "a job should be a basic right of every individual."

In spite of the "overstated" negatives—such as government's limited ability to create jobs and the burden of administering such programs—benefits of the public-service approach could include more high-quality services for communities and expanded job placement of minorities in both the public and private sectors.

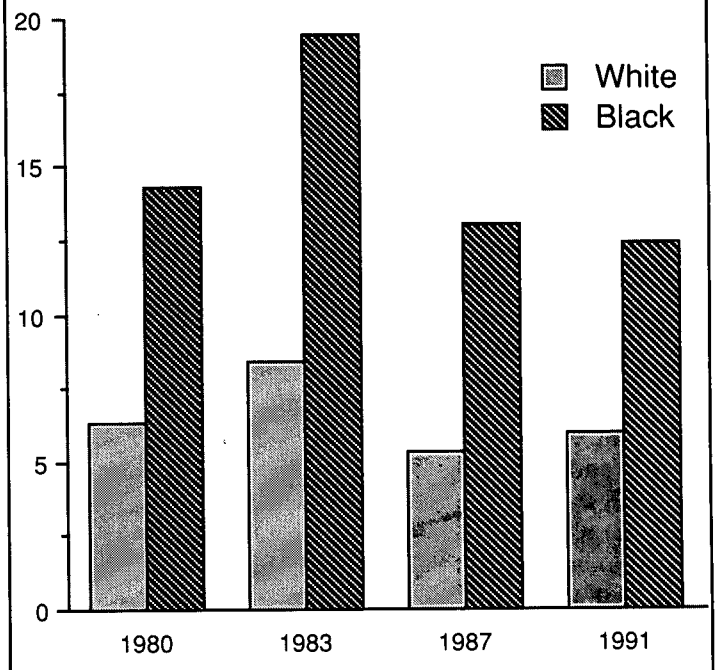
**Median Family Income, by Race, 1980-1990**

(Dollars in 1,000s)




Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

**Unemployment Rate, by Race, for Selected Years, 1980-1991**




Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics.

*(Continued from page 9)*

## Black Entrepreneurs Need Cash, Contracts

Andre Carrington, executive director of the Commission on Minority Business Development in Washington, D.C., discussed the findings of the 15-member panel appointed by President Bush to determine how to foster growth among minority business enterprises. After two years of study, an interim report released in March 1991 found the following: many black entrepreneurs lack sufficient access to capital; there needs to be a better system to track the flow of capital to black businesses; and the federal government needs to play a stronger role in tracking the flow of international trade deals among black businesses. The Commission's final report will be released this spring.

Many questions and comments dealt with the 1989 *City of Richmond* v. *J.A. Croson* Supreme Court ruling, which declared the Richmond, Virginia, minority business set-aside program unconstitutional and established rigid standards that jurisdictions must meet before they can establish or operate set-asides. The decision requires that jurisdictions conduct a "disparity" study to prove direct or indirect discrimination against minority firms. It also mandates that remedies be narrowly focused.

Rodney Strong, the director for contract compliance in Atlanta, cited his city as an example of how officials are struggling to develop a program that would meet the standards laid down in the *Croson* decision. With a long-established and progressive set-aside program, Atlanta met the new requirements and reestablished its program by hiring economic consultants to develop a "factual predicate" for the city and to document past discrimination. Their study analyzed the negative effects of conservative economic policies on black Americans, and it documented every type of discrimination against black businesses in the Atlanta construction industry through the testimony of laborers, CPAs, attorneys, and other involved parties. Analyzing data on the past use of minority firms by the city, a "utilization percentage ratio" for every industry in Atlanta was devised.

Atlanta now must establish minority set-aside goals, project by project. The benchmarks are 30 percent African-American and one percent Asians and Native Americans. No goals can be set unless minority business are actually operating in an industry. The city council also passed new legislation requiring joint ventures with minority firms on projects over $10 million and a bonding assistance program for minority businesses involved in those ventures. So far, no one has challenged these new standards in court.

While established black firms are having trouble securing municipal contracts, the lack of capital is preventing some entrepreneurs from getting businesses off the ground. Jennifer Henderson, director of training at the Center for Community Change in Washington, D.C., stated that due to the numerous recent mergers and acquisitions of banks, community banks that used to finance fledgling ventures have become a thing of the past. Banks still located in black communities but owned by large national or multinational parent companies have no sense of commitment to local communities.

The Michigan BIDCO (Business and Industrial Development Corporation) Act promotes the formation of business and industrial development corporations which in turn provide financing and management assistance to minority firms. Karl Gregory, who chairs the Greater Detroit BIDCO, explained that BIDCOs help minority entrepreneuers get loans and seed capital usually denied them through traditional lending mechanisms. Applicants for BIDCO assistance must raise a certain amount of capital on their own, and it is then matched by loans from the state. These loans have an interest rate of one percent and are payable in 10 years.

Participation in the BIDCO program enables entrepreneurs to earn their way out of interest and principal repayments; in effect, the arrangement ends up being a grant instead of a loan. Response to the program has been high, and Gregory believes that the BIDCO model can be applied in other states. ■

The steering committee responsible for coordinating the SNPI conference were: Edolphus Towns, Chair, Congressional Black Caucus; Webster Brewer, Chair, Judicial Council of the National Bar Association, and Veronica Simmons McBeth, immediate past chair of the Council; Thelma Moore, President, National Association of Black County Officials; Carolyn Long Banks, President, National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, and Daniel Tabor, immediate past president of the Caucus; Regis Groff, President, National Black Caucus of State Legislators; Brenda J. Council, President, National Caucus of Black School Board Members; Unita Blackwell, President, National Conference of Black Mayors; Eddie N. Williams, President, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; and Russell E. Owens, Director of the National Policy Institute at the Joint Center.

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Sam Lin, Assistant Surgeon General and Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Minority Health
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Floretta McKenzie, President
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Jessie Rattley, Former President
National League of Cities
Newport News, VA

Adelaide Sanford
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Lottie Shackelford
Councilwoman, Little Rock, AR

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The College Board
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Meta Williams
National Urban Coalition
Silver Spring, MD

## Drugs

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Atlanta, GA

David Chavis, Associate Director
Center for Community Education, Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ

John Clark,
Assistant Director
Community Corrections and Detention Division
Federal Bureau of Prisons
Washington, D.C.

Thelma Wyatt Cummings, Judge
Georgia Superior Court
Atlanta, GA

John Daniels, Mayor
New Haven, CT

John W. Farrell, Acting Assistant Commissioner
Division of Addiction Services
Trenton, NJ

Isaac Fulwood
Chief of Police
Washington, D.C.

Regis Groff, President
National Black Caucus of State Legislators
State Representative
Denver, CO

Jerome Miller, President
National Center of Institutions and Alternatives
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Beny J. Primm, Associate Administrator, Office for Treatment Improvement
U.S. Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Administration
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Julie Stewart, President
Families Against Mandatory Minimums
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Leon West
Congress of National Black Churches
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John Wilson, Chair
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Arthur Blackwell
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Detroit, MI

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Associate Professor, Georgia Institute of Technology
Atlanta, GA

Andre Carrington
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Commission on Minority Business Development
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Karl Gregory
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Demetra Nightingale, Director
Welfare and Training Research Programs
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**NOTICE TO READERS: Please notify FOCUS of any change of address or title. YOU MUST ATTACH THE MAILING LABEL FROM THE BACK COVER when writing about service or change of address. No change can be made without this information. Allow 6 weeks for change of address to take effect. Thank you.**

NON-PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
**PAID**
PERMIT No. 6958
Washington, D.C.