Volume 24, Nos. 2 & 3 February/March 1996

FOCUS

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

Special Issue: The Changing Role of Government: A Report from the Seventh National Policy Institute



The Crisis in Black Political Participation

Keeping Cities Alive

Training Workers, Creating Jobs

Health: Care to Fit the Need

Education Winners and Losers

Public Supports Clinton, Affirmative Action

Joint Center's National Survey Reveals Most Blacks Oppose the Death Penalty and Devolving Power to the States, Most Are Concerned About Crime

REGISTER AND PLEDGE TO VOTE; TAKE RELATIVES, FRIENDS, AND NEIGHBORS WITH YOU.

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

PERSPECTIVE

ISSN 0740-0195

PRICE $1.50

Churches Add to Our Chorus

Black political participation has dropped significantly in recent years, health care is much less accessible to African Americans than to whites, and innovative policies are urgently needed to make our cities more liveable. These are among the conclusions that emerged from the highly successful Seventh National Policy Institute (NPI VII) held at the end of January. This combined February/March issue of *FOCUS* is dedicated to reporting the most salient points of concern that emanated from that quadrennial conference.

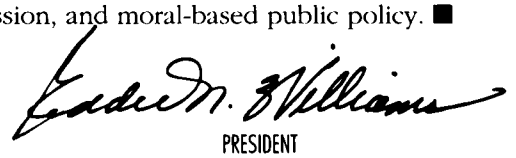
As in other years, NPI VII was sponsored by the Joint Center and the seven national caucuses of black elected officials, and more than 400 black elected officials attended. But this year was unique. Two other major leadership groups were invited to participate in key aspects of NPI VII: the Black Leadership Forum, headed by Dr. Joseph Lowery, and the Congress of National Black Churches, headed by Bishop Roy L. H. Winbush.

Thus, for the first time, in my memory at least, three major black leadership groups were brought under one roof to decide what strategies African Americans should pursue in 1996 and beyond. Religious leaders and civil rights leaders joined black elected officials in a number of policy and strategy sessions, but one session in particular—the National Leaders Forum—demonstrated the collective wisdom as well as the collective power inherent in this tripartite coalition. Forum participants were: Bishop Cecil Bishop, AME Zion Church; Lois M. DeBerry, president, National Black Caucus of State Legislators; Dr. Ramona Edelin, president, National Urban Coalition; Dr. Wallace S. Hartsfield, Sr., second vice president, National Baptist Convention of America; Dr. Dorothy I. Height, president, National Council of Negro Women; Robert B. Ingram, president, National Conference of Black Mayors; Dr. Joseph E. Lowery, president, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, chairman, Black Leadership Forum; Congressman Kweisi Mfume (D–Md.), president-elect, NAACP; Congressman Donald M. Payne (D–NJ), chair, Congressional Black Caucus; S.A. Wilburn, Jr., president, National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials; and Bishop Roy L.H. Winbush, chairman, Congress of National Black Churches.

While black churches have always been spiritual anchors and centers of philanthropy in black communities, participation in NPI VII symbolizes a resurgence of another role churches have played in our history—as rallying points for moral activism. Since the 18th century, black churches of America have been refuges from persecution as well as staging bases for political movements.

Churches have provided ministers with the power bases necessary to gain political office. Hiram Revels (R–Miss.), the first black U.S. senator (1870-71), was a minister. When African Methodist Episcopal minister Richard Harvey Cain was elected to Congress from South Carolina in 1872, he became the first black clergyman to serve in the House of Representatives. Other minister-politicians have followed their example, like Congressman Bill Gray and Kansas City Mayor Emanuel Cleaver. And it was at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church in Montgomery, Alabama, where Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., was anointed to lead the historic bus boycott that helped launch the modern civil rights movement.

This is a time when conservative forces are working to reverse this society's social progress of the last three decades and jeopardize any future progress. If we are to halt such retrogression, it is vital that elected officials, heads of civil rights organizations, and ministers band together in a united chorus of those who speak for justice, compassion, and moral-based public policy. ■



PRESIDENT

FOCUS Copyright © 1996 Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Inc. The monthly magazine of the **Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies,** 1090 Vermont Ave., N.W., Ste. 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005-4961 (202) 789-3500. The Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies is a national, nonprofit, tax-exempt institution that conducts research on public policy issues of special concern to black Americans and promotes informed and effective involvement of blacks in the governmental process. Founded in 1970, the Joint Center provides independent and nonpartisan analyses through research, publication, and outreach programs. Opinions expressed in signed *FOCUS* articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. *FOCUS* is published monthly. $15.00 per year by JCPES, Inc.

PRESIDENT/Eddie N. Williams
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT/Fredric Leigh
SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT/Eleanor Farrar
VICE PRESIDENT, RESEARCH/Milton Morris
VICE PRESIDENT, PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT/Kathleen Vander Horst
VICE PRESIDENT, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION/Brenda Watkins Noel

EDITOR, *FOCUS*/David C. Ruffin
CONTRIBUTING EDITOR/Diane Powers
ASSOCIATE EDITOR/Marc DeFrancis
PRODUCTION MANAGER/Theresa Kikourse
TRENDLETTER RESEARCHER/Alfred Baltimore

BOARD OF GOVERNORS
Pauline A. Schneider/Hunton & Williams, *Chair*
LaBaron Taylor/Sony Music Entertainment, Inc., *Vice Chair*
Hector M. Hyacinthe/Packard Frank Business and Corporate Interiors, Inc., *Treasurer*
Eddie N. Williams/Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, *President*
Bishop John Hurst Adams/Senior Bishop, African Methodist Episcopal Church
Norma Ketay Asnes/Ketay Asnes Productions
Martina L. Bradford/AT&T
Andrew F. Brimmer/Brimmer & Company, Inc.
Charles U. Daly/John F. Kennedy Library Foundation
Julian C. Dixon/U.S. House of Representatives
Wendell G. Freeland/Freeland & Kronz
Elliott S. Hall/Ford Motor Company
Bonnie Guiton Hill/McIntire School of Commerce, University of Virginia
Freeman A. Hrabowski/President, University of Maryland, Baltimore County
Jayne Brumley Ikard, Consultant
Jeremy M. Jacobs/Delaware North Companies
Vernon E. Jordan, Jr./Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld
Robert M. McGlotten/McGlotten & Jarvis
Patrice I. Mitchell, Office of Comptroller, City of New York
Bernard Rapoport/American Income Life Insurance Company
Audrey Rowe/National Urban League

Members Emeriti: William B. Boyd, Kenneth B. Clark, Louis E. Martin, James D. Wolfensohn

Eleanor Farrar/*Secretary to the Board*

The Changing Role of Government

A Report from the Seventh National Policy Institute

In January, the Joint Center and the seven national organizations of black public officials brought together in Washington, more than 400 black elected officials, civil rights leaders, community activists, clergy, and professionals with expertise in a range of fields for the Seventh National Policy Institute (NPI VII). The institute sponsors sought to convene a distinguished and diverse group to engage in a dialogue on the strategies that might be pursued to address the enormous public policy challenges that confront black America today.

This special issue of FOCUS highlights the workshops that formed the core of the NPI VII conference. The workshops, which engaged those who attended in lively exchanges, touched on a range of current issues and policy questions: corporate downsizing; congressional threats to Medicare, Medicaid, and Head Start; the politicization of local school curricula; the spread of AIDS in the black community; and the devolution of federal authority to states were just a few of the many issues and problems discussed. Solutions and avenues of attack were proposed, including ways to reverse the decline in black voter participation, to help minority-owned businesses expand, and to educate and retrain today's workforce.

This issue of FOCUS brings our readers some of the best information that emerged from this important event.

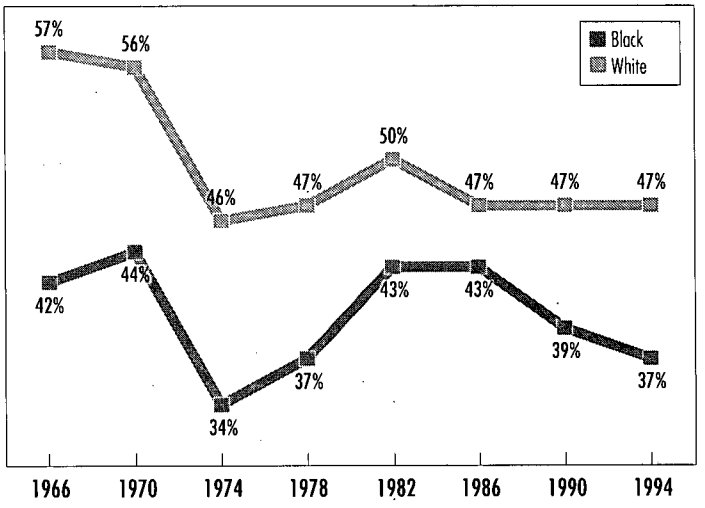
The Crisis in Black Political Participation

With black voter participation in decline in recent years, black leaders are concerned that the domination of the nation's political agenda by conservatives may continue into the next century. In response, a broad strategy to register, educate, and mobilize voters is being implemented by the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation, churches, labor unions, and other groups.

Participation at the polls has been declining in recent years not only among African Americans but among Hispanics and Asian Americans as well, according to James Ferguson, director of the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation (NCBVP). Ferguson and other speakers at the workshops consider this a perilous time because federal budget priorities, civil rights policy, welfare reform, and other national issues are all being driven by conservative forces. Moreover, recent redistricting decisions by the courts do not bode well for black America. The next six years, Ferguson believes, may prove to be a critical turning point that could make or break minority leverage in American politics. A worst case scenario: with the success of further challenges to majority-black congressional districts, passage of restrictive term limits, further deterioration among already weakened labor unions, and the retirement of many senior black officials, a "cleansing" election could take place in the year 2002 in which black political power is significantly eroded.

Voter turnout rates by race for Congressional elections: 1966–94

(Percentage of voting age population)



Source: *Voting and Registration in the Election of November 1990*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P20–453: Tables A&B. 1994 figures released on Internet; available through the Census Bureau (http:\\www.census.gov), "Population and Housing, Social and Demographic Characteristics."

Ferguson argued that we must take swift, positive steps, beginning with this year's election, to ensure that such a nightmare scenario doesn't take place. Toward that end, the NCBVP is systematically working to register as many African American voters across the country as possible for primaries and the general election in November.

William Johnson, Jr., mayor of Rochester, New York, expressed concern over the fall-off in black voter participation. Johnson attributes much of this apathy and stay-at-home behavior to disappointment among African Americans who see few of their social and economic aspirations being met. People stop voting when they cannot connect it with results where they live.

Registering black voters is still difficult, even when the appeal is made that our ancestors fought and died to obtain the franchise. Recently, Mayor Johnson and a team of volunteers set out with the goal of registering 50,000 people in Rochester. After inundating black churches with fliers on the need to vote and making numerous personal visits, they met one woman at a local church who asked Johnson, "Why are you talking about voting? It doesn't mean anything to me."

Johnson pointed out that disaffection from politics is not new. In the 1960s, he and fellow students at Howard

University carried out a registration drive in Flint, Michigan. "I had been raised in the South, before the poll tax was abolished" he said. "But here we were in Michigan with black people who warned us to get off their property." Johnson pointed out that his group had to work hard just to get 1,000 people registered, and he believes the same is true today.

This year, the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation is targeting attention on those voting precincts with the largest black populations as well as those where strong black turnout could influence the elections. In each precinct, NCBVP's registration drives and voting assistance will be based at local black churches, which are providing central locations and assisting with transportation to the polls, especially for people without cars.

The church-based strategy makes sense to Rev. Patrick J. Wilson III, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Richmond, Virginia. Wilson argued that black churches should look at the success of religious groups in the Christian Coalition and emulate the seriousness with which those groups apply religion to politics.

The NCBVP's current effort also involves early commitments to assist in the voter drive from labor unions, including the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, the A. Philip Randolph Institute, and several Hispanic unions.

The question of who should be targeted in voter drives also came up. John Flateau, director of the DuBois-Bunche Center in New York City, said that one neglected group is young ex-offenders who remain unregistered. Recently naturalized citizens comprise another major group to which, Flateau believes, black voter drives should reach out. Flateau, who headed the successful 1989 mayoral campaign of former New York Mayor David Dinkins, noted that the victory required extensive coalition-building across ethnic groups (blacks in New York City are but 25 percent of the population).

Flateau also noted that many black candidates and black voter drives lack commonplace office technology. "Blacks are the least likely to own computers," he said, "but we need at least to be using fax machines and PCs—let alone Web pages and the Internet—if we are to compete." As for participation, Flateau argued that public schools should do a better job of teaching the basics of civics and government to help nurture upcoming generations of voters and candidates.

Passing the torch. Some young people at the conference complained that the black establishment itself should do more to groom them for leadership. "Young people interested in getting involved in politics are often met by a closed door at the offices of black elected officials," said Shannelle Armstrong, 25. When the subject was brought up at the NPI VII National Leaders Forum, NAACP president-elect Kweisi Mfume expressed dismay at participating in yet another panel where young people are discussed but on which they are not present. Talib Karim, a recent graduate from Howard University Law School who will be working this year with other young volunteers to mobilize voters from Mississippi to Michigan, charged that the older generation has failed to pass on the reins of leadership to the younger generation. He asked Roger Wilkins, a journalist and professor at George Mason University, what he was willing to do to prepare young people to assume leadership roles.

"There has been a growing awareness by older leaders that the young have been ignored," Wilkins responded, "but it's wrong to assume that everyone who has gray hair is hostile to the aspirations of young people." Mary Frances Berry, who chairs the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, disagreed with Karim's assessment, noting that many of the young people who came out of the civil rights movement are in public office today. She went on to say, "In the '60s, we didn't ask any adult's permission. We didn't wait for anybody to organize us or tell us what to do. So don't wait for us to pass the torch. No one ever passed the torch to us—we went out and took it."

Keeping Cities Alive

Saving cities, where most African Americans reside, was a focus of two NPI workshops. "Keeping Cities Alive: Raising and Spending Money" focussed on a constant problem confronting practically all urban administrations: making ends meet.

Most cities are reaching the limit of conventional revenue sources (income, sales, and property taxes and revenue bonds underwritten by Wall Street investment banks to be repaid from taxes). Pauline A. Schneider, a partner in the law firm of Hunton & Williams and chair of the Joint Center's board of governors, discussed some creative strategies for targeting revenue that localities might employ, given that business and residential taxpayers are opposed to tax increases and debt-limit laws are enacted that tie the hands of city administrations. Schneider, an expert on public finance, noted that long-frowned-upon techniques like long-term deficit financing that can close the gap between municipal costs and the shrinking pool of funds are gaining more acceptance. Some strategies are:

Revenue-generating services: The District of Columbia is generating revenue to finance construction of its new convention center by taxing hotels, restaurant meals, and car rental companies because these businesses would directly benefit from the new center. This off-budget strategy has the added advantage of not violating debt-limitation laws and tends to tax visitors to the city instead of local residents.

Lease financing: Particularly useful in renovation projects, this technique involves the lease of a municipal building that is being rehabilitated to a development company. After construction is completed, the city agrees to lease back the building and to pay an annual fee for a fixed term to cover the cost of the renovations, at the end of which the city regains ownership of the building. The

City of St. Louis used this arrangement to renovate its courthouse and jail. This is another way of paying for a capital expense without running afoul of debt-limit laws.

Special assessments: Used effectively in several western states to finance infrastructure improvements, special assessment districts are areas in which landowners agree to be assessed an amount sufficient to pay the cost of certain improvements. For example, a new residential subdivision can be so designated. Individuals who buy the homes pay a special assessment to extend city services including sidewalks and water and sewer lines. As a result, only the developer and the residents who directly benefit are assessed, keeping the infrastructure costs off the city's budget.

Empowerment zone bonds: Qualified redevelopment areas are authorized to incur debt and issue tax-exempt bonds separately from the bond issues of cities. This worked effectively in some cities in California, where the repayment of bonds was secured by a pledge of taxes resulting from the increasing value of the area's real estate.

Control boards. Even with innovative fiscal policies, some cities become insolvent. On such occasions, fiscal oversight boards are appointed to provide advice on the city's financial affairs or even to control them directly; such boards have been established in New York, Philadelphia, and the District of Columbia. Since these boards are usually made up of financial experts and not political figures, they have the advantage of being able to make necessary, if at times unpopular, financial decisions, free from the pull of competing political interests.

Workshop panelist Bernard E. Anderson, assistant secretary for employment standards at the U.S. Department of Labor, chaired the fiscal oversight commission appointed for Philadelphia. The city's five-member commission was established in June 1991 after the city had lost its investment bond rating and was paying 25 percent interest on a loan of $80 million; spending outstripped revenues by a ratio of five to three. The city's financial woes were due in large part to an enormous drop in federal revenues: from $250 million in 1980 to $46 million in 1991. During the same period, the costs of programs for the homeless, AIDS victims, and children had risen dramatically.

The oversight commission established a five-year plan that included borrowing money on the bond market on the city's behalf. As a borrowing intermediary, the commission helped the city regain access to capital markets and begin the slow process of reestablishing its investment rating. But the commission's more politically sensitive task was to reduce municipal spending by reducing services, as well as the cost of providing them. In its first year, the commission cut the municipal budget by $180 million, about one-third through cuts in personnel, which required amending the city's labor-management agreements, reducing city employees' health benefits and overtime pay, and eliminating pay increases for three years. As Anderson described it, by making these hard fiscal decisions, the commission provided a shield for elected officials.

While it's important to establish the budgetary health of a city, a balanced budget and developing surpluses may not improve the economic condition of poor communities, warned Melvin Mister, a community development finance specialist. He added that national economic trends in growth, inflation, and interest rates have monumental effects on the fiscal health of cities.

Few mayors are spared the inherent difficulties of maintaining essential services, making capital investments in rebuilding deteriorating infrastructures, and complying with obligations mandated by state and federal governments, all of it at a time when expenses are increasing and revenues are not. As the costs of running municipalities grow, and the options for raising revenues diminish, the accumulated deficits of cities are mounting.

Training Workers, Creating Jobs

In the face of corporate downsizing, long-term economic restructuring, and the disappearance of "jobs for life," many American workers view their economic futures with anxiety. Many who have lost their jobs have found reemployment only at lower wages and with fewer benefits, while residents of central cities have difficulty finding any employment. To compete successfully in the global marketplace and lift the living standards of its people, our nation must have a well-trained, efficient workforce. But the need for substantial investment in worker training and job creation comes at a time when federal, state, and local lawmakers are rethinking the nation's approach to all government-supported social programs.

Congress now is considering two controversial pieces of legislation that would reduce funding for federal job training programs and consolidate them into block grants to the states. These bills, the Workforce Development Act (S.143), sponsored by Sen. Nancy Kassebaum (R–Kan.), and the Careers Act (H.R. 1617), sponsored by Rep. William Goodling (R-Pa.), were discussed at the NPI workshop on "Workforce Development: Preparation for the 21st Century."

The Senate measure calls for a single workforce development block grant to be allocated as follows: 25 percent to state education programs such as vocational and adult education, 25 percent to state training programs that might fund employment training or job information clearinghouse systems, and 50 percent to be used at the governors' discretion for education or training (but half of these funds would go to train incumbent workers who are at-risk or who are employed in developing areas). A separate provision of the bill would fund the Job Corps and at-risk youth programs.

The House bill, H.R. 1617, which is preferred by the Clinton administration, would provide for three block grants: one for adult literacy, a second for adult training, and the third for youth programs. The youth block grant specifies that 40 percent of funding would be for educational pro-

grams for in-school youth; 40 percent for programs for out-of-school at-risk youth; and the remaining 20 percent would be a flexible reserve for either of the above categories. Under this measure, the Job Corps would be funded as is. The bills are now in House/Senate conference.

Although Republicans and Democrats in Congress agree that most federal job training programs should be consolidated, there is disagreement over the funding level. Last year's budget rescissions by the Republican-controlled Congress reduced support for job training by $700 million, and some legislators are calling for even deeper cuts. To sustain the current level of job training, states would have to make up the shortfall. Policymakers could be faced with having to choose between programs like summer youth jobs and adult education.

William Spriggs, senior staff economist for the congressional Joint Economic Committee, questioned the wisdom of reducing resources for job training at this critical juncture. Seeing job training as a long-term economic investment, Spriggs commented, "We cannot balance the budget by disinvesting in our future."

Preparing for block grants. David Brown, senior policy analyst for the National Governors Association (NGA), discussed the organization's efforts to help states cope with these upcoming changes. According to Brown, all states have received planning grants for school-to-work programs, which prepare students for jobs after high school, and for "one-stop" agencies, which coordinate human-resource services. Many states have also received grants to implement these programs. Some states, including Indiana, Kentucky, Texas, and Wisconsin, have already consolidated agencies. Utah and New York State are considering consolidating their workforce development and welfare agencies.

The National Governors Association recommends that states undertake these steps to prepare for the implementation of block grants:

- establish a vision of their restructured system, including identifying benchmarks to measure effectiveness;
- create new public-private and interagency governance arrangements to increase coordination between the state and local levels;
- organize planning processes to address local needs;
- set up systems for outcome-based accountability;
- create flexible financing arrangements that promote competition among providers;
- restructure service delivery to make it more flexible, accessible, and responsive; and,
- improve efficiency through the use of new technology.

Dr. Bennett Harrison, a visiting professor at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, urged policymakers to include community-based organizations in their plans for restructuring training programs. He noted that many such organizations have long track records in workforce development and could offer important insights. Networks are particularly valuable in making the connections between individuals and training systems. Harrison identified three types of networks and referred workshop participants to a Ford Foundation report, "Building Bridges: Community Development Corporations and the World of Employment Training."

Creating urban jobs. Many more Americans could join the labor force if there were work waiting for them after job training. But with the unemployment rate among African Americans twice that among whites, urban job creation is a major concern. At a workshop entitled "Urban Economic Development—Job Creation in Central Cities," a panel of experts discussed strategies for expanding opportunity. Dr. Margaret Simms, director of research programs at the Joint Center, identified three possible objectives of economic development (1) increasing total employment, (2) increasing the proportion of high-wage jobs, and (3) diversifying the industrial composition of jobs. Simms argued that each objective requires a different strategy, so policymakers should be clear about their goals.

Once objectives have been identified, policymakers should assess their current situation, looking at the occupational and field-of-industry make-up of the workforce and estimating the size and composition of the jobless popula-

Seventh National Policy Institute
Steering Committee and Sponsoring Organizations

Members of the Steering Committee responsible for coordinating the Seventh National Policy Institute were:

Donald M. Payne, Congressional Black Caucus • Donna Crews, Congressional Black Caucus • Eddie N. Williams, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies • Yvonne Scruggs, NPI VII • William Cousins, Jr., Judicial Council of the National Bar Association • Joyce London Alexander, National Bar Association • Earline Parmon, National Association of Black County Officials • Maria Lopes, National Association of Black County Officials • S.A. "Shep" Wilbun, Jr., National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials • Mary Gordon,National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials • Lois DeBerry, National Black Caucus of State Legislators • Charles Bremer, National Black Caucus of State Legislators • George E. Evans, National Caucus of Black School Board Members • Jeremiah Floyd, National School Boards Association • Robert B. Ingram, National Conference of Black Mayors • Michelle Kourouma, National Conference of Black Mayors

The sponsoring organizations of the Seventh National Policy Institute gratefully acknowledge the following for their generous support:

The Ford Foundation • U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development • Carnegie Corporation of New York • Philip Morris Companies, Inc. • U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Community Service • Aetna Life & Casualty • General Motors Corporation • NIKE, Inc. • American Income Life Insurance Company • Chrysler Corporation • KPMG Peat Marwick • Lockheed Martin Corporation • Mobil Corporation • J.C. Penney Company, Inc. • Sony Music Entertainment, Inc. • Time Warner, Inc. • TRW, Government Information Services Division, Systems Integration Group • Xerox Corporation

The sponsors of the Institute also extend thanks to NIKE, Inc., Philip Morris Companies, Inc., Sony Music Entertainment, Inc., and Xerox Corporation for their special contributions to the Institute.

February / March 1996

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

Inside This Issue:

- Jesse Jackson calls for the reclamation of our youth and using pension funds to reinvest in urban communities in a speech at the National Policy Institute.
- During the Institute, Vice President Al Gore outlined the successes of the Clinton administration and vowed to continue streamlining government.
- After his primary victory, Maryland State Rep. Elijah Cummings is certain to succeed Baltimore Congressman Kweisi Mfume who resigned to head the NAACP.

Jesse Jackson Calls for Moral-Centered Policies

In a plenary address at the National Policy Institute, Rev. Jesse L. Jackson said that a moral-centered movement should support President Clinton by focusing national attention on a progressive agenda involving economic justice and a renewed commitment to civil rights. The following is an excerpt of his comments:

We need a freedom movement to expand the political landscape and our own options. Our options in 1996 are: (1) Not to support the President, which helps Gingrich and Dole and the extremists on the right; (2) to support Clinton quietly, as if we accepted the premises on which he will campaign and govern; (3) to support him, while focusing on the moral center and moving to expand our options outside the political tent.

Right now, Option 3 makes sense to me. I prefer Clinton to Dole. Clinton's speech presented a kinder and gentler conservative; Dole is meaner and harsher. But just as Gingrich needed a right-wing movement to create the political space for his speakership, President Clinton needs the help of a freedom movement to allow him to follow his soul more than his pollsters, to allow him to move to the moral center.

We need a serious war on poverty. We need to understand who the poor in America really are. Most poor people are *not* on welfare; they work every day. Most poor people are *not black*; they are white and female. Two-thirds are children. Neither party's political tent provided coverage for those Americans living in fear and economic crisis: for workers displaced by corporate mergers, downsizing, and NAFTA; for abandoned urban dwellers, whose lives grow harder every day; for our youth, caught up in the Jail-Industrial complex, especially young black men who are now being jailed in record numbers that exceed those of South Africa under apartheid. Jails are the number one growth industry in urban America; jails make up one-half of the public housing built in our nation in the last decade.Two hundred thousand more African Americans are in jail than in four-year colleges; [there is] a new prison labor force [producing] $9 billion in products next year, displacing 400,000 private jobs, and certainly not unionized.

Our political democracy is threatened by big money, by corrupt special interest campaign contributions, by lobbyists for the rich and powerful. The average American family has seen its standard of living decline in the last generation. But over the last two decades, 90 percent of the increase in income has gone to the top 20 percent of the income pyramid.

Balanced Opportunity

Balancing the budget in seven years will not balance opportunity in seven years. We are facing cuts in public investments, education, job retraining, and day care. We cannot accept the idea that government has no role in securing a safety net for our people to offset capital greed.

We are all opposed to rising crime and irresponsible parenting, but we also recognize a direct causal relationship between a lack of investment, a lack of jobs, a lack of education—and crime. When politicians attack AFDC, Aid to Families with Dependent Children, they get applause for opposing a program that cost $17 billion, serves 14 million people, and covers 9 million poor children. But when it comes to another AFDC, Aid for Dependent Corporations, there is only silence. Corporate welfare serves only a few, but costs us all $236

billion in taxes and spending subsidies. It is protected by business lobbyists, even to the point where these lobbyists are *writing* the new laws and the new regulations.

We must depend on our own movement. But no small movement for change can take us to the promised land. No nationalistic, conservative, exclusive effort can change this reactionary course. We must have a broad-based coalition in our freedom movement. We need a revival of massive, disciplined, direct action.

Historically t,he answers for change have come from outside the system, not inside it. In recent years, as many of us have succeeded in climbing inside the tent, we have developed too much confidence in the system. This is a mistake. Those inside the system also need outside forces to change the environment, outside movements to hold them accountable and open up new options. We must never forget that all our great movements—the abolitionists, the labor struggles, the civil rights movement, women's suffrage, antiwar, the environmental movement—all took place outside the system.

An Action Plan

My concerns go beyond poll watching and run in conflict with the current balanced budget preoccupations of popular politicians. What are the long-term needs of this country? How do we organize to meet those needs?

I offer the following five-part action plan to expand the tent:

1. Urban Development Banks—When the United States decided to support the Polish solidarity movement, we did not offer them a plan for behavior modification, but rather a plan for development and economic growth: 40-year loans at three-quarters of one percent, first payment in 10 years, concessionary bank loans. We need the same concept for urban America. We should seek to have hearings around this nation with mayors, legislators, and other people to develop such a plan.
2. Pension Funds—There are $6 trillion in private and public pension funds. We should take 10 percent of this money, government secured, to enable us to build a series of development banks around the country. This would generate revenue, without new taxes. It would expand the taxpayer base and the number of productive citizens. We must take this case to the working people of America and demonstrate on Wall Street, to bring this idea to life.
3. Target '96: The National Rainbow Coalition will be holding a major conference in Chicago, February 29 to March 2, to build a coalition to regain the Congress this year. We need to target 75 House districts for voter registration, street heat on issues that affect our people, to recruit good candidates for building multi-racial coalitions with our allies around blunting the right-wing offensive.
4. Economic Direct Action—At the Rainbow conference, we will also review some corporate targets for negotiation. Thirty years ago, we would shut down a highway, boycott a company, or picket a corporate headquarters to expand balanced opportunity. The government is using shutdown as a form of legal civil disobedience to reverse our gains and reduce opportunity. We must fight back.
5. Reclaim Our Youth—We must take the initiative and responsibility to reclaim our youth. We must challenge this generation to lift morals, character, and a sense of duty to a level higher than the cultural norms.

Our Reclaim Our Youth Program consists of 20,000 parents in each of 50 cities—for a total of 1 million parents—who will take a six-point pledge to joint venture with their children's teachers, to promise to: (1) take a child to school; (2) meet your child's teacher; (3) exchange home telephone numbers; (4) turn off the television set three hours each night; (5) pick up a report card every nine weeks; (6) initial report cards. The program also involves 100 ministers in each of 50 cities to reclaim 20 youth per church from the criminal justice system. This means 100,000 youth reclaimed by our churches rather than claimed as victims by our jails.

Al Gore: Reinventing a Better, Cheaper Government

In a speech at the National Policy Institute, Vice President Al Gore cataloged some of the accomplishments of the Clinton administration, including the creation of 8 million jobs, expansion of the Earned Income Tax Credit, enforcement of the Motor Voter Act, and more funding for Head Start and National Service. He also described the administration's efforts to make the government leaner and less bureaucratic. Excerpts follow:

In his powerful State of the Union Address, President Clinton confronted the theme of your conference: "The Changing Role of Government." He said, "The era of big government is over." But the President added, "We can't go back to the era of fending for yourself." That part of the President's statement is the battleground for sharp disagreement and debate in this country. Let's make no mistake about it, there are those who would like to dismantle all that the federal government does to help our citizens.

We believe they are wrong. We believe there is a better approach, an approach, as the President has said, that brings people together and has lifted the lives of people across this great country. In the most diverse administration in the history of our country, there are more African Americans, 45, serving in the White House than any time in history. Of course, these appointments are important not just because they look like America, but because of what they have done for America.

We've reduced the deficit and have created almost 8 million new jobs. African American unemployment has gone down and incomes have gone up, although we still have a long way to go. The Earned Income Tax Credit has cut taxes for 15 million working families with modest incomes. Bill Clinton expanded Head Start, and signed the National Service Act, with African Americans comprising one-third of the young people who are earning money for college by serving America's communities. We've passed and are enforcing the Motor Voter Act. The Justice Department has filed a record 189 cases in the last fiscal year to enforce fair housing laws. The President signed an Executive Order on Environmental Justice. We're putting police on the street while taking guns off them, thanks to the Brady Bill and the assault weapons ban. Thanks also to community policing, we are now beginning to see the crime rate come down in cities across America.

Government should not abandon the programs that embody American values like education, caring for the elderly and disadvantaged, or protecting our environment. No, government shouldn't abandon the core principles that have made this nation great. Because if the progress I just talked about teaches us anything, it teaches us this: we can accomplish so much when we work together. As the President has said, there is no limit to what we can achieve when we work, as one nation, without the division, without the discrimination, without the rancor. I left two accomplishments off the list that I recited above because I wanted to talk about them in this context: responsible government and responsible citizenship, working together to bring concrete results. I am talking about our efforts to reinvent government, and to empower our communities.

First, reinventing government—creating a government that works better and costs less. You have heard all about the staplers which used to cost $54 and the endless pages of regulations. We're going to save $12 billion over the next five years just by getting rid of the nonsense and replacing it with common sense. I bet you didn't know that pigs are really good at sniffing out drugs. In fact, the Portland, Oregon police department had a pig named Harley. The kids loved him. So the police department said, "This pig's doing a great job. Let's hire a few of his friends." Pigs are cheaper and easier to train. But the federal government said the Portland Police couldn't get any federal funds for this project. And the reason could be reduced to four words: Dogs, yes, pigs, no. So by the power vested in me as Vice President of the United States, I conferred upon Harley the honorary title of "Harley the Dog," which conferred upon Harley all the rights and privileges reserved for drug-sniffing dogs. It's a funny story but it really does get to the heart of what we're doing.

Let me give you another example of how we're bringing government closer to the people it serves. A few years ago, former President Jimmy Carter began Project Atlanta. What he heard over and over again was that people were frustrated because they had to fill out page after page of forms for federal assistance. As one person put it "the poorer you are, the more forms you have to fill out." We created what's called Georgia Common Access. Working together, employees from various federal agencies used a little common sense and took 64 pages of applications for programs like WIC, food stamps, and housing, combined them, and cut them down to 8 pages. It saves over $11 per applicant in processing. It cuts down on the time families have to spend struggling over burdensome forms and travelling from office to office. And it lets workers spend time with the people they are trying to help, not pushing papers and fumbling through endless layers of red tape. So far, we've eliminated 16,000 pages of federal regulations. And we've reduced the federal workforce by 200,000 positions—creating the smallest government in 30 years. People haven't noticed the smaller workforce because our federal employees are picking up the slack. They're working harder and smarter than ever before.

How do we revitalize South Central Los Angeles or Harlem or Philadelphia or the Kentucky Highlands? The first thing we do is ask the people who live there—the community leaders, the parents, the teachers, the business leaders, the pastors. That's the idea behind the Empowerment Zones and Enterprise Communities. Communities developed their own innovative plans to create jobs and get the economy moving.

Look at the Empowerment Zone in Detroit and Vinnie Johnson, for example. He's a former Detroit Piston basketball player, and his game plan was to give something back to the community by leading a group of partners in opening a manufacturing business—Piston Packaging. They've cleaned up part of an abandoned General Motors plant and now employ 34 workers—most of them Zone residents. They are expanding and expect to hire 250 more employees in the next year and a half.

I use Vinnie Johnson's example because there's an analogy we can make with basketball. The local communities are the power forwards. They are going to score all the points. The federal government is like the guard staying in the background, helping to get the ball up court, passing the ball to the scorers, making an assist. Government must become a real partner again for people who are trapped in poverty. Now, community residents, local governments, churches, universities, and an involved and concerned private sector have all come together—as a team—to announce at least 21 private developments, including 10 industrial and five residential projects. They have attracted $2 billion in local private and public investments. And they are creating hundreds of good jobs. Detroit is only one example.

That is why Bill Clinton and I are so adamant about protecting programs like Head Start, and college loans, Medicaid, and the Earned Income Tax Credit. They are good programs, they are desperately needed, and they are working. Let's not destroy what has made and continues to make America strong. And that is why as we travel down the road to meet new challenges—like raising the minimum wage, improving this nation's health care, bringing technology to the classroom. If we can come together to discuss the problems we face, we can work together to solve them. And that means that our greatest days are still ahead.

Cummings Likely Successor to Mfume

By winning his bid for the Democratic nomination to represent Maryland's 7th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives, black state legislator **ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS**, 45, is likely to succeed five-term Baltimore Congressman **KWEISI MFUME** (D–Md.). Mfume resigned from Congress in February to assume the presidency of the NAACP. Cummings, who is Maryland House of Delegates speaker pro tem, prevailed over 26 other candidates in a contest where a major theme was bashing U.S. House of Representatives Speaker **NEWT GINGRICH**.

The vacancy left by Mfume, who did not anoint a successor, opened a campaign that attracted five state legislators, five ministers, and an assortment of other candidates. Cummings, who is serving his fourth term in the House of Delegates, garnered 37 percent of the vote in the March 5 primary. He outdistanced the second highest finisher, Rev. **FRANK M. REID III**, pastor of the Bethel AME church, by more than 8,000 votes. State senator **DELORES G. KELLEY** got 10 percent. All three of the top vote getters are black.

The winner of the Republican nomination was **KENNETH KONDNER**, a white dental technician, who defeated four others in the GOP primary. Kondner unsuccessfully challenged Mfume in three previous elections.

Cummings and Kondner will face off in a special election on April 16 to determine who will complete Mfume's unexpired term. They will go head to head again in the November election for the right to represent the 7th district for a full two-year term. Cummings, with his track record of public service and name recognition, is the overwhelming favorite in both contests to represent this majority black and Democratic seat. The 71 percent black 7th district includes most of Baltimore, but a third of the district lies in the more racially diverse western suburbs. Eighty-three percent of the district's registered voters are Democrats.

Cummings graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Howard University and earned his law degree at the University of Maryland Law School. He is a partner in the law firm of Cummings and Dashiell. Elected to the Maryland House of Delegates in 1982, Cummings has served on the House Constitution and Administrative Law Committee and Economic Matters Committee and chaired the Maryland Legislative Black Caucus. In 1991, he founded the Maryland Bootcamp Aftercare Program for young male and female ex-offenders.

tion. The other side of the assessment is to examine the make-up of current employers: What is their industrial mix? What are the skill levels of workers they currently employ? From what parts of the community are they drawing that workforce? The final step of the assessment in Simms' strategy is to determine which industries the community wishes to attract.

Policymakers then need to identify the incentive packages they can use to attract businesses. They must ask themselves: Have these incentives been effective in other locations, and are they available to this community? What other support services are needed? Is customized training, like that offered by South Carolina to BMW and others, a viable option? Does the transportation system need improvement? Is land assembly necessary? Finally, local governments need to look for partners—state agencies, nonprofit organizations, and businesses.

Timothy Bates, professor of economics at Wayne State University, discussed the importance of minority business development as part of an overall strategy. He noted that the "mom and pop" operations of the past are no longer representative of the minority business community. On the contrary, many modern minority-owned companies are in skill- and technology-intensive industries such as business and professional services, computer software development, and information management systems. Many of these companies compete on a global basis.

Bates noted that the primary objective of any entrepreneur is to become and remain profitable. Some firms may not find it profitable to locate in the inner city, and there may not be any viable incentives to change that. Government officials should be aware of this fact and not target incentive packages too narrowly. It may be possible to increase employment among inner-city residents without requiring businesses to relocate in low-income communities. Bates' own research suggests that regardless of location, minority firms are more likely than nonminority firms to hire minority workers. Carlton Guthrie, chief executive officer of Trumark, Inc., an auto parts manufacturer, agreed that remaining profitable can sometimes run counter to job creation. After he and his brother acquired Trumark, they did expand employment, and the proportion of those jobs held by minorities and women increased dramatically. However, to remain competitive, they have had to reduce their workforce in recent years.

Guthrie also discussed some of his collaborative efforts with the public and nonprofit sectors, including programs to provide support services to single mothers who worked for his company. These experiences led him to suggest that policymakers try to minimize red tape and regulations so that businesses can pursue innovative ways of training and assisting employees.

Memphis city councilmember S.A. "Shep" Wilbun, Jr., president of the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, spoke on the value of minority business development programs, both as a public official and as an entrepreneur in the construction industry. He noted that public contracts are extremely lucrative for the construction industry. However, the opportunity for minorities to participate in the industry have been and continue to be restricted because of race. Minority business set-aside programs have been the only way in which minorities have been able to get a foot in the door. Without them, the "old boys" network would have kept blacks out all together, and Wilburn warned that the loss of these programs will mean a return to the days of exclusion.

Health: Care to Fit the Need

While AIDS ravages poor and minority communities, many black and Latino Americans have no access to any form of health care. Nevertheless, conservatives in Congress are advocating major cuts in Medicaid and Medicare, the primary federally supported programs that ensure care for at least a segment of the low-income population. Some experts hold out hope that expanded managed-care programs will partially fill the gap in health care delivery. Others express the need for better community education.

Half of all poor and near-poor Americans—including half of all African Americans—currently have no access to health care at all, according to a recent Joint Center-Johns Hopkins study of health care access. The study was codirected by Dr. Marsha Lillie-Blanton, associate director of the Kaiser Commission on the Future of Medicaid and assistant professor at Johns Hopkins University, who was among the panelists at the health issues workshop. Lillie-Blanton remarked that the health needs of minority Americans have not been factored into the current policy debate.

The threat to Medicaid. "Right now, there's no health care reform being addressed in Congress," said Rep. Louis Stokes (D–Ohio). "All we're talking about are cuts in Medicare and Medicaid... as an offset for the tax cut they [Republicans] want to give the rich." Both Medicare, which insures the elderly and disabled,and Medicaid, which insures low-income Americans, are federal entitlement programs. This means they guarantee care for eligible populations no matter what state they live in.

This year, one-fifth of the federal budget will go to Medicare and Medicaid, which cover 70 million Americans. In 1993, 70 percent of Medicaid expenditures went for the care of the elderly. "Without Medicaid, who is going to care for those people?" asked Dr. LaVarne Burton, deputy associate secretary for budget policy initiatives at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, which administers the program. Another vital role was pointed out by Marsha Lillie-Blanton: her research credited Medicare and Medicaid with greatly narrowing racial disparities in access.

Patricia Fleming, director of the Office of National AIDS Policy, noted that half of all HIV-infected Americans, and 90 percent of all HIV-infected children, are covered by Medicaid. "If reduced, if made into block grants," she said,

"those infected with HIV will be at great risk, will get sick more quickly, and will die sooner."

Congressman Stokes added that the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), whose Health Task Force he heads, has asked President Clinton to hold firm on Medicaid's and Medicare's entitlement status.

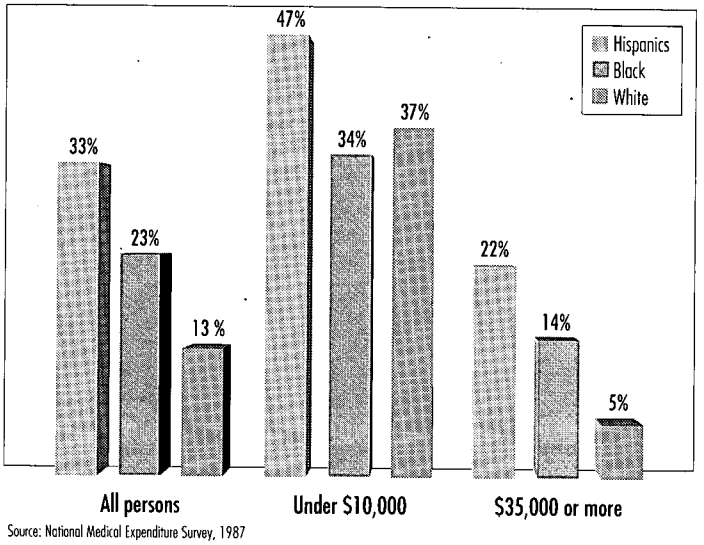
Dropping the safety net to the states. The health plan proposed by congressional Republicans would devolve federal authority over health assistance to the states through block grants as a substitute for Medicaid, a change that many policy experts believe would place people of color at a disadvantage.

Otto Beatty, a member of the Ohio State Senate, pointed out that without Medicaid, the federal safety net for low-income Americans is unlikely to be replicated at the state level. Beatty also cautioned that states would not be guided by a uniform set of standards for health care providers. So in some states, for example, there may not be a mechanism to guarantee that minority health professionals are included in Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO).

Inequities in care are not only expected from state to state, but from region to region. Lillie-Blanton observed that the proportion of poor and near-poor African Americans and Hispanics who go without coverage is twice as high in the South and West as in the Northeast and Midwest.

Percent uninsured, by income, 1987

Persons 25 years or older (In thousands)



Source: National Medical Expenditure Survey, 1987

Devolution may induce many states to embrace managed care as a health care alternative. Dr. Julius Combs, clinical assistant professor at Wayne State University, defined managed care as an organized system of health care delivery, different from the traditional fee-for-service arrangement, that functions as the health care payor, provider, and subscriber, all in one. HMOs are the most common vehicle for managed-care delivery. Combs added that any managed-care system must have three basic qualities in order to be cost-effective: accessibility, accountability, and acceptability. In a managed-care setting, emphasis is placed on preventive care because, as Combs put it, "it is cheaper to prevent than to treat."

According to Lillie-Blanton, public support of managed-care may be valid since such providers may offer valuable access to care for populations who currently have no access. She again cited the Joint Center-Johns Hopkins study, which found that the individuals least likely to obtain treatment were those who were not enrolled in any health care system.

But the managed-care approach also raises concerns. According to Combs, enrollment surveys indicate that there are not enough black health care providers working in managed-care systems. This problem was corroborated by Senator Beatty, who pointed to ongoing problems in retaining black doctors and the limited access they have to HMO panels. Combs feels strongly that African American participation in these systems is a matter that must be addressed in the health policy debate.

Tennessee's alternative. One state, Tennessee, has already supplanted Medicaid with its own managed-care system. Roscoe Dixon, a member of the Tennessee State Senate, gave a brief explanation of the controversial Tennessee health care plan, TennCare, a massive managed-care program operated by the state. The state decided to change its health care system fundamentally, by eliminating Medicaid and establishing the TennCare plan in its place. TennCare was created to expand health coverage by including all Medicaid-eligible persons and permitting low-income persons who are not eligible for Medicaid to enroll in the program (including the uninsured and those determined "uninsurable" by private insurance companies). TennCare enrollees who are not eligible for Medicaid and have income above the poverty line are required to pay monthly premiums based on their incomes. The plan is designed to limit enrollee out-of-pocket expense. The plan also added to the services available to its participants. Another positive element of TennCare is that 40 percent of the plan's health care providers are African Americans. One of the more common complaints about the plan is that it is a two-tiered system, which means to some extent you get what you pay for. For example, poor people are prescribed generic drugs.

Education Winners and Losers

Public schools remain the primary source of education and provide the first step toward upward mobility for most Americans. But in this era of frustration and discontent with public instruction, many communities have lost faith in school administrators and have embraced unproven experimental approaches, usually involving some form of privatization. These changes have affected the selection of school boards, the formulation of curricula, and the allocation of shrinking resources.

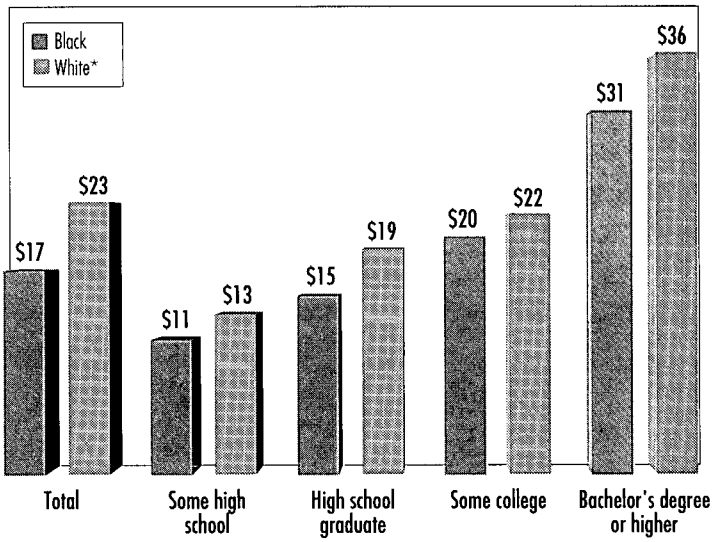
As Congressman Major Owens (D–NY) pointed out at the "Politics of Education," workshop, public concern is rarely translated into more dollars or more political clout for public schools. Politics does, however, determine how funds are allocated, and black and Latino communities have rarely received their fair share of those funds. Yet in today's economy, education is the prime determinant of how much Americans earn as adults.

Educational consultant Floretta McKenzie, former superintendent of the District of Columbia public schools and founder of the Washington, DC-based McKenzie Group, set out some of the challenges facing public schools. Chief among them is the adoption of experimental concepts that have not been tested or well thought out. These movements include the transfer of power away from local school boards to municipal and state governments, education vouchers, and the charter school movement. McKenzie pointed out that even if some of these changes result in better management of schools there is seldom a corresponding improvement in performance—that is, children are still no better educated.

W.W. Herenton, mayor of Memphis and a former superintendent of schools in that city, pointed out that arbitrary transfers of power and budget cuts politicize schools. "In power rearrangements, kids get lost," he asserted. Certain areas and populations are hit harder than others by cuts and transfers. In the competition for resources, rural areas may win out over urban areas, and race is often a factor.

Median per capita earnings by educational attainment and race: 1993

Persons 25 years or older (in thousands)



Source: Bennett, Claudette E., *The Black Population in the United States: March 1994 and 1993*, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports, P20-480: Table 12.
* Not Hispanic

Skimming off better students. Privatization, charter schools, and education vouchers are a set of controversial ideas being advocated across the country. Earl Rickman, vice president of the National Caucus of Black School Board Members, said that privatization, within clear limits, can save schools money. He noted, as examples, contracting with private vendors to provide food, janitorial, computer, and other noneducational services to schools. He also distinguished between public and private charter schools. Public charter schools, he argued, encourage innovation, diversity, meaningful reform, and community involvement, while private charter schools allow private companies, operating under the profit motive, to call themselves educators. He expressed concern that education vouchers, which allow parents to use tax dollars to send their children to private and religious denominational schools, will "skim off" better students from public schools and create a two-tier educational system, with winners and losers. Furthermore, private and parochial schools are not compelled to accept minorities or physically or emotionally challenged students. "Winners and losers have no place in a democratic educational system," Rickman said.

At the same time, too many school districts are being burdened with compensating for the impact on their young students of societal ills. McKenzie believes that the trend toward collaboration among schools and government agencies, such as family and community resource centers, is helpful, but she warned that it sometimes means adding new responsibilities for educators without increasing resources. Mayor Herenton noted that public schools must deal with cutting costs even while they remain concerned with everything from improving academic performance to discouraging teenage pregnancies. He reminded participants that there are limits to what schools can do.

Across-the-board cuts. Even before this latest GOP-led movement to reduce the size and scope of the federal government, many officials, including former U.S. Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander, who served in the Bush administration, were proposing the dissolution of the Department of Education. According to Catherine LeBlanc, executive director of the White House Initiative for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, this antipathy toward the department has translated into a reluctance to fund education generally. Republicans in Congress have proposed a 13 percent reduction in education spending across the board, and have even called for cuts in Head Start.

Although education is primarily a state and local function, the federal government has provided 8 percent of the total spending on education, much of this in the form of student loans and aid for higher education. LeBlanc cautioned that while the numbers of needy students are increasing, federal funds are decreasing. She stressed that because education is a springboard to the middle class, college financial aid is particularly important to minorities and low-income Americans. ■

Cathy Appling, Marland E. Buckner, Jr., Maurice Carney, Marc DeFrancis, Willie Fowler, Kitty Garber, Cecilia Hawkins, Derrick Johnson, Theresa Kilcourse, Deborah Kobak, Robin Lake, Barry Malin, April Robbins, David C. Ruffin, Margaret Simms, and Doris Warriner contributed to this special issue.

SEVENTH NATIONAL POLICY INSTITUTE NPI VII 1996

The following public officials, professionals, and experts made presentations at NPI VII forums and workshops:

Plenary Sessions

Senior Bishop John Hurst Adams, AME Church

Marion S. Barry, mayor, District of Columbia

Mary Frances Berry, chairperson, U.S. Commission on Civil Rights

Bishop Cecil Bishop, Third Episcopal District, Mid-Atlantic I, AME Zion Church

Ronald H. Brown, secretary of Commerce

William Cousins, chair, Judicial Council of the National Bar Association

Delores Cross, president, Chicago State University

E.J. Dionne, columnist, Editorial Board, *Washington Post*

Ramona Edelin, president, National Urban Coalition

Edwin Dorn, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, U.S. Department of Defense

Albert Gore, Jr., vice president of the United States

Wallace S. Hartsfield, Sr., second vice president, National Baptist Convention of America

Dorothy I. Height, president, National Council of Negro Women

Lynn Walker Huntley, Southern Education Foundation, Inc.

Robert B. Ingram, president, National Conference of Black Mayors

Jesse L. Jackson, president and founder, National Rainbow Coalition; President/CEO, Operation PUSH

William Kristol, editor-publisher, *The Weekly Standard*

Joseph E. Lowery, president, Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Kweisi Mfume, U.S. Representative (D–MD); president-elect, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

David W. Moore, mayor, Beaumont, Texas

Charles T. Ogletree, professor, Harvard School of Law

Earline Parmon, president, National Association of Black County Officials

Donald M. Payne, chair, Congressional Black Caucus; U.S. Representative (D–NJ)

Lois Poag'ray, pastor, Pilgrim AME Church

C. DeLores Tucker, founder and national chair, National Political Congress of Black Women

S.A. Wilbun, Jr., president, National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials

Roger Wilkins, historian, journalist, professor, George Mason University

Eddie N. Williams, president, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Bishop Roy L.H. Winbush, chairman, Congress of National Black Churches

Politics

Faye M. Anderson, executive director, Council of 100

Geraldine Boykin, president, GPB Political Strategies, Inc.

Melanie Campbell-Hill, deputy director, National Coalition for Black Voter Participation

Rodney Ellis, member, Texas State Senate

George E. Evans, president, National Caucus of Black School Board Members

Eric Eve, special assistant to the president, White House Office of Political Affairs

Chaka Fattah, U.S. House of Representatives (D–PA)

James Ferguson, executive director, National Coalition on Black Voter Participation

John Flateau, executive director, DuBois-Bunche Center for Public Policy, CUNY

Jerry Henderson, Author, consultant, educator, former director of elections, State of Alabama

Michael Hightower, president-elect, National Association of Black County Officials

Sonia Jarvis, Esq., professor, George Washington University

William Johnson, mayor, Rochester, New York

Silas Lee, political consultant; professor, Xavier University

Thomas Mann, program director of governmental studies, Brookings Institution

Dwight Robinson, deputy secretary, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Rodney Slater, administrator, Federal Highway Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation

Louis Stokes, U.S. Representative (D–OH)

Linda Faye Williams, political scientist and acting director, Afro American Studies, University of Maryland, College Park

Patrick J. Wilson III, pastor, Trinity Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia

Economic Development

Timothy Bates, professor of economics, Wayne State University

Diane Bell, president, Empower Baltimore Management Corporation

David Brown, senior policy analyst, National Governors Association

Brenda Council, member, City Council, Omaha, Nebraska

Dianne Dillon-Ridgley, co-chair, Citizens Network for Sustainable Development

Charles Grigsby, director, Public Facilities Department, City of Boston, Massachusetts

Carlton Guthrie, chief executive officer, Trumark, Inc.

Jacqueline Hamilton, National Defense Research Council

Bennett Harrison, professor of political economy, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University

Will Minter, past-president, NBC/LEO; former vice-mayor, Oakridge, Tennessee

Sandy Phillips, executive director, Pittsburgh Partnership for Neighborhood Development

Ruth Ruttenberg, president, Ruth Ruttenberg and Associates

Margaret Simms, director of research programs, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

William E. Spriggs, senior economist, Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress

Maxine Waters, U.S. House of Representatives (D–CA)

S.A. Wilbun, Jr., president, National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials

Florence Williams, director of human services, New Community Corporation, Newark, New Jersey

Albert Wynn, U.S. Representative (D–MD)

Cities

Carlos Acosta, director, Empowerment Zone Implementation, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Bernard E. Anderson, assistant secretary for employment standards, U.S. Department of Labor

Dennis Archer, mayor, Detroit, Michigan

Sharon Sayles Belton, mayor, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Arthur Gray, Empowerment Zone Group, Baltimore, Maryland

Robert B. Ingram, president, National Conference of Black Mayors

William Lucy, international secretary/treasurer, American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees

Melvin Mister, Melvin Mister Associates

Roy Priest, director of economic development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Joseph Reid, advisor to the mayor on urban issues, Atlanta, Georgia

Pauline Schneider, chair of the board, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies; Partner, Hunton & Williams

Marjery Austin Turner, deputy assistant secretary for policy development and research, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Kenneth Williams, deputy assistant secretary for community planning and development, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Bishop Milton A. Williams, Fifth Episcopal District, Mid-Atlantic II, AME Zion Church

Kathryn Wylde, president, New York City Housing Partnership Development Corporation

Health

Otto Beatty, member, Ohio State Senate

LaVarne Burton, deputy assistant secretary for budget policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Julius Combs, chair, United American Health Care Corporation of Detroit

Roscoe Dixon, member, Tennessee State Senate; chair, National Health Committee of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators

Patricia Fleming, director, Office of National AIDS Policy

Norma J. Goodwin, M.D., president and founder, Health Watch Information and Promotion Service

Marsha Lillie-Blanton, assistant professor, School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University

Bailus Walker, Jr., director of health programs, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Preston Washington, president, Harlem Congregation for Community Improvement, Inc.

Education

W. W. Herenton, mayor, Memphis, Tennessee

Catherine W. LeBlanc, executive director, White House Initiative on Historically Black Colleges and Universities

Floretta McKenzie, president, The McKenzie Group, Inc.

Major R. Owens, U.S. Representative (D–NY)

Earl Rickman, vice president, National Caucus of Black School Board Members

Welfare Reform

Wade Henderson, director, Washington Bureau, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Katherine McFate, associate director of research, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

Gwendolyne Moore, member, Wisconsin State Senate

Barbara Sabol, president, University Research Corporation and Center for Human Services

Crime

Joyce London Alexander, chief U.S. magistrate judge, U.S. District Court, Boston, Massachusetts

Lynn A. Curtis, president, The Eisenhower Foundation

Wilkie Ferguson, U.S. district judge, Miami, Florida

Fred Thomas, director of public safety, Prince Georges County, Maryland; former chief of police, District of Columbia

Wellington Webb, mayor, Denver, Colorado

Technology

Denise Gary, founder and president, Halsey Street Interactive, Inc., New Providence, New Jersey

Timothy Jenkins, chairman, Unlimited Visions

Mark Lloyd, Esq., Dow, Lohnes and Alberton; general counsel, Benton Foundation

Al Vann, member, New York State Assembly

Public Supports Clinton, Affirmative Action

Joint Center's National Survey Reveals Most Blacks Oppose the Death Penalty and Devolving Power to the States, Most Are Concerned About Crime

by David C. Ruffin

If the election were held now, most Americans would vote for President Clinton over Kansas Senator Bob Dole, and this is as true for whites as for blacks, according to a newly released national opinion poll by the Joint Center. The survey also found that blacks and whites alike believe that affirmative action should be continued and that the reproductive rights of women should be upheld. They also agree in their choice of the three issues of greatest importance to the nation: the economy, including unemployment; crime and violence; and federal budget priorities. But black respondents parted company with the general population on the death penalty and entrusting welfare to the states.

The survey, carried out in early January, registered the opinions of 1,596 Americans over age 18 on their political affiliation, how they feel about political leadership, and their positions on major issues. Designed by David Bositis, Joint Center senior research associate, the survey offers an unusually reliable picture of African Americans' views because it sampled an equal number of African Americans (750) and members of the general population (750).

Following are selected survey results concerning African Americans' views on governance, affirmative action, reproductive choice, the death penalty, and the Million Man March.

Clinton would beat Dole. Poll results relevant to this campaign season emerged from questions on partisanship and ideology. Respondents from the general population were almost evenly split in their affiliation between the two major parties: 45 percent identified themselves as (or leaned toward) Democrats, 41 percent as Republicans, and 10 percent as independents. By contrast, the long-term alignment of African Americans with the Democratic Party is still very much in evidence: 81 percent identified with or leaned toward the Democratic Party. Just under 9 percent of blacks identified with the GOP, and 6 percent called themselves independents.

Party affiliations parallelled respondents' presidential preferences. When asked who they would vote for if "the 1996 presidential election were held today"—President Bill Clinton or Kansas Senator Bob Dole?—Clinton beat Dole 47 to 37 percent among the general population but won by a whopping 85 to 6 percent among blacks.

The ideological views of the respondents proved to be more diverse than party identity, however. Blacks were almost evenly divided in thirds in their identification of themselves as liberals (32%), moderates (32%), or conservatives (29%). Respondents from the general population tilted slightly more toward the conservative end of the spectrum (liberal, 24%, moderate, 31%, conservative, 39%). Interestingly, 76 percent of blacks and 67 percent of the general population who identified themselves as conservative or somewhat conservative considered themselves *Christian* conservatives.

Congress gets failing grades. African Americans clearly hold a different view from the population at large regarding President Clinton. They were nearly twice as likely as others to rate Clinton's job performance as excellent or good (65 percent versus 39 percent). But the Republican-controlled Congress got low marks all around. Just 11 percent of black respondents and 19 percent of the general population rated the job Congress was doing as excellent or good.

Federal authority preferred to states'. Those surveyed were also divided on devolving to the states authority to run federal programs that help the poor. Fifty-eight percent of the black respondents preferred that the federal government continue to set basic standards for welfare and ensure that eligible individuals receive benefits, while 34 percent of them said that state governments should set the standards. The corresponding figures for the general population were almost exactly the reverse: 30 percent for federal standards and 61 percent for state standards. The pattern was nearly identical on the issue of Medicaid: blacks supported federal standards for Medicaid nearly two-to-one, while the general population responded nearly two-to-one in favor of state standards.

Unemployment tops concerns. African American respondents said that the top three problems facing the nation, in order of importance, were: first, the economy and unemployment; second, crime and violence; and third, federal budget priorities. These three problems also topped the list among the general population, but in reverse order. The next seven priority issues blacks identified, in descending order of importance, were: drugs, education, race relations, poverty and homelessness, health care, moral decline, and welfare. These differed from the next seven issues identified by the general population, which were: moral decline, government waste, health care, education, government gridlock, poverty and homelessness, and welfare.

Mr. Ruffin is the editor of *FOCUS*.

Continued on back page

Joint Center Survey

Continued from page 11

Social spending over tax cuts. If President Clinton and Congress were to produce a seven-year balanced budget, respondents generally agreed, it should contain smaller tax cuts and more money for health, education, and other social programs instead of larger tax cuts and less money for these programs. This was the position of 87 percent of black respondents and 70 percent of the general population. A more specific question on education confirmed this outlook: 83 percent of blacks, and 64 percent of the general population said the government was spending too little on education.

Affirmative action supported. An overwhelming majority of all respondents opposed the simple elimination of government affirmative action programs. Fully 90 percent of the African Americans surveyed and 66 percent of the general population respondents said these programs should be either maintained as they are or revised.

Right to abortion affirmed. On a scale from one to 10, respondents were asked to place themselves along a scale that ranged from making abortion illegal to a policy of unrestricted access to abortions. A nearly identical two-thirds majority of both groups came down on the more liberal side of this issue: 70 percent of blacks and 67 percent of the general population gave answers that fell within the range from maintaining current law to allowing unrestricted access.

Keep gun control. Respondents were likewise asked to rank their views on a scale ranging from favoring strictly controlled gun ownership to allowing the unabridged freedom to keep and bear arms. As with responses on abortion, two-thirds or more of both groups came down on the side of regulating firearms. The views of 76 percent of blacks and 64 percent of the general population fell within the range from maintaining current law to reforming the law for strict control.

Agreement on ending unfair sentencing. Federal mandatory sentences for possession of crack cocaine, disproportionately abused by blacks, are 100 times more severe than penalties for possession of powder cocaine, which is more frequently abused by whites. Although Congress voted last year to maintain more severe criminal penalties for the possession of crack cocaine than for powder cocaine, three-quarters of respondents from both groups disagreed with that policy. Seventy-eight percent of blacks and 74 percent of the general population said that penalties for crack and powder cocaine should be the same.

Disagreement on death penalty and police brutality. The respondents differed dramatically on the death penalty, however. When asked "Do you favor the death penalty for persons convicted of first-degree murder?", 48 percent of the black respondents answered "yes" and 37 percent "no." But 72 percent of the general population answered "yes" and only 18 percent "no." And more than three times as many African Americans as general population respondents (43 to 13 percent) said that police brutality and the harassment of African Americans is a serious problem.

Million Man March an inspiration. Black and general-population respondents split on how they felt about the Million Man March on Washington last October 16. About 80 percent of blacks described the event in favorable terms, in contrast with only 46 percent of the general population (25 percent had no opinion). Those who approved of the march indicated that what they liked about the event was black unity, consciousness raising, and the focus on African Americans accepting responsibility for their communities. ■

FOCUS *is printed on recycled paper with soy-based ink.*

FOCUS

Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies
1090 Vermont Ave., NW, Suite 1100
Washington, D.C. 20005-4961
202-789-3500

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Postmaster: Form 3547 requested

IMPORTANT!

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.