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FOCUS

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

Bill Clinton on Voting Rights

Legislation Mandating Registration by Mail, Through State Agencies, and Same Day Registration Would Enfranchise More Citizens

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Perspective

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The Clinton Agenda Meets Black Expectations

When President-elect Bill Clinton nominated Ron Brown, the chief engineer of the Democratic Party over the last four years, to be Secretary of Commerce, I had that same "right on," "high-five" feeling that I felt 16 years ago when another southern president, Jimmy Carter, named Andrew Young to be U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations and Patricia Harris to be Secretary of HUD. As Secretary of Commerce, Brown will be on the cutting edge of President Clinton's attempt to fix the U.S. economy, his number one mandate. As spectacular as this nomination may seem to many, it will not reduce the pressure from blacks for other key visible appointments in the Clinton administration. Nor will it stem the tide of demands for appointments at the subcabinet level.

In the wake of Brown's appointment, the call for "more, more" was on the lips of black leaders, and they have a strong basis for their expectation that Clinton will deliver. Black voters turned out on election day in unexpectedly large numbers and gave Clinton 82 percent of their votes—the largest share he received from any other identifiable segment of the population. Black voters were responsible for Clinton's margin of victory in several states.

Clinton's appointments aside, the major question on the minds of black folks today is the same one they had 16 years ago when Carter was elected. Does the new president have the will and the capacity to pursue policies and programs that result in an enhancement of the quality of life for black Americans?

The euphoria of victory must not obscure the fact that the problems for a great many African Americans are massive and complex: poor job prospects, poor health care, poor educational opportunities, and the continuing legacy of racism. Addressing these problems will require a serious commitment from the president and his entire administration and the dedication of significant financial resources at a time when available dollars are scarce.

As the new chief executive's administration begins to take shape, we should remember that the presidency is not one man but is made up of over 3,500 appointed officials. President Clinton's effectiveness will depend on the thousands of actions and decisions of his cabinet and subcabinet appointees. They will be responsible for the allocation of funds for urban transportation systems, and student financial aid; overseeing small business development programs and job training initiatives; as well as enforcing consumer credit regulations, and preventing the sale of unsafe drugs. In addition, they will advise the president on when and where to send troops overseas.

President Clinton will have a chance to appoint more than 107 federal district and appeals judges to help offset the influence of the 580 conservative—mainly white male—judges installed by Presidents Reagan and Bush. Over the last 12 years only 19 (or 3 percent) federal judgeships went to blacks. President Carter still has the best record on black appointments to the federal judiciary: 38 of his 265 appointments (14 percent). As president, Clinton has an opportunity to do better.

It is unlikely that the Clinton administration will fully succeed in meeting all of its own expectations, nor those of black Americans. Despite the administration's best intentions, benefits to black Americans will not flow easily. But the benefits that actually do flow will be the result of black Americans' persistent efforts to effectively mobilize their growing political clout and to articulate clear, realistic objectives.■



PRESIDENT

FOCUS
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Initiatives to Increase Voter Participation

Legislation Mandating Registration by Mail, Through State Agencies, and Same Day Registration Would Enfranchise More Citizens

by Bill Clinton

The following article, based on a speech the president-elect gave in 1988, is excerpted from one of 12 essays that appear in the newly released book, Voting Rights in America: Continuing the Quest for Full Participation, *edited by Karen McGill Arrington and William L. Taylor and copublished by the Joint Center and the Leadership Conference Education Fund. The essays survey the historical expansion of the voting franchise, detail recent and current efforts to expand voter access, and describe the nuts and bolts of getting both laws and participation to change. Among the other contributing authors are civil rights commissioner Mary Frances Berry, political scientist Charles V. Hamilton, federal judge Damon Keith, voting rights attorney Armand Derfner, and Al Raby, the late chairman of Project Vote.*

Voting rights in America are a hidden resource for our nation's poor and downtrodden. Too many of us take our right to vote for granted, not aware that others among us have not been so fortunate. Some have never been taught the value of voting; others have met with unconcern or downright hostility when they try to register; still others have grown disaffected when the votes they cast seem to have no discernible effect. It is these neglected and frustrated Americans that we must work assiduously to bring into the election system.

When I ran for governor of Arkansas during the height of a nationwide recession in 1982, our state and region were confronting several critical issues, including high unemployment, high interest rates, phasing out of revenue sharing, and pruning back of Social Security for children. Our citizens' safety net was badly torn and needed immediate repair. In such a climate of despair perhaps it is not surprising that our state garnered a bigger turnout of black voters during that off-year election than had voted in the previous presidential election—something that had never happened before.

But despite gains of political power by black voters, effective political power remains beyond the reach not only of ordinary voters but of people who might be expected to represent them in various political offices on various issues. Fortunately, this situation is changing. More and more elected officials in our region—without regard to race or political philosophy—are coming to terms with the underlying difficulties we face. Nevertheless, significant barriers to effective participation in the political process still exist.

The Framers of our nation's Constitution gave states the right to prescribe their own qualifications for voting because, as James Madison said, it is difficult to form any uniform rules that would apply equally to all states; therefore, he argued, the states are the best judges of the circumstances and temperament of their people. Today, however, I question whether people believe that axiom.

I would like to address the following questions:

- How have various states expanded the franchise, either on their own initiative or because they were sued and forced to comply?
- What still needs to be done?
- What can groups like the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the League of Women Voters, and others do to encourage greater action on the home front?

Citizenship in a Global Era

It is important to recognize that we do have a significant problem with international economic competition. The Europeans and the Japanese are relatively as wealthy as we are. We Americans must readjust our attitudes considerably if we hope to remain competitive in the world economy that is now emerging. One of the first things we must do is to guarantee that our citizenship is as effective as that of other nations.

In the most recent presidential election in France, for example, nearly 85 percent of the eligible voters went to the polls on election day. In America there aren't more than two states that ever have an 80 percent turnout, even during a presidential election when interest runs very high. In 1984, the United States witnessed the largest voter registration effort in two decades—12 million voters were registered. This meant 61 percent of those eligible were registered; yet only about 53 percent of them voted. The numbers show that we are still a long way from participatory democracy in this nation.

There are still too many cumbersome and outdated administrative impediments standing in the way of voting rights. Efforts under way to remove these barriers have met with mixed success.

Out of frustration with the checkerboard pattern of development from state to state, Senator Alan Cranston of California introduced [in 1988] a bill in the Senate. Among the cosponsors was Senator Quentin Burdick of North Dakota, the only state that does not require voter registration. All you need do there is show up at the polls on election day and vote. (One might argue convincingly that

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Voter Participation

(Continued from page 3)

such a system works only in a very rural, sparsely populated state where officials already may know 80 percent of the 650,000 residents by their first names.)

Senator Cranston's bill, the Universal Voter Registration Act, would have mandated three methods of registering voters: election-day registration, currently allowed by only three states (in addition to North Dakota, where registration is not necessary); registration by mail, presently found in only 23 [now 28] states and the District of Columbia even though it has been an option to states since 1941, when it was adopted by Texas; and agency-based registration, subject to design by the states affected. I believe it would be useful to review how each of these three methods is faring in various states.

Election-Day Registration

Maine, Minnesota, and Wisconsin are the three states that permit voter registration on election day. Since 1972, when election-day registration was first adopted, voter turnout rose by eight percent, a significant increase in the states that adopted it. During the 1984 election, the Federal Election Commission found that Minnesota ranked first among states in voting participation, Maine was second, and Wisconsin was fourth. The Minnesota secretary of state reports that more than 90 percent of the state's eligible voters are registered; generally, 5 to 10 percent of those voters register on election day just before they vote....

No significant evidence has arisen to suggest that election-day registration has any substantial effect on the political composition of the electorate or that it has exacerbated voter fraud. Should someone suspect that a fraudulent ballot has been cast, it can be challenged and will not be counted until after the validity of the voter's registration has been confirmed....

Registration by Mail

Twenty-three [now 28] states allow registration by mail. Many other states have tried unsuccessfully to institute this method. In 1987 my administration supported a bill to implement postcard voter registration in Arkansas, but the bill never got out of committee because legislators feared it would promote fraud.

Such dire predictions appear groundless. Several states have watched voter participation soar after they adopted postcard registration. When Alaska shifted to postcard registration, the registered population increased by more than 20 percent, while voter turnout increased by more than 9 percent. In the District of Columbia, postcard registration reversed a persistent decline in registered voters and voter turnout. In Iowa, the number of registered voters increased by 14 percent between 1976 and 1980 after the state went to postcard registration....

Registration by State Agencies

One of the most important initiatives of recent years is the idea of agency-based registration; in other words, using state agencies that come in contact with people traditionally underrepresented in the electorate to help register them. In Arkansas we have begun to register people through our Department of Human Services offices.... It is clear that many people will register now who did not understand how the system works or where they were supposed to register—people who never had occasion to go into the county courthouse but who do come in contact with our Department of Human Services personnel.

The same process is evolving in many other states. There are agency-based registrations by law or through executive orders in [29 states and the District of Columbia]....

Administrative Barriers to Voting

Another initiative that has been discussed by states involves purging the voters' names from the rolls. In 1987, I signed a law requiring that voters be notified before their names are removed from the rolls. Prior to that, you were taken off the rolls if you hadn't voted within the last four years. An outmoded assumption allegedly designed to prevent fraud, I believe the real idea behind it was that if you weren't going to vote, you shouldn't retain the right to continue voting unless you went to the trouble of registering again. We have changed that dynamic in Arkansas, and I sincerely hope many other states will follow suit.

Michigan, Maryland, South Carolina, and Rhode Island have introduced computerized solutions to various administrative barriers found in those states. Minnesota is now sending voter registration materials along with tax forms. The thinking goes that when people receive their tax materials, they get so incensed that they'll register immediately if they hadn't already!... Minnesota and other states were considering options like telephone voting for handicapped and homebound elderly people. I think it is imperative that disabled and immobilized citizens be able to register and vote from home through a computer device.

Individual states, then, are making progress. So the question becomes: Have we done enough to facilitate registration? Does it make sense to accept such wide variations in practice from state to state? If not, two options exist: (1) We can support federal action in this area; or (2) we can devise alternative state-based methods of implementing more consistent action among states. One of the ideas I have suggested is that the National Governors' Association be urged to adopt a uniform policy. Should that occur, many governors who had never given much consideration to this issue would spend a lot more time thinking about it and trying to move it along. I would also like to see an effort to get the National Governors Association, the National Council of State Legislatures, and the National Association of Counties on record in favor of some basic, uniform principles of voter registration. Their support would lend great weight to this issue.

(Continued on back page)

January 1993

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

Inside This Issue:

- Eleanor Holmes Norton and delegates to Congress from U.S. territories win voting privileges on the House floor.
- TrendLetter profiles three new black members of Congress.
- Across the Nation: James Hayes was elected as mayor of Fairbanks, Alaska; the campaign is underway to replace Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley; blacks expand their presence in the Mississippi state legislature; and Gwendolynn Moore is elected to the Wisconsin State Senate.

One Step Forward for the District

When the 103rd Congress convened this month, the residents of Washington, D.C., moved one step closer to full voting representation in Congress when the District's non-voting delegate, **ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**, was granted limited voting privileges on the House floor. It all started when Norton persuaded her House Democratic colleagues to extend House chamber voting privileges to herself and congressional delegates from the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, and American Samoa. All the delegates are Democrats. When the House Democratic Caucus (which includes all the Democrats of that body) met in December, it agreed to allow delegates to vote in the Committee of the Whole in the House chamber. The House resolves itself into the Committee of the Whole, comprising all House members, in order to conduct most of its important work. Most significantly, the Committee of the Whole works on substantive legislation, including all money bills—tax legislation and appropriations or spending measures. It also takes up bills that have fiscal implications such as those authorizing new programs or reauthorizing ongoing programs that approve spending outlays.

Under current House rules, delegates are allowed to vote in the committees on which they serve but not on the House floor. These expanded privileges will enable delegates to help shape major legislative proposals of the incoming Clinton administration. However, the delegates will not be allowed to vote on the final passage of bills or on certain procedural votes such as rules governing the length of debate or the number of amendments that may be offered. House Republicans, vowing to oppose expanded voting privileges when the full House took up the proposal, argued that only duly elected representatives from the *states* should be allowed to vote on the floor. The proposal would essentially add five more floor votes to the Democratic majority. But Delegate Norton replied that the Committee of the Whole has the same status as any other committee created by Congress, and that if delegates can vote in other committees, they should be able to vote in the Committee of the Whole. Norton and her supporters won the argument when the new House rules that included extended voting privileges for delegates were adopted by the House on January 5.

Congress With a New Profile

This month, 16 new black members, all Democrats, were sworn in to the U.S. House of Representatives. Of the new arrivals, 13 are from newly created congressional districts that have black majorities or near-majorities. Most of the new legislators come from Southern states and those from Alabama, Florida, North and South Carolina, and Virginia are their states' first black congressional representatives since Reconstruction. In Illinois, **CAROL MOSELEY BRAUN** rose from the position of Cook County recorder of deeds to become the first black woman ever elected to the U.S. Senate. She also becomes the first black U.S. senator since the defeat of Massachusetts Senator **EDWARD BROOKE** in 1978. Braun will be the fourth black Senator in U.S. history.

This was the largest single entry of new black members of Congress, and it expanded the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) from 26 to 40 members, a 54 percent increase. Also historic is the arrival of five new black women in the House which will increase the overall female presence in the CBC from four to 10. In addition to the 13 CBC members from newly created districts, there are three new black congressmen—**BOBBY RUSH** and **MELVIN REYNOLDS** from Illinois and **WALTER TUCKER** from California—who are replacing veteran House members **CHARLES HAYES, GUS SAVAGE**, and **MERVYN DYMALLY**, respectively.

TrendLetter profiles three of the new members: Cleo Fields of Baton Rouge, Louisiana; Cynthia McKinney of Atlanta, Georgia; and Bobby Rush of Chicago, Illinois. Other profiles will be published in future issues of *FOCUS*.

Bobby Rush—From Black Panther to Mainstreamer

Chicago alderman and former leader in the Black Panther Party Bobby Rush, 46, will represent Illinois' 1st district on Chicago's South Side, the congressional district that has been continuously represented by a black person longer than any other district in the nation. When **OSCAR DePRIEST** was elected to the 1st district in 1928, he became the first black congressman from a Northern state and the first black person to sit in Congress since the turn of the century. Other notable representatives who have held the 1st district seat have included **RALPH METCALFE**, medal winner in the 1932 and 1936 Olympics, and the late **HAROLD WASHINGTON**, who left Congress in 1983 to make a successful bid to become the first black mayor of Chicago.

Rush won the Democratic primary last March with a slim margin over five-term black incumbent **CHARLES HAYES**, who was exposed in the House bank scandal. In the general election, Rush defeated a little-known black Republican **JAY WALKER**, by a five-to-one margin. Rush will serve on the Government Operations and Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs Committees. Rush has promised to work for the passage of legislation that would give tax breaks to companies that hire inner-city high school students; plans to introduce a bill that would provide incentives to small businesses to create jobs close to the homes of poor people, and contends that U.S companies that move their manufacturing operations overseas ought to pay higher taxes. Rush also believes the federal government should halt foreclosures on government-subsidized housing units until the economy improves.

After the Chicago branch of the Black Panther Party collapsed in the early 1970s following a campaign of violent harassment by the local police and the FBI, Rush, one of the branch's organizers, decided to become involved in more conventional politics. In 1983, he won a position as a Chicago alderman, and used his post to push for the investment of $11 million in infrastructure in his South Side district—street lamps, sewers, and other public works projects—which in turn attracted businesses and new housing construction. Rush's defeated opponent, Jay Walker, charges that Rush should be disqualified from taking a seat in Congress because he spent six months in jail on a weapons charge while still a Black Panther. Nevertheless, as an alderman, Rush urged the banning of handguns and assault rifles. Most voters and local observers obviously did not view Rush's past as an indicator of his fitness to serve in Congress. **LYNN SWEET**, chief political reporter with the *Chicago Sun Times*, asserts, "This Black Panthers thing—it's really ancient history. He's evolved. His recent political history belies any notion that he'd be a radical in Congress."

Today, Rush is very much in the political mainstream. He has been the deputy chair of the Illinois Democratic Party and most recently ran a voter registration drive to support the Clinton-Gore presidential ticket.

Cynthia McKinney—Determined and Persistent

For Georgia's Cynthia McKinney, 37, politics has always been a family affair. Her politician father is her unpaid advisor, her mother a campaigner, and her young son a traveling companion on the campaign trail. As a state representative from Fulton County, she and her father, **JAMES McKINNEY**, comprised a father-and-daughter act in the Georgia state House of Representatives. James McKinney continues to represent a Fulton County district in the legislature. Now the first black woman to be elected to Congress from Georgia, Cynthia McKinney will represent the 11th district, one of two newly created majority-black districts in Georgia and one of the state's largest. The district is both urban and rural and encompasses parts of Augusta, Savannah, and Fulton Counties.

Before her election to the House, McKinney taught political science as a Spelman College Diplomatic Fellow and was an aide to the late Georgia Senator **HERMAN TALMADGE**. Since being elected to the State House of Representatives in 1988, she has had her hands full serving as a legislator, raising her son Coy, now seven years old,

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"We must create new bonds to hold our nation together. One way to do that is to develop a system in which 80 percent instead of 50 percent of the people participate on election day." **— from the essay by President Bill Clinton**

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★ DAMON KEITH, federal judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals, Sixth Circuit ★
★ ARMAND DERFNER, who has argued five voting rights cases before the U.S. Supreme Court ★
★ LANI GUINIER, key participant in the coalition that got the 1982 Voting Rights Act passed ★
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as a single parent, and completing a doctoral dissertation in international affairs at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. Her academic background should serve McKinney well as a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, to which she has assigned. She has also been placed on the Agriculture Committee, which should please her rural constituents.

As a state representative, McKinney was committed to a congressional redistricting plan that would ensure that Georgia's black citizens (who make up 27 percent of the state's population) were fairly represented in Congress. She and three other state representatives comprised a group that became known as "The Four Horsemen." They fought for their "Max Plan" to establish two new majority-black districts in the state, in addition to the existing majority-black 5th district, represented by veteran Congressman **JOHN LEWIS**. (The 2nd, represented by freshman **STANFORD BISHOP**, is the other newly formed district.) In redrawing the district lines, the four went up against Georgia's Democratic leadership. Under the leadership's original plan, the election of three black members to Congress from Georgia would have been less likely. Persistent and, at times, combative, McKinney and her allies prevailed. James McKinney explains that the U.S. Justice Department rejected the leadership's plan at the urging of the Four Horsemen. Although Cynthia McKinney succeeded in the redistricting struggle, she alienated some members of the Georgia House by her combative style, which local observers compare to that of her father. But rubbing fellow legislators the wrong way is nothing new for her. McKinney adamantly opposed the Persian Gulf War, and when she made a speech against it on the state house floor, many of her colleagues walked out.

Getting to Washington wasn't easy, according to Cynthia's mother, **LEOLA McKINNEY**. While long on volunteer help, McKinney's campaign was short on financial help. Few would give her any money, except "25 dollars here, 100 dollars there," her father says. Her mother adds, "She was not favored to win by any of the good ole boys." She has certainly proven them wrong.

Cleo Fields—Youthful Ambition

Louisiana's **CLEO FIELDS** has always been a step ahead of the pack. Before he turned 30 he had received a law degree, served two terms as Louisiana's youngest state senator and—just this November—gotten elected to Congress. The new representative of Louisiana's 4th district began his political career at McKinley High School in Baton Rouge, where "he was always campaigning for something," says **JOE DELPIT**, a retired state representative from that city, who knew him as a junior high school member of Young Adults for Political Action, an organization Delpit sponsored.

Explaining his congressional objectives, Fields identifies health care as a priority. "Something's going to have to be done about the 10 million people who are out of work and the 37 million people without health insurance," he says. Fields also put in a bid for a spot on the Appropriations Committee. "Any time you control the purse strings of the country, you can do so much good for people across America," he explains. He admits that this goal is ambitious for a freshman, but that's Cleo Fields' style. He wasn't assigned to the Appropriations Committee but did get on the Small Business and Banking, Finance and Urban Affairs Committees.

Fields' style showed itself in 1986 when he ran successfully against black incumbent State Senator **RICHARD TURNLEY**, who served two terms in the state house of representatives and two terms in the state senate. Some of his associates didn't think he was ready to run. "I told him he was shooting too high," says Dr. **JAMES LLORENS**, professor of political science at Southern University in Baton Rouge, Fields' alma mater. Delpit didn't want him to run either. "Cleo's name recognition was so low it wasn't even funny. I pleaded with him not to run. But he said, 'I can win!'" And he did. In October, he won the open primary election to represent the newly created majority-black 4th district by garnering 48 percent of the vote, beating eight other candidates including state senate colleague **CHARLES JONES**, who came in second with only 14 percent of the vote. Fields went on to defeat Jones in a runoff in November with support from 74 percent of the voters.

According to Llorens, Fields won this time both because he is a tireless campaigner and because he raised more money than his opponents. He financed his campaign through effective community fundraisers and support from political action committees. He was also endorsed by Governor **EDWIN EDWARDS**, members of the local political and business communities, and TV celebrities **DARRYL BELL** from "A Different World" and **KIM FIELDS** (his cousin) from "The Facts of Life." Fields plans to spend half his time in his home district. "If he has a half hour of free time, he'll be on the phone or knocking on doors," says Llorens adding, "I don't know if Cleo has any hobbies other than campaigning."

ACROSS THE NATION

ALASKA: Black Democratic city council member **JAMES C. "JIM" HAYES**, 46, became Fairbanks' first black mayor on October 6. Running unopposed until the 11th hour, Hayes received more than 80 percent of the vote, squelching a last-minute write-in campaign by **BILL PREISING**, a white Fairbanks businessman. Hayes, who was sworn into office on October 26, will preside over the state's second largest city (population of 30,843) which is 13 percent black. He has served two terms on the city council and will now replace one-term Mayor **WAYNE NELSON**, who opted not to run for reelection.

As mayor, Hayes plans to focus on three issues: reducing the city's projected $800,000 deficit; passing an ordinance limiting the service of the mayor and city council members to two terms; and establishing Martin Luther King's birthday as a municipal holiday. A King holiday measure was defeated in the Fairbanks council three years ago, though the holiday is already observed by the state. Before his election to the council, Hayes served on the city's school board and human rights and transportation commissions.

CALIFORNIA: So far, among a crowded field of would-be successors to retiring Los Angeles Mayor **TOM BRADLEY**, only one black candidate, **NATE HOLDEN**, 63, has filed to run. Holden, a two-term city council member and former state senator, is on a long list of announced mayoral hopefuls who will be running in the April 20 nonpartisan primary. Holden ran a close second to Bradley in the 1989 mayoral race. According to **BASIL KIMBREW**, a black political organizer and consultant based in Los Angeles, Holden's involvement in two controversies may hinder his efforts. First, he supported former police chief **DARYL GATES** in the aftermath of the police beating of motorist **RODNEY KING** in 1991; he was one of 10 council members who voted to reinstate Gates after he was placed on administrative leave by the Los Angeles Police Commission. Holden is also being sued by several former female employees for sexual harassment.

Other candidates bidding for the mayoral seat are **MICHAEL WOO**, a two-term Democratic city council member; **TOM HOUSTON**, an attorney and a former deputy mayor; **RICHARD RIORDAN**, an attorney and millionaire businessman; **JOHN FERRARO**, Democratic city council president; **JULIAN NAVA**, former U.S. ambassador to Mexico and former Los Angeles school board president; city council member **JOEL WACHS**; **NICK PATSAOURAS**, who has been a director of the Southern California Transit District Board; and State Representative **RICHARD KATZ**, who has hired top political consultant **JAMES CARVILLE** as his campaign manager. Carville ran the successful campaigns of President **BILL CLINTON** and U.S. Senator **HARRIS WOFFORD** of Pennsylvania.

The filing deadline is February 13 and there are rumors that prominent black city attorney **J. STANLEY SANDERS**, a Bradley ally, may launch a bid. **GLORIA MOLINA**, elected to the powerful five-member L.A. Board of Supervisors two years ago, was considered the early favorite for the mayor's seat but decided not to run. In Molina's absence there is no clear front runner.

MISSISSIPPI: The number of blacks in the Mississippi state legislature almost doubled as a result of reapportionment and recent elections. Black representation in the senate jumped from two to 10 and in the house from 20 to 32. What contributed to these major increases was the U.S. Justice Department's rejection of redistricting plans favored by House Speaker **TIM FORD** that would have limited the number of seats black and white liberal and moderate legislators could be elected to. The Justice Department has the power to preclear all changes in state or local election laws and procedures in certain states under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act to ensure that they are not discriminatory. The Justice Department's action forced a compromise between Ford and a coalition of blacks and progressive whites that resulted in the dramatic increases of blacks in the legislature.

WISCONSIN: Democratic State Representative **GWENDOLYNN S. MOORE** of Milwaukee has been elected to a seat in the state senate. She defeated white state assembly colleague **LOUIS G. FORTIS** in the September 8 primary, and faced no opposition in the November general election.

Moore, 41, will represent the 4th senate district on Milwaukee's north side, which has a 45 percent black voting-age population. She was first elected to the state assembly in 1988 and won reelection in 1990. During her two terms, Moore chaired the Urban Infrastructure Committee and sat on committees with jurisdiction over transportation, small business, welfare reform, and drug enforcement. Wisconsin currently has only one other black state senator, Democrat **GARY R. GEORGE** of Milwaukee, who is entering his fourth term.

Coming in the next issue of *FOCUS*: Black leaders have petitioned United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to expand the U.N. mission in Somalia beyond guaranteeing food distribution. They have also asked that the U.N. direct its forces to disarm warring factions and use the world body's resources to bring about political stability in that land. Also featured in *FOCUS* will be articles on youth violence in the District of Columbia, and why short-term food aid from the West will not solve Africa's problem of wide spread hunger.

NAFTA: Good or Bad for the U.S.?

Business and Labor Differ on Whether the North American Free Trade Agreement Will Stimulate Growth or Help U.S. Workers

by Edgar E. Stanton III

As a new president comes to office focused on the national economy, a compelling issue for all Americans, and black workers in particular, has emerged: the North American Free Trade Agreement, commonly known as NAFTA. On December 17, 1992, after more than a year of negotiations, the United States, Canada, and Mexico signed this agreement to remove tariffs on goods, services, and investment among the countries over a period of 10 to 15 years.

In November, the Joint Center hosted a roundtable on NAFTA to explore the likely impact the agreement will have on the U.S. economy and to forecast its consequences for employment and earnings for American workers. Participants at the roundtable included representatives from business, labor, government, civil rights groups, and independent organizations. This article draws from the roundtable debate as well as other analyses of NAFTA and aims to review the agreement's pros and cons.

NAFTA formally establishes a free-trade area consisting of the United States, Canada, and Mexico with the objectives of eliminating barriers to trade, promoting fair competition, increasing investment opportunities, and providing protection for intellectual property rights. Specifically, NAFTA will eliminate tariffs on textiles and apparel, phase out agricultural tariffs, and open Mexican financial service markets to Americans and Canadians by the year 2000. The agreement must now be ratified by the national legislatures of the three countries.

In the United States, NAFTA is moving through a "fast track" ratification procedure. Once Congress and the executive branch have hammered out the implementing legislation, the president will formally send the package to Congress which must vote to either approve it as written, or reject it, within 90 days. Under this procedure, Congress consents to abstain from amending the final agreement with the understanding it will be a full partner in the drafting of the legislation. It is expected that Congress will approve the final bill by the summer of 1993 with the agreement taking effect in January 1994.

An Engine of Growth

Advocates of NAFTA, including major corporations and the Bush administration, see the agreement as an engine of growth because it will liberalize trade as restrictive tariffs are phased out. Proponents of NAFTA contend that it will reduce U.S. consumer prices by taking advantage of lower Mexican labor costs and that it will expand lucrative markets for U.S. exports south of the border.

U.S. exports to Mexico have already doubled since 1986. The Overseas Development Council (ODC), an independent organization in Washington, D.C. that promotes understanding among Americans of the economic problems of developing nations, reports that about 70 percent of Mexico's total imports are from the U.S. In a 1992 report on NAFTA in *Policy Focus*, their periodic publication, the ODC states, "With a population of 88 million, 47 percent of whom are under the age of 15, Mexico holds great potential as a marketplace for U.S. exports. This is especially true given the Mexican consumer's propensity to acquire U.S. goods. Mexicans buy more from the United States than do residents of the European Community—$350 per person versus $266 per person."

Those who support NAFTA expect that increased access to Mexican markets will stimulate U.S. job growth. According to the U.S. Department of Commerce, for every $1 billion increase in exports to Mexico, about 19,600 U.S. jobs will be created. The ODC report cites two studies on the economic impact of NAFTA. A study by the management consulting firm, Peat Marwick Main & Co., commissioned by the U.S.-Mexico Business Council, an association of 60 companies, projects that sectors of the U.S. economy which could benefit from NAFTA include motor vehicles and parts, food products, machinery and equipment, optical instruments, transportation equipment, business services, iron and steel, utilities, communications, finance, and insurance. A second report, by the U.S. International Trade Commission, predicts a small benefit for the U.S. from NAFTA through expanded exports in the grains, oilseed, alcoholic beverages, transportation, and telecommunication industries.

NAFTA is also viewed by some as a political tool that could ameliorate what have been difficult relations between the U.S. and Mexico. Douglas Ryan, a U.S. State Department participant in the Joint Center's roundtable, says, "The U.S. and Mexico share a 2,000 mile common border with over 250 million crossings annually. NAFTA provides a foundation for improving cooperation between the U.S. and Mexico in such areas as narcotics control and immigration." Job growth and stability in Mexico could also reduce the number of Mexicans looking for employment and higher pay in the United States.

(Continued on page 6)

U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel Stanton is the 1992-93 senior military fellow at the Joint Center.

NAFTA

(Continued from page 5)

Exporting U.S. Jobs

Opponents of the agreement, including labor organizations and some civil rights organizations, have a different viewpoint. They believe NAFTA could lead to significant U.S. job loss, at least in the short term. The Labor Advisory Committee for Trade Negotiations and Trade Policy takes the position that NAFTA fails to promote the economic interests of the United States and that it will in fact worsen the serious economic and social problems already facing the nation. The Advisory Committee was established by the Trade Act of 1974 to provide advice to the U.S. Trade Representative and the Secretary of Labor on trade agreements with foreign countries.

In a September 1992 report to the president, Congress, and the U.S. Trade Representative, the Advisory Committee concluded that: There are no protections in the agreement against deindustrialization of the U.S. economy; there are no protections against further erosion of skilled manufacturing jobs; and the agreement encourages the transfer of U.S. production to Mexico. The report asks, "Why would companies build new plants in the United States when they could lay off workers here, move to Mexico, pay workers less than $1 per hour, ignore health and safety regulations, disregard environmental laws and get away with flagrant violations of trade union rights?" The Advisory Committee's position is supported by a study conducted by economists at Skidmore College and the University of Massachusetts. Their study projects that the agreement will cost between 290,000 and 550,000 jobs through the end of the decade and will place serious downward pressure on U.S. wages.

There was a general consensus among participants at the Joint Center's roundtable that jobs will be lost if NAFTA goes into force. The U.S. is confronted with a number of issues that must be brought into sharper relief: Which jobs will be lost? Which sectors of the economy will be most severely affected? Will the job losses be concentrated regionally? Will the effects be concentrated demographically? And what are the implications for small businesses?

Roundtable participants agreed that manufacturing jobs, particularly those in the apparel and food industries that primarily employ low-skilled workers, will be hardest hit. The jury is still out on how black workers will fare under NAFTA. No meaningful analysis has been done to determine exactly which jobs will be lost, but blacks are highly represented in the nation's lower-skilled jobs. Slow economic growth and deindustrialization have led to a decline in real earnings for workers of all races, and blacks can least afford to lose additional jobs. Black unemployment is already double the national rate and black workers continue to earn far less on average than their white counterparts. Fully one-third of black Americans are poor and many have a far greater sense of hopelessness than a generation ago.

Yet, NAFTA, as drafted, contains few provisions on workers' rights or labor standards. In fact, opponents see the agreement as an invitation to American businesses to exploit Mexico's lower wages and relatively lax enforcement of environmental and safety standards.

Flowing Waste and Pesticides

There is also concern that NAFTA does not adequately provide for environmental protection. The Labor Advisory Committee's report finds that the agreement "does not contain provisions to address the existing environmental degradation of the border area and fails to provide for a funding mechanism that would ensure increased enforcement of environmental regulations in the region."

While President Bush, in response to environmental concerns, submitted an action plan to Congress in May 1991 that addresses the problems of air and water pollution, hazardous waste, chemical spills, pesticides, and enforcement, there is concern that funding is inadequate. According to the Labor Advisory Committee report, "Funding provisions within the Bush plan do not approach the level of need that has been identified by public officials in border states and even by pro-NAFTA organizations such as the Border Trade Alliance. For example, the total U.S. government budget for 1992-93 to implement Bush's environmental action plan is $241 million. This compares with $5.5 billion that the Border Trade Alliance estimates is required to correct existing problems and to prepare the border environment for a NAFTA agreement."

Clinton: Proceeding With Caution

During his presidential campaign, Bill Clinton endorsed NAFTA with qualifications. Clinton, who sees the agreement as part of a total national economic strategy, has identified several issues requiring legislative action. These include worker adjustment assistance in the form of training, health care benefits, income supports and job creation assistance for those who lose their jobs because of NAFTA, as well as funding for environmental cleanup and assistance to farmers.

Additionally, Clinton says he would submit several supplemental agreements to Congress along with the NAFTA implementing legislation which would create an Environmental Protection Commission and a Labor Commission to protect worker standards and safety. Both agreements would provide the authority and resources for education, training, development of standards and resolution of disputes.

There are still many unanswered questions concerning NAFTA. While there is general agreement that there will be job dislocation, it is still not clear just what types of jobs will be lost, how many will be lost or where they will be lost. The Joint Center will continue examining and reporting on the ramifications of the agreement, especially as they affect blacks. Another Joint Center roundtable is planned for the near future to examine strategies for training and job assistance to minimize the harmful effects on displaced workers. ■

Creating a Black Wealth-Producing Class

New Center for Entrepreneurship at Clark Atlanta University Confronts the Challenge of Black Economic Empowerment

by John Baker Brown

We must not only be able to black boots, but to make them," Frederick Douglass admonished his fellow 19th century African Americans. No doubt the author, abolitionist, and former slave would be gratified that a tradition of entrepreneurship is finally taking root in black America. In fact, if the new Center for Entrepreneurship at Clark Atlanta University (CAU) is any indication, the entrepreneurial tradition will not simply take root, it will flourish with the fruits of capitalism so long overdue in the African American community.

The brainchild of Dr. Edward D. Irons, dean of the CAU School of Business, the center for Entrepreneurship was established last fall with the aid of a $250,000 grant from Dow Jones & Company. The Center is the first of its kind at a historically black institution of higher education—specifically dedicated to teaching the skills needed to create as well as manage businesses, according to Dr. Dennis P. Kimbro, who will serve as the center's director.

After earning a doctorate at Northwestern in 1984, Kimbro toured the country interviewing a range of successful African Americans as part of a study of wealth and poverty. The result was his first book, *Think and Grow Rich: A Black Choice*, a 1991 best-seller about business enterprise among African Americans. "We want to show students that entrepreneurship is an option. We want them to know that it's okay to look out the window—okay to dream," says Kimbro. "The center's long-term goal is to create a wealth-producing class of African Americans."

Still in its formative stages, the center will serve MBA students at CAU's business school and will offer its first classes in the fall of 1993. Kimbro expects at least one-fourth of the school's more than 150 MBA students to sign up. In addition to courses on business start-up and management, the center will offer a variety of extra-curricular features including a lecture series that will introduce students to the nation's top minority business owners and an "entrepreneurship in residence" program that will bring minority business executives to campus for one week to meet and network with the students. A continuing education program will be geared to aspiring entrepreneurs from corporations as well as those outside the business world. Another initiative, which Kimbro describes as a two-week "boot camp" summer workshop, will encourage promising minority high school students to count business ownership among their career options.

The center will establish a repository for publications and video presentations as well as a database on minority firms, small businesses, and economic organizations. It will also compile case studies of minority business successes and failures. Typical of such students, Kimbro says, is Gina M. McAfee, who enrolled at CAU in 1991. An honors graduate of Northern Arizona University in Flagstaff, McAfee spent two years gaining valuable work experience as a financial analyst with Jet Propulsion Laboratories (JPL) in California.

McAfee's plans include taking her corporate experience and MBA training home—literally. She will go to work with her father, a retired Air Force master sergeant who bought a janitorial firm in Phoenix a few years ago. She already sits on the company's board of directors and spent part of her Christmas holiday setting up a software program to automate the firm's accounts receivable processing.

Although McAfee regrets that she will graduate before the Center for Entrepreneurship begins offering classes, she is determined, as president of CAU's student Entrepreneurship Club, to help the fledgling center get on line. Club members will help to line up outside lecturers and work with the center to establish an outreach program to assist neighboring public housing residents who want to launch their own businesses.

McAfee shares the center's commitment to establishing a tradition of entrepreneurship in the black community. "For so long [African Americans] have focused on getting into corporate America—getting a job, working our way up and retiring one day," says the 25-year-old honor student. But she believes the focus should now be on business ownership. "My generation must be ready to take responsibility for the economic destiny of the African American community," she says. And the key to controlling that destiny, both McAfee and Kimbro agree, is black entrepreneurship.

Kimbro argues that, while the black community today has far too few entrepreneurs, those it does have are extraordinary. He points out that, during the past five years, Fortune 500 firms produced only single-digit growth and lost millions of jobs. During the same period, he says, firms on *Black Enterprise* magazine's list of the nation's top 100 black-owned businesses enjoyed 30 percent average annual growth—and created jobs.

Kimbro believes a subtle but essential change is occurring in the African American community. "Black folks are finally learning that capitalism is not a dirty word," Kimbro says. "We're finally learning that we don't have to sell our souls to be capitalists." ■

Mr. Brown is a freelance writer, columnist, and former editor of *The Atlanta Tribune*.

Voter Participation

(Continued from page 4)

Another significant barrier to our economic security, social stability, and greater political participation is the enormous number of functionally illiterate adults in our nation today. This issue now receives far greater attention than it did just a few years ago, and it is increasingly being seen as an integral part of any educational reform or economic development program. We will experience real frustration in our efforts to increase voter participation in traditionally underrepresented groups unless we make a concomitant effort to reduce the barriers that illiteracy imposes. We can help eliminate these barriers by simplifying voting procedures and by simultaneously increasing the literacy levels of our people.

With a carefully designed plan, and a commitment from the president on down, we could dramatically reduce the illiteracy rate among working-age Americans. If that were accomplished, I believe we would see an enormous increase in voter participation throughout this nation.

One final point: Many nations around the world don't vote during working hours on working days. If you really want to go from 50 percent to 80 percent voting participation; if you want to attract people who work in low-paying jobs and who can't simply walk off the job to vote without being fired;...we might have to consider whether we want to keep the polls open longer, vote over two days, or even vote over an entire weekend. There is no doubt that we could have a substantial increase in voter participation if we changed the day or lengthened the time for voting. Sometimes we get so engrossed in trying to change the details of the system that we forget we can change the system altogether.

The Path to True Democracy

Our country will benefit immeasurably by debating these issues of voting rights as we enter the twenty-first century. We will live in a world that is more competitive, more uncertain, and ever fuller of catalytic change. The average 18-year old, it is predicted, will change jobs eight times in a lifetime. We are going to become more racially and culturally diverse. It will become more difficult to preserve the idea of the United States of America. For, fundamentally, that's what this country is—an idea. It is not a race. It is not a fixed set of institutions. It is a grand idea that has been implanted in our minds and embodied in our Constitution. As change accelerates, diversity explodes, and our nation inevitably metamorphoses, we will be hard pressed to find a shared set of core values and a system that can surmount these obstacles. We must create new bonds to hold our nation together. One way to do that is to develop a system in which 80 percent instead of 50 percent of the people participate on election day.

To reach that goal of 80 percent voter participation, we must tear down the remaining barriers to participation. Our government at every level must promote rather than discourage participation. Those of us in government sometimes have other issues on our minds; some of us may even feel threatened by the prospect of increased voter participation. Therefore, everyone who cares about expanding American democracy should apply steady pressure on public officials to make sure we in government take whatever actions are necessary to throw open the doors to the polls.

Therein lies the path to true democracy in America. ■

To order a copy of *Voting Rights in America*, write to: Voting Rights, Dept. F, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, Office of Information Resources, 1090 Vermont Avenue, Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005. Make checks payable to University Press of America (softcover price, $24.00, includes shipping)

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