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FOCUS

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Hard Times–Tough Choices

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER | **PERSPECTIVE**

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Luther H. Foster–In Memoriam

I delivered this tribute to the late Luther Hilton Foster, Jr., a member of the Joint Center board of governors, at a memorial service in Alexandria, Virginia, on December 5, 1994. Dr. Foster died on November 27, 1994, of a heart attack. He was 81.

Dr. Luther H. Foster, Jr., was a distinguished educator. I knew him as a member of Epsilon Boule of Sigma Pi Phi fraternity, as a board member of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, and as a personal friend.

Luther had a deep concern for humanity and a strong commitment to the advancement of African Americans. He did not seek public acclaim for his enormous contributions to this nation, preferring instead to support the successes of others. Social psychologist Kenneth B. Clark, a friend of Luther's since the early 1940s, said that "making a contribution to others" was the hallmark of his life.

Behind Luther's selflessness was the quiet, strong determination of a confident scholar and activist. In this respect, he was the perfect fourth president of Tuskegee Institute (now University), from 1953 to 1981, following in the footsteps of Booker T. Washington, Robert R. Moton, and Fred Patterson. His commitment to education was matched by an equally strong commitment to activism. Historian John Hope Franklin recently recalled how Tuskegee President Luther Foster contributed to the success of the 1965 march to Montgomery, Alabama. The night before the march, Luther hosted a meeting of more than 60 of the nation's leading historians who were headed for Montgomery. According to Dr. Franklin, who was there, Luther talked about the importance of the civil rights march and told the historians they had a responsibility for both recording the march and helping to lead it.

While I had known about Dr. Foster for years as the renowned president of Tuskegee, I came to know him personally with my induction into Sigma Pi Phi's Epsilon Boule in Washington in 1983. He became a friend and mentor from the beginning. During my tenure as Sire Archon (president) of Epsilon Boule from 1992 to 1994, Luther was a strong supporter and an inspiration, often drawing upon his 40 years in the fraternity to give me advice and perspective. On one occasion, when I mispronounced a key word in our fraternal lexicon, Luther approached me in his quiet and diplomatic way and asked: "Would you mind if I told you how to pronounce that word?"

In 1984, he agreed to become a member of the board of governors of the Joint Center, a position he held until his untimely death. During the past 10 years, Luther also served as chairman of our finance committee and as treasurer. Given his academic training in business and management and his professional experience, Luther was always on top of how money was raised and spent. There was no one on the board more generous with personal time or more selfless in devotion to the Joint Center. When asked whether he would be willing to do this or that, Luther's reply was always the same: "Just tell me what you want me to do and if I am able to do it, I will." And he did it, whatever "it" was, with dedication and a warm sense of humor.

He graced our midst, and by example he encouraged all of us to become more active in making a contribution to our fellow man. I found it revealing that among his many honorary degrees Luther had been awarded a "doctorate of public service." For him, public service encompassed all kinds of service to others. And we are forever grateful that he included the Joint Center among the organizations he cared about and to which he gave so much of himself.

It is very difficult for me, personally, to say goodbye to my friend. I will miss him. We all will miss Luther H. Foster. ■

Eddie N. Williams

PRESIDENT

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Hard Times–Tough Choices

Blacks Must Be Guided by Pragmatism As They Proceed Through the New Political Landscape That Was Created by GOP Electoral Successes

by Eddie N. Williams

By now, the dramatic dimensions of Republican electoral gains on November 8 are well known. They won control of both houses of Congress and 29 governorships as well as control of an impressive number of state legislatures. The fact is that something momentous happened on election day, and we must take the time to analyze how to deal with it. In our analysis, we must ask three questions: What do the election results tell us about the nation as a whole? What happened to African Americans in the election? And, where do we go from here?

No matter how you analyze it, this election was a serious defeat for Democrats, especially legislators, and for President Clinton; and it probably signalled a national shift to the right, but not a radical one. The big question is how far to the right and on which issues? I do not believe this election was about a reprise of Reaganomics or about kicking poor women and their children into the streets and orphanages. Rather, I believe it was about reducing the size, complexity, and intrusiveness of the federal government, lowering taxes, reforming welfare, reducing crime, and preparing people to take care of themselves and contribute to the nation's economic health.

There are two factors that have led me to the conclusion that the election was not a radical shift to the right. First, in House elections, Democrats actually won almost as many votes as Republicans, and Republicans won 30 seats with 52 percent of the vote or less. There is no mandate here.

The second factor is the volatility of the electorate, prompted in large measure by what might be called the post Cold War blahs. For example, some Republicans who had voted Democratic in recent years actually voted Republican this time, and many registered Democrats voted Republican as well. The Perot voters, who gave Democrats 50 percent of their votes in 1992, gave Republicans 60 percent this time. At the same time, many dissatisfied Democrats simply stayed home, while Republicans flocked to the polls. We saw this same volatility at work against President Bush in 1992. I predict it will exist in 1996 as well. If Republican legislators don't appear to be performing to voter expectations, and if the Democrats can mobilize their supporters at the polls, we could see a lot of this year's winners booted out in 1996.

Black Gains, Black Losses

For African Americans, the elections were a tale of two outcomes: black elected officials made numerical gains, but they lost a lot of power. As might have been expected, the black vote protected black Democrats from the GOP sweep. The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) experienced a net increase of one member in the House of Representatives. The 41-member CBC in the 104th Congress will be even more diverse than it is now: 40 CBC members in the House and one in the Senate; 38 Democrats, two Republicans, and one independent; 17 Southerners; 11 women; 4 freshmen; and 10 members from districts where blacks are not a majority of the population. With the House under Republican control, however, blacks will lose three committee chairmanships, 17 subcommittee chairs, a deputy majority whip, and access to majority party leadership.

This election was not about a reprise of Reaganomics or kicking poor women and their children into the streets and orphanages.

The number of black state legislators continued to grow this year with a net increase of 16—12 Democrats and four Republicans—bringing the total to 529. However, with GOP gains in state legislatures, a lot of blacks will be in the minority party next year. The number of black Democrats in the majority party in state lower houses will decrease from 349 to 257, a drop of 26 percent. Conversely, the number serving in the minority party will increase from 22 to 122. Black state legislators will lose key leadership posts and access to the clout that the majority party wields.

The loss of black political power and influence is especially acute in the South. An examination of congressional elections there is instructive. Southern Republicans won 16 House seats previously held by Democrats, shifting the South from a 77-seat Democratic majority to a 64-seat Republican majority. Instead of 77 Democrats and 48 Republicans, the South now has 64 Republicans and 61 Democrats in the House. These 64 white Republicans will represent almost one-third of all black voters in the South. (The 17 black Democrats will represent 42 percent of black voters, and the remaining 44 non-black congresspersons [40 whites and 4 Latinos] will represent 27 percent of black voters).

One of the results of the ascendance of the GOP in Dixie is that an increased number of black voters in Southern congressional districts will have white Republican

Mr. Williams is the president of the Joint Center.

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congressmen representing them. That also means that a lot of those congressmen, including some freshmen who won with thin margins, will have a sizeable black Democratic vote with which to contend over the next two years. Twenty-eight Southern Republicans will hold seats in congressional districts where the black vote comprises 10 to 25 percent of all voters.

Looking at the black vote nationally, it was higher than in the 1990 midterm election: 13 percent versus 8 percent. Blacks remained true to the Democratic Party, giving its candidates 88 percent of their votes: 9 percentage points higher than in 1990 and just one percentage point lower than in the 1992 presidential election. This level of support should discourage anyone from thinking that Democratic defeats can be blamed on the black vote. On the contrary, in a number of elections the black vote was critical to the successes enjoyed by Democratic candidates.

A Fight for the Center

Looking ahead, several things are clear. There is a conservative trend among voters. But I believe that most discerning Americans would agree that the shift does not go as far as Rep. Newt Gingrich suggests. Frankly, enactment of his "Contract With America" would be an unmitigated disaster for most whites as well as for blacks and other minorities. It would bankrupt the Treasury, heaping untold indebtedness on middle America, and it would deepen the gulf between whites and blacks in this country.

Blacks, however, cannot afford to take for granted that extremist positions will always be defeated. We must examine each policy proposal, no matter who authors it, pinpointing those things we agree with and those we disagree with. We must be able to document our positions with facts and with persuasive appeals to the nation's sense of fairness.

Given the political landscape that lies ahead, we have no alternative but to adopt strategies that encompass a new pragmatism that says explore all of the issues coming down the pike to determine where our self-interest lies. Much of the public policy debate will take place around the ideological center. In my view, that's a ball park we can play in. In this context, it would be a serious mistake to paint all Republicans with the same brush since they are as diverse as the Democrats. There are a number of moderate, progressive, and even liberal Republicans. And pragmatic Republicans and pragmatic blacks must find ways to communicate with each other.

Years ago the CBC made its own contract with black Americans. It pledged that it would have "no permanent friends, no permanent enemies, only permanent interests." This pledge is about to be tested in the 104th Congress and in state legislatures as well. Strengthening our efforts to influence public policy will require that we strengthen our coalitions with communities with which we have formed alliances in the past. Recall that while 88 percent of blacks voted Democratic, 79 percent of Jews and 77 percent of Hispanics also voted Democratic. We must reach out to these allies who share our vision of an equal opportunity society.

Where Do We Go From Here?

African Americans must become more effective at influencing public policies at the national level, as well as at the state and local levels where more and more policies will directly affect our lives and our livelihood. Blacks must also become much more efficient and self-sustaining in their efforts to mobilize the black vote.

We need new policy structures to help black leaders analyze, shape, and promote effective public policies for their constituents. The Joint Center has launched a new initiative that seeks to accomplish this objective. It is called the Urban Policy Institute (UPI), and the pilot program has been operating successfully in Chicago for the past three years. Now we are ready to expand it to urban areas across the nation.

Through the Urban Policy Institute, the Joint Center uses its research and policy analysis skills to strengthen the capacity of local leaders. UPI has three goals:

- To broaden civic participation in shaping public policies;
- To facilitate structured collaboration among local black leaders and between blacks and other groups; and
- To help improve the quality of urban life.

UPI is part of a growing American "citizen movement" which empowers citizen-leaders to influence policy decisions that affect the quality of their lives. UPI, or a similar vehicle, will be needed not only to analyze new policies as they are formed, but to develop policies of our own. Two new UPI sites are under consideration at this time in Memphis and New Orleans. The Joint Center also has had exploratory conversations with community leaders in St. Louis, Los Angeles, New York City, and Baltimore.

Another key to influencing policy making, of course, is voting. Despite relatively high black turnout on November 8 and the significant impact of the black vote, there are clear indications that blacks need to rethink several aspects of their voter mobilization strategy.

Given the political landscape that lies ahead, we have no alternative but to adopt strategies that encompass a new pragmatism.

A major problem area is funding. Black leaders have been critical of foundations and the Democratic Party for not making available financial resources for targeted nonpartisan, get-out-the-vote efforts in 1994. Foundation resources were limited, and dollars from the Democratic Party focused mainly on generic television advertisements.

What was even more unfortunate was the relatively little black support—organizationally or financially—to help mobilize the black vote. What this suggests is that an

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January 1995

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

Inside This Issue:

- In this special election roundup, TrendLetter looks at what the Republican dominated 104th Congress will mean to African Americans.
- Across the Nation provides final election results in key federal and statewide elections.

American Voters Hand the GOP Control of Congress

The first day of the 104th Congress will be January 4. By the end of that day, the speaker of the House of Representatives will be Republican **NEWT GINGRICH** of Georgia, and the Senate majority leader will be Republican **ROBERT DOLE** of Kansas. In what might be compared to wartime saturation bombing, the GOP overwhelmed its Democratic opponents in all regions of the country on November 8 in a stunning electoral victory. With their election successes, the Republicans gained controlling majorities in both houses of Congress for the first time in 40 years. (The Republicans controlled the Senate from 1981 to 1987.) After all the ballots were counted, Republicans had 230 seats in the House to the Democrats' 204 (**BERNIE SANDERS** of Vermont is an independent). In the Senate, the GOP holds a 53-to-47 edge which was bolstered by the defection of Alabama's Democratic Senator **RICHARD SHELBY** to Republican ranks immediately after the election.

While midterm losses for the party in power are to be expected, few pundits anticipated that the Democrats would lose both houses. This astonishing reversal for President **BILL CLINTON** and his party is even more remarkable since it occurred during peacetime, while the Democrats presided over a national economy strengthened by nearly two years of sustained growth, a steady reduction in unemployment, and the lowest federal deficit in 13 years. In normal midterm elections, these circumstances would have diminished the gains by the party out of power. Their defeat would have been even more devastating had Democrats not been aided by black voters in several key races. For example, African American voters provided the margin of victory to Democratic gubernatorial candidate **PARRIS GLENDENING** in Maryland and to the reelection bids of governors **LAWTON CHILES** of Florida and **ZELL MILLER** of Georgia, and of U.S. senators **DIANNE FEINSTEIN** of California and **FRANK LAUTENBERG** of New Jersey. The impact of African American voters was perhaps most significant in Virginia, where their support for U.S. Senator **CHARLES ROBB** helped to narrowly defeat Republican challenger **OLIVER NORTH**.

The CBC Grows But Loses Chairmanships

If viewed strictly by the numbers, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) had a good day on November 8. It grew from 40 to 41 members and increased the number of women members from 10 to 11. New African American representatives include Democrats **CHAKA FATTAH** from Pennsylvania's 2nd district in Philadelphia, **SHEILA JACKSON LEE** from Texas's 18th district in Houston, Republican **JULIUS CAESAR "J.C." WATTS** from Oklahoma's 4th district in Oklahoma City, and **Independent VICTOR FRAZER** from the Virgin Islands (see special edition of "Across the Nation"—Election Results in this edition of "TrendLetter"). Of the biggest-ever field of black Republican candidates for congressional office, numbering 24, only Watts and incumbent **GARY FRANKS** (R–Conn.) won their races. Watts, who leaves the post of Oklahoma state corporation commissioner, has identified himself with the "tough on crime, strong on national defense, and let's cut taxes" line of the GOP. But his election cannot be seen as an indicator that African American voters are shifting to the right since only seven percent of his 4th district constituency is black. (Similarly, Gary Franks represents a district that is just five percent black.)

The electoral success of the GOP means that Republicans will control not only the top leadership posts in the House, but all House Committees as well. Thus, Rep. **RONALD DELLUMS** (D–Cal.) will relinquish his chairmanship of the Armed Services Committee. And **WILLIAM CLAY** (D–Mo.) and **JOHN CONYERS** (D–Mich.), whose seniority placed them next in line to head the Education and Labor Committee and the Judiciary Committee, respectively, will have to settle for ranking minority member status. (In the 103rd Congress, Clay chaired the Post Office and Civil Service Committee and Conyers chaired Government Operations.)

But the CBC won't be powerless. The GOP's slim majorities leave President Clinton the power to successfully veto any measure he deems too extreme or not in the best interests of the nation. In order to override his veto, the GOP faces the daunting task of mustering two-thirds majorities in both chambers of Congress—290 votes in the House and 67 in the Senate. In the House, Democratic members of the CBC will be an essential component of the coalition that is likely to enable the President to prevail in most cases.

"Citizen Legislators"

Most Republican candidates triumphed by campaigning on messages that invoked fear of crime and "big government" with a full measure of "throw the bums out" rhetoric. Unlike other recent congressional elections, this time the GOP fielded a candidate for each House and Senate seat, pouring millions of dollars into campaigns. Furthermore, the unveiling of its "Contract With America" on the steps of the Capitol, cosigned by more than 300 Republican congressional candidates, gave the impression that the GOP had a plan of action. Released less than two months before election day, the Contract promises congressional votes within the first 100 days of the 104th Congress on a compendium of legislative proposals that are based on long-held conservative ideas. Among the proposals are a constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget, a presidential line-item veto of congressional budgets, harsh anti-crime measures (but no crime prevention provisions), welfare reform, tax cuts, increased military spending, (including a revitalization of "Star Wars"), and a constitutional amendment on term limits. Conspicuously absent is even a modest proposal to reform the nation's health care system.

By contrast, the majority of Democrats ran on the defensive with many candidates for state and federal seats attempting to disassociate themselves from the Clinton administration. But voter dissatisfaction swept away legislators regardless of their lengths of tenure, political philosophy, or region. Altogether, the Democrats lost 55 House seats to the Republicans. Through challenges to Democratic incumbents as well as campaigns for open seats formerly held by Democrats, the GOP seized six seats in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic region, 15 seats in the Mid-West and Grain Belt, 17 seats in the West and Pacific Coast states, and 17 seats among Southern and Border states. At the same time, all Republican incumbents who ran for reelection won their races. Buried in the electoral rubble were some of the most venerable Democratic leaders of the House, including Speaker **TOM FOLEY** (D–Wash.), Judiciary Chairman **JACK BROOKS** (D–Tex.), and **NEAL SMITH** (D–Iowa) an Appropriations subcommittee chairman. Each was a veteran of at least 15 terms in the House and each was defeated by an opponent who had never previously held elected public office.

Some have charged that the recent formation of majority-black congressional districts in several Southern states was a determining factor in the Democrats' loss. Thirteen majority-black districts were created in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, North and South Carolina, Texas, and Virginia after the 1990 Census in order to comply with the Voting Rights Act. Blaming redistricting is insupportable however, because the party's losses were across the board. Many of the most severe losses were suffered in states where no new majority-black districts were formed and indeed where the number of black voters was small. In the state of Washington, six seats formerly held by Democrats were won by Republicans. There were three such losses in Indiana and Oklahoma, and two each in Arizona and Kansas. In total, the Democrats lost at least one House seat to a GOP opponent in 29 states.

It may prove to be an irony that the Republican Party has advocated and must now address term limits in one of the most controversial elements of the GOP Contract With America, under the heading "Citizen Legislature Act." This proposal is designed to replace "career politicians" with "citizen legislators" by limiting senators to two six-year terms and House members to either three or six two-year terms. But if the proposal is intended to clear away politicians who hold on to office too long, this election has proven that such a measure is unnecessary.

Significantly, Republican signatories to the Contract have not allowed their advocacy of term limits to restrict their congressional careers to six terms. Fifty-five incumbent House Republicans who have already served more than six terms, all Contract signers, ran and were reelected in November. Among them was future speaker Newt Gingrich who just won reelection to his 9th term. In the Senate, Republican leader **ROBERT DOLE** (R–Kan.) has been in office for 26 years. Dole is in serious danger of becoming a "career politician" having served continually in a variety of elected public offices since 1951, including eight years in the U.S. House of Representatives, several terms in the Kansas House of Representatives, and service as Russell County (Kansas) attorney. He was also a vice presidential candidate in 1976, was a presidential candidate in 1980 and 88, and is expected to run for the White House again in two years. Both Gingrich and Dole are well beyond limiting themselves to the 12 years of congressional service prescribed in the Contract With America. But now that House majority-leader-to-be **DICK ARMEY** (R–Tex.), the chief drafter of the Contract, has just won his sixth term in the House, it will be interesting to see if he stands by his principles and announces that he will retire at the end of the next Congress.

by David C. Ruffin

1994 Election Results for Black Candidates to U.S. Congress and Statewide Offices

STATE	OFFICE	WINNER	%	DEFEATED	%
AL	House, 7th	**Earl F. Hilliard** (D)*	77	**Alfred J. Middleton, Sr.** (R)	23
	Supreme Court	**Ralph Cook** (D)*	51	Mark Montiel (R)	49
CA	House, 9th	**Ronald V. Dellums** (D)*	72	**Deborah Wright** (R)	23
	House, 28th	David Dreier (R)*	67	**Tommy Randle** (D)	31
	House, 32nd	**Julian C. Dixon** (D)*	78	Ernie A. Farhat (R)	17
	House, 35th	**Maxine Waters** (D)*	78	**Nate Truman** (R)	22
	House, 37th	**Walter R. Tucker III** (D)*	78	Guy Wilson (I)	22
CO	Secretary of State	**Vikki Buckley** (R)	58	Sherrie Wolf (D)	36
CT	House, 3rd	Rosa DeLauro (D)*	64	**Susan Johnson** (R)	36
	House, 5th	**Gary Franks** (R)*	52	James Maloney (D)	45
	Secretary of State	Miles Rapoport (D)	51	**Andrea Scott** (R)	49
	Lieutenant Governor	Jodi Rell (R)	41	Joseph Ganim (D)	37
				Audrey Rowe (A Conn. Party)	22
	Treasurer	Christopher Burnham (R)	54	**Joseph Suggs, Jr.** (D)*	46
DC	Mayor	**Marion Barry** (D)	56	Carol Schwartz (R)	42
	House (Delegate)	**Eleanor Holmes Norton** (D)*	89	Donald A. Saltz (R)	8
FL	House, 3rd	**Corrine Brown** (D)*	58	**Marc Little** (R)	42
	House, 17th	**Carrie Meek** (D)*		unopposed	
	House, 23rd	**Alcee Hastings** (D)*		unopposed	
	Commissioner of Education	Frank Brogan (R)	53	**Douglas Jamerson** (D)*	47
GA	House, 2nd	**Sanford Bishop** (D)*	66	John Clayton (R)	34
	House, 5th	**John Lewis** (D)*	69	Dale Dixon (R)	31
	House, 11th	**Cynthia McKinney** (D)*	66	Woodrow Lovett (R)	34
IL	House, 1st	**Bobby Rush** (D)*	75	William Kelly (R)	25
	House, 2nd	**Mel Reynolds** (D)*		unopposed	
	House, 7th	**Cardiss Collins** (D)*	79	**Charles Mobley** (R)	21
	Comptroller	Loleta Didrickson (R)	55	**Earlean Collins** (D)	41
IN	House, 10th	Andrew Jacobs Jr. (D)*	53	**Marvin Bailey Scott** (R)	47
LA	House, 2nd	**William Jefferson** (D)*		unopposed	
	House, 4th	**Cleo Fields** (D)*		unopposed	
MD	House, 4th	**Albert Wynn** (D)*	75	**Michele Dyson** (R)	25
	House, 7th	**Kweisi Mfume** (D)*	81	Kenneth Kondner (R)	19
MA	House, 5th	Martin Meehan (D)*	70	**David Coleman** (R)	30
	House, 9th	John Joseph Moakley (D)*	70	**Michael Murphy** (R)	30
MI	House, 14th	**John Conyers** (D)*	82	Richard Fournier (R)	17

Names in bold are black candidates; names with asterisks * *are incumbents.*

STATE	OFFICE	WINNER	%	DEFEATED	%
	House, 15th	**Barbara-Rose Collins** (D)*	84	**John Savage II** (R)	14
	Secretary of State	Candice Miller (R)	54	**Richard Austin** (D)*	46
MN	House, 5th	Martin Olav Sabo (D)*	62	**Dorothy LeGrand** (R)	38
MS	House, 2nd	**Bennie Thompson** (D)*	53	**Bill Jordan** (R)	39
MO	Senate	John Ashcroft (R)	60	**Alan Wheat** (D)	36
	House, 1st	**William Clay, Sr.** (D)*	63	Donald R. Counts (R)	33
	House, 5th	Karen McCarthy (D)	57	**Ron Freeman** (R)	43
NJ	House, 10th	**Donald M. Payne** (D)*	76	Jim Ford (R)	22
NY	House, 6th	**Floyd Flake** (D)*	80	Denny D. Bhagwandin (R)	20
	House, 10th	**Edolphus Towns** (D)*	89	**Amelia Smith Parker** (R)	9
	House, 11th	**Major Owens** (D)*	89	Gary Popkin (R)	10
	House, 15th	**Charles Rangel** (D)*	96	Jose Suero (I)	4
	House, 17th	Eliot Engel (D)*	74	**Edward Marshall** (R)	18
	Comptroller	**H. Carl McCall** (D)*	52	Herbert London (R)	47
NC	House, 1st	**Eva Clayton** (D)*	61	Ted Tyler (R)	39
	House, 12th	**Mel Watt** (D)*	66	Joe Martino (R)	34
OH	House, 11th	**Louis Stokes** (D)*	77	James Sykora (R)	23
	Treasurer	**J. Kenneth Blackwell** (R)*	54	**Barbara Sykes** (D)	42
OK	House, 4th	**J.C. Watts** (R)	52	David Perryman (D)	43
	House, 6th	Frank Lucas (R)*	70	**Jeffrey Tollett** (D)	30
PA	House, 1st	Tom Foglietta (D)*	81	**Roger Gordon** (R)	19
	House, 2nd	**Chaka Fattah** (D)	86	**Lawrence R. Watson II** (R)	14
SC	House, 6th	**James Clyburn** (D)*	64	Gary McLeod (R)	36
	Secretary of State	Jim Miles (R)	63	**Milton Kimpson** (D)	35
TN	House, 9th	**Harold Ford** (D)*	58	**Rod Deberry** (R)	42
TX	House, 10th	Lloyd Doggett (D)	56	**A. Jo Baylor** (R)	40
	House, 18th	**Sheila Jackson Lee** (D)	72	**Jerry Burley** (R)	24
	House, 30th	**Eddie Bernice Johnson** (D)*	73	**Lucy Cain** (R)	26
	Comptroller	John Sharp (D)*	55	**Teresa Doggett** (R)	45
VI	House (Delegate)	**Victor Frazer** (I)	55	**Eileen Petersen** (D)	45
VA	House, 3rd	**Bobby Scott** (D)*	79	Thomas Ward (R)	21
WA	Senate	Slade Gorton (R)*	55	**Ron Sims** (D)	45

Compiled by Alfred Baltimore and Allison King

Names in bold are black candidates; names with asterisks are incumbents.*

CBC Returns to Its Roots in 104th Congress

In the Wake of November's Election, Black Caucus Members Plan to Stay on the Offensive But Work With GOP Leaders When They Can

by Sam Fulwood III

For the first time in 40 years, Republicans have grabbed control of the U.S. House of Representatives. The GOP dominance of the federal legislature in the wake of the November 1992 midterm elections was made complete by its return to power in the Senate as well after an eight-year absence. No group finds itself in more of a soul-searching mood than African Americans, who collectively awoke the morning after the elections with the same question: What does this mean for us?

In November 1992, many blacks were buoyed by the election to the White House of the first Democrat in a dozen years. Now they find themselves stripped of many of their congressional allies and stunned by a seeming national rejection of social policies that they had believed could be enacted with President Bill Clinton's support. The sweeping changes are an especially humbling reversal for members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), who must surrender three committee chairs and 17 subcommittee chairs to Republicans. As a consequence, the CBC, which has long been proactive in pursuit of new or expanded programs aimed at improving the status of black Americans, will instead take on a defensive role.

The ramifications of the Republicans' march to power portends major changes in Washington's politics-as-usual attitude. Since 1955, when Republicans last controlled both chambers of the legislature, the relationship between black Americans and Congress has been a mixed bag of success and disappointment, but never during that time of Democratic congressional rule had the relationship been aggressively hostile.

That may change with the 104th Congress, which will be seated in early January. African Americans are already groping for new strategies and new allies intended to advance the interests of their constituents or, at least, protect past gains against radical changes.

From the vantage of Rep. Kweisi Mfume (D-Md.), outgoing chairman of the CBC, the Republicans' control may liberate black lawmakers to speak their minds and vote their consciences as they did in the Caucus's early days. "We've become in many respects bigger fish in a smaller pond," Mfume says, alluding to the fact that the CBC's 38 House Democrats will have more clout within the 204-member minority party. In the previous Congress, when Democrats were the majority party, there were 38 black Democratic representatives among 258 Democrats. This means that while black members made up about 15 percent of House Democrats in the 103rd Congress, they will become nearly 19 percent in the 104th Congress.

"The situation that is before us now presents us with enormous possibilities to negotiate, to bargain," Mfume says. "But most of all, it presents us with an opportunity to win." Any legislation affecting minority entrepreneurship and federal aid for black colleges and universities, according to Mfume, will be unlikely to pass without the support of the CBC. He adds: "There will be a lot of horse trading going on in the 104th Congress."

Prisons and Orphanages

But making deals in the new Congress won't be easy for the CBC. Though he has yet to lift the speaker's gavel, Rep. Newt Gingrich (R–Ga.), the incoming House Speaker, has already vowed to make wholesale changes in the role of government. For example, under the rubric of the "Contract With America," House GOP members promised to remove recipients from the rolls of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program after two years. Thinking aloud, after the election, Gingrich suggested that for hard-luck cases—mothers who have babies and can't afford to support them after their AFDC support runs out—state-run orphanages might dissuade other mothers from having babies and expecting taxpayers to foot the expenses.

Another set of "Contract" proposals addresses crime, including a call to close "loopholes" to make it easier to carry out executions in death penalty cases and amendments to the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 to eliminate spending on crime prevention programs and to add even more money for prison construction than the Act already calls for. And, in what many consider a case of overkill, the primary item on the new majority party's agenda is a balanced-budget amendment that could be used as a pretext to deny adequate funding to federally supported social programs that have proven their value, like Head Start and the Job Corps, unless Congress provides alternative cuts in expenditures elsewhere in the federal budget.

"This situation is certain to pose a new challenge because it raises questions about how blacks relate to the Clinton administration, which we expect will move to the right and away from our concerns," says political scientist Linda Faye Williams, who heads the Institute for Policy and Education at the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. "The same can be said of Congress. Even the Democrats who were our allies will be rushing to the center and away from anything

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CBC

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that smacks of being liberal. Right now, we don't know whether we have foes or allies." Specifically, Williams adds, "black lawmakers expect a lonely fight as they struggle to try to prevent enactment of crime and welfare legislation that might disproportionately harm blacks."

The CBC's New Possibilities

But Mfume believes there's nothing really new about fighting against harmful policies. In fact, he argues that by engaging in that kind of struggle, the Caucus would be returning to its roots. "A historical perspective has been missing in the overall debate" over the role of the Caucus in the GOP-led Congress, he says. "That is why when things took place as they did at the polls on November 8, members of the Congressional Black Caucus became energized at the new set of possibilities in the wake of perceived ruin. At its founding, the CBC never intended to be an adjunct of the Democratic Party—especially if the policies of the party ran counter to the interests of black people." Mfume reminds us that the Caucus was formed in 1970 because its original members weren't taken seriously by either the then-majority Democrats or the minority Republicans in Congress.

Dianne Pinderhughes, director of the Afro-American Studies and Research Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, agrees that the upcoming Congress holds opportunities and challenges for black lawmakers. "The GOP rise means the Black Caucus and the Hispanic Caucus and progressive white Democrats on the left side of the Democratic ledger will have to work together as they have never before," she says. "If they do their job well enough, that group is likely to pull Clinton to the left."

Pinderhughes believes Clinton is key because he's going to be running for reelection by the middle of next year and will need to summon all the support he can muster to hold on to the White House. According to her thinking, Clinton will need to return to his base supporters—and these are the Democrats on the left. "He's stuck," says Pinderhughes, "He took the position that he had to pull the party back to the center. Well, he's done that and the Republicans are running the show from Congress. Now he's got nowhere to go but back to his core constituency. That means the Black Caucus and others have an important opportunity and could exercise real influence over Clinton, if not in Congress."

Interests in Common With the GOP

Some—like Wade Henderson, Washington director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People—say they are planning the unimaginable: to survive in the next Congress, Henderson is seeking issues where the civil rights group can form coalitions with the Republicans. "It's going to be necessary to cultivate more access and involvement with the Republican leadership," Henderson says, adding that the points of common interest have yet to be defined or suggested to the incoming congressional leaders.

Meanwhile, blacks on the right are celebrating the victory as justification for having toiled in the outskirts of black politics during much of their lives. Conservative black Republicans were overjoyed by the election returns, sensing an opening for their ideas that had never presented itself when Democrats ruled Congress. "The results of the elections made it respectable for blacks to be conservative and Republican," says Armstrong Williams, a Washington-based black radio talk-show host. "Black Americans can come out of the kitchens of the Democratic Party." Williams thinks the impressive showing of black Republicans in the elections was positive proof of opportunities for blacks within the GOP. In particular, he points to the election to Congress of former Oklahoma University quarterback J.C. Watts and the reelection of Rep. Gary Franks (R–Conn.), which illustrate the willingness of whites to vote for blacks with conservative values. Both Watts and Franks represent majority-white districts.

Nevertheless, the national Republican Party has shown little willingness to reach out to black voters or to support black candidates in local and state races, asserts Teresa Doggett, who lost in November in her bid for Texas state comptroller. "There were Republicans who told me they would be wasting money by supporting me," she says. "That attitude has to change if the party is going to garner more support among black people." For proof of her assertion, look no further than the bombastic new speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich. He has made a career of blasting programs that benefit black Americans.

Some analysts glumly predict that black lawmakers and their constituents will find few sympathetic ears within the Clinton administration or among congressional leaders—Democrats or Republicans—as they fight to maintain policies and programs supported by their constituents. Keith Reeves, assistant professor of electoral politics and public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, fears that black Americans may decide politics are not worth their time if they must choose between supporting Republicans intent on reversing social policies and right-tilting Democrats who equally fail to support black concerns.

But at the NAACP, Henderson disagrees. He says a GOP-controlled Congress might make it easier for his group and other black-led organizations to motivate black participation in politics so they can effect changes in 1996. "Newt Gingrich will frighten many black people," Henderson says. "Much of what he says on subjects like crime and welfare has an undertone that strikes a racial chord among African Americans."

Until changes come, black Americans can't risk dismissing electoral politics or refusing to work whenever possible with the new Republican leaders. To be sure, blacks involved in politics at every level must deal aggressively and affirmatively with what Henderson calls "the new regime" on Capitol Hill. "Our whole strategy can't be a defensive one," Henderson says. "We will have to develop a functional relationship with the Republicans. To do otherwise would mean we're shutting ourselves off from any progress." ■

Term Limits Are Not the Answer

League of Women Voters President Rejects Restricting Terms of Election As the Way to Address Flaws in the Nation's Political System

by Becky Cain

Just as the American people have a number of specific complaints about the ways in which government responds—or fails to respond—to their needs and concerns, so too are there a number of specific things we can do to fix the American political system. But alas, term limits for members of Congress are not one of them.

Rather, term limits are a smokescreen, a simplistic answer to hard questions about our government that demand equally hard choices. It is easy, as it always has been, to holler, "Throw the bums out!" It is a more thoughtful, complicated process, however, to throw out the pieces of the system that don't work and to keep and strengthen what's good and productive about our government.

The truth is that there already are term limits in this country. They are called elections. If citizens don't like the job their elected representatives in Washington are doing, they can support other candidates and vote them out. While there is plenty that can and must be done to even the playing field between challengers and incumbents, we cannot ignore the fact that incumbents are regularly sent packing from Washington if they are perceived to have "lost touch" with the folks back home.

The "meat-axe" approach of the term limits movement does not distinguish between legislators whose careers deserve to be cut short and those who deserve reelection. As a result, term limits deny citizens the right to choose those whom they think best represent their interests. The decision about how long in office is long enough should be left up to the voters, who are the best judges of whether their interests are being served by the women and men they send to Washington. Here's what else is wrong with term limits:

- **Term limits would weaken the legislative branch of government and strengthen an already powerful presidency.** Congress must be able to form its own judgments on national issues, to come to consensus independently of the executive branch's policies, if necessary. A Congress of amateurs, however, would, by its very nature be more pliable and deferential and the institution would thus be robbed of its historic role of restraining runaway executive power. As a result, the branch of government closest to the people would become a less effective advocate for its constituents.
- **Term limits would result in increased reliance on congressional staff and unelected "insiders."** Novice legislators would depend much more on staff to sort out complicated issues and to keep things running—this at a time when many argue that congressional staffs are already too influential. And policy decisions and the oversight of complex financial markets and international affairs would in all probability end up largely in the hands of seasoned bureaucrats, presidential appointees, and judges. Also gaining in influence under term limits would be lobbyists and special interest groups.
- **Term limits would inhibit meaningful congressional reforms.** Instead of offering an opportunity to make productive changes in the political system, term limits would require legislators to exit the system just as they are developing a working knowledge of how it does and doesn't work—just when their understanding of the system would place them in a position to offer meaningful proposals for making it work better.
- **Term limits ignore the need for enlightened and experienced management of public policy.** There is nothing wrong with entrusting decisions about complex and crucial issues that can affect our lives and the world we live in to people with professional experience. We recognize the importance of experience in other walks of life—teachers are required to do student teaching, doctors have to complete residencies, and laborers have worked in apprenticeships for centuries. Why can't we expect the nation's lawmakers to benefit from experience when dealing with such complex matters as the world economy and meeting the needs of a modern society of 250 million diverse individuals?
- **Term limits would put our elected officials in a position of always thinking about that "next job," giving them an excuse not to be responsive to the people who elect them.** Elected representatives with a built-in cut-off date are less likely to be swayed by their constituents' interests and more likely to respond to the special interests who might provide them with a job—or at least, a hand in finding one—after their term is over. And for many, congressional service will become merely a stepping stone to a higher office.
- **Term limits would encourage legislators to consider the short-term over the long-term.** Finally, term-limited legislators would know for certain that they wouldn't be around to deal with the long-term consequences of many of their decisions. Their limited time in office would encourage them to focus on "quick fixes" and programs that might be wildly popular at the moment but that might result in severe repercussions down the road. By placing the burden of sainthood and "for the good of the country" thinking on amateur legislators, term limits fly in the face of political reality. ■

Ms. Cain is the president of the League of Women Voters of the United States.

Hard Times

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independent fundraising vehicle to support voter registration, education, and mobilization is needed. There is only one national organization which is currently concerned with these matters on a full-time basis: the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation, headquartered in Washington. This nonpartisan organization receives nearly 100 percent of its small budget from a few foundations and labor unions. Less than one percent of its annual budget is raised from within the black community. That is unacceptable. It is not a good idea to rely on other people's money for our own political empowerment. Freedom isn't free and neither is political power.

If we are seriously committed to mobilizing the black vote, we must generously commit our own dollars to making this happen. We need to start mobilizing now. Waiting until a few weeks before the election or depending solely on the generosity of foundations or political parties will not do. We can start by helping the National Coalition to raise the money it needs and by helping Operation Big Vote coalitions to raise funds locally. A national task force should be created to assist the National Coalition in identifying successful strategies for raising nonpartisan funds from blacks and their allies.

We face hard times and tough choices. But we've faced them before. In fact, the history of African Americans is a history of hard times and tough choices. In the past, we have always overcome. We will overcome again. ■

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The Joint Center's Board of Governors and its many friends invite you to our 25th Anniversary dinner to be held on Wednesday, March 22, 1995, at the Washington Hilton Hotel. National chairman of the 25th Anniversary celebration is Alex Trotman, CEO of the Ford Motor Company. Assisting Mr. Trotman in making this occasion a success is Ronald Townsend, president, Gannett Television Group, and chairman of the 20-member general dinner committee.

The dinner, which is the Joint Center's only public fundraising event, provides significant support for our research and outreach programs. Dinner tables are: Silver Anniversary Circle $25,000; Chairman's Circle $10,000; and Sponsor $5,000. Individual tickets are also available at $500 each. Opportunities to advertise in the dinner souvenir program are available. For reservations and further information, please contact Alfreda Edwards, dinner coordinator, at 202-789-3545.

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