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FOCUS

Do You Remember Your First Vote?

Voting Rights Are Still Unfinished Business

Our first vote is a benchmark of maturity and active citizenship. For many, like the woman pictured here, it is often an act of courage.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 made it possible for many Americans to vote for the first time. It continues to help them overcome a history of discrimination and confusing voting procedures.

Between 1960 and 1980, for example, black voter registration increased from 25.8% to 59.8% in 9 states covered by the Act. In 1980, 59% of eligible Hispanics registered to vote in the presidential election—up 20% from 1976.

The Voting Rights Act is now up for renewal in Congress. It is still needed. On October 5, 1981 the U.S. House of Representatives voted 389-24 to pass H.R. 3112, a bipartisan voting rights bill. The U.S. Senate is currently considering similar legislation, S. 1992.

The case for citizen participation was made a long time ago by Aristotle: "...liberty and equality... will be best attained when all persons alike share in the government to the utmost." Assuring the right to vote is the first step.

For more information about the Voting Rights Act, contact the Joint Center for Political Studies, 202-626-3500.

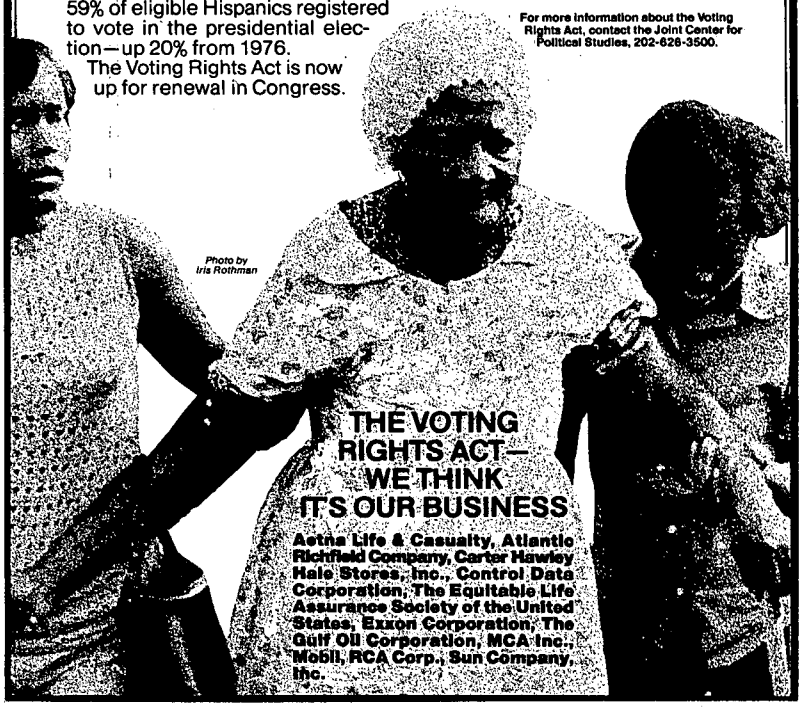


Photo by Iris Rothman

THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT— WE THINK IT'S OUR BUSINESS

Aetna Life & Casualty, Atlantic Richfield Company, Carter Hawley Hale Stores, Inc., Control Data Corporation, The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, Exxon Corporation, The Gulf Oil Corporation, MCA Inc., Mobil, RCA Corp., Sun Company, Inc.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT: *Still in Business*

Joint Center for Political Studies

Perspective

Last September I said that if corporations were to throw their weight behind renewal of the Voting Rights Act the way they threw their weight behind the Reagan budget, the Act's chances for extension would be enhanced significantly. Moreover, corporations would be giving a clear signal of their support for the protection of voting rights and, at the same time, would be taking the initiative in establishing a dialogue with minorities for their mutual benefit. This, it seemed to me, was the essence of corporate social responsibility.

On June 29 of this year—truly at the eleventh hour—President Reagan signed into law a bill extending the Voting Rights Act for 25 years (see story in this issue).

Among the many, many efforts that went into this important victory, one unusual undertaking was a corporate letter writing and advertising campaign. A corporate ad, shown on the cover of this month's *Focus,* was sponsored by 11 major corporations; it appeared in the *New York Times,* the *Washington Post,* and the *Los Angeles Times* during May.

The corporate ad, supporting the right to vote, resulted from an appeal by John Filer, chairman of Aetna Life and Casualty, and Lew Wasserman, chairman of MCA, for corporations to get into the voting rights debate. In addition to their own companies, Filer and Wasserman recruited nine other ad sponsors: Atlantic Richfield, Carter Hawley Hale, Control Data, The Equitable, Exxon, Gulf, Mobil, RCA, and Sun Oil.

Other expressions of support for voting rights came from such companies as Time, Inc.; American Airlines; Levi Strauss; Young & Rubicam, Inc.; Prudential; Metropolitan Life; Bank of America; and Ford Motor Company. Several associations, such as the American Council of Life Insurance and the Health Insurance Association, endorsed strong extension of the Act, as did individuals such as Alexander B. Trowbridge, president of the National Association of Manufacturers.

Much of this support grew out of the Joint Center's Corporate Information Program, which was designed to ensure that the voting rights issue received full and informed public debate. This program was given strong backing by the Black Leadership Forum.

On the final day of Senate debate on extension of the Voting Rights Act, Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA) commented on the corporate voting rights ad: "I am proud that corporations from Pennsylvania—as well as California, New York, New Jersey, Minnesota, and Connecticut, who do business in all parts of the country—made it their business to speak out about the importance of protecting minority voting rights. . . . The message of these corporate leaders is a signal of their concern to the millions of black, Hispanic, and other minority citizens who work in their plants, purchase their products, and share with them the responsibilities of citizenship."

This message is particularly welcome at a time when the Reagan administration is leaving more and more gaps in social programs to be filled by the private sector. The decision of these corporations to make voting rights their business affects more than the debate over extending the most effective civil rights legislation ever enacted. By their actions, the corporate leaders have opened the door for further dialogue on issues of common concern.

Having achieved passage of a strengthened Voting Rights Act, minorities and their allies have demonstrated their political clout. Now that this battle is behind us for at least 25 years—and we hope forever—the civil rights community can put its rediscovered clout behind other efforts to ensure justice and equality for all. And it can join in nationwide efforts to rebuild our economy, to patch the social fabric where it has been torn by certain actions of the administration and the Congress, and to forge sensible and sensitive public policies at all levels of government.

We welcome the opportunity to work with corporate America toward permanent solutions to the problems confronting all segments of our society.

Eddie N. Williams
President

FOCUS

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The Voting Rights Act: Still in Business

by Armand Derfner

(The author is director of the Joint Center's Voter Law Policy Project.)

At 2:00 p.m. on Friday, June 18, the year-and-a-half long struggle to extend the Voting Rights Act of 1965 reached a stunning climax with an 85-8 victory in the United States Senate.

The House of Representatives unanimously agreed to the Senate amendments on June 23, and on June 29, President Reagan, whose opposition to a strong Voting Rights Act had been rendered essentially irrelevant in the last few months, signed the bill into law.

The margin of victory in the Senate was by far the largest on any major civil rights bill in modern times. The victory was the result of many factors, of which the single most important was probably the grassroots support of millions of people throughout the country, including minority voters who demonstrated their political strength and others who joined in demanding effective protection of the right to vote.

Senator Russell Long (D-LA), a symbol of the Old South but one who was an original co-sponsor and consistent supporter of this bill, said he remembered the days when southern senators like himself thought it was "political suicide" to vote for civil rights legislation, but that today it might be political suicide to vote against the bill. Perhaps most telling were the "aye" votes on final passage of Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC) and Senator John Stennis (D-MS), two men who have personified the Old South and who voted against the original Voting Rights Act in 1965 and its extension in 1970 and 1975.

The Senate Extension Bill

Except for several technical amendments adopted without objection, the final version of the bill was identical to the version approved by the Senate Judiciary Committee on May 4. That version in turn was similar to the bill passed by the House of Representatives last October, except for several provisions added as part of the Dole-Kennedy-Mathias agreement.

The final version of the bill includes these features:

- *Section 5* preclearance is continued for the covered jurisdictions for a period of up to 25 years, unless the jurisdiction bails out before that time. For the next 2 years, the current bail-out test (which requires a showing that literacy tests have not been used discriminatorily for a certain period) will remain in operation. After August 6, 1984, new bail-out provisions take effect. Under these provisions, a state can bail out as a whole if it can show that it and all its political subdivisions meet the tests; in addition, whether or not a state bails out, individual counties (or comparable units) within the state are eligible to bail out separately if they and the towns and other political districts within the county can meet the bail-out tests. The bail-out tests, which are contained in section 4(a)(1) of the Act, are of two types: subsections *A* through *E* require a showing of a good record in certain respects for 10 years, while subsection *F* requires certain positive steps to ensure fair participation by minority voters.
- *Section 2* of the Voting Rights Act is amended to overturn the plurality opinion of the Supreme Court in *Mobile v. Bolden.* The new amendment makes it clear that in cases brought under this section, a violation of voting rights can be proved by showing a discriminatory result, without any requirement of proof of discriminatory intent. The new amendment adopts the approach (and language) of a 1973 Supreme Court decision called *White* v. *Regester.*
- *Section 203* of the Voting Rights Act, which provides assistance in a foreign language for language-minority voters (Hispanic, Asian-American, Native American, and Alaskan Native) in certain areas, is extended from its current expiration date of August 6, 1985 until August 6, 1992.
- *A new Section 208* is added to the Voting Rights Act, providing that voters who require assistance because they are blind, disabled, or unable to read or write are entitled to be assisted by a person of their choice. When this provision takes effect on January 1, 1984, it will eliminate any problems that might arise where a voter who needs assistance must rely on an election official for such assistance.

The Last Battle

The final battle in the Senate was as dramatic as previous stages in the struggle.

The bill was scheduled to come up for debate in the full Senate on Wednesday, June 9. Even before debate could begin on the bill, however, Senator East (R-NC) began a filibuster on the motion to proceed—a technical part of the parliamentary procedure that is almost always adopted routinely even when there is going to be a filibuster on the bill itself. Discussion on the motion to proceed went along for a full week and was finally closed off only after an exasperated Senate adopted a "cloture motion" (to shut off debate) by a vote of 86-8 the following Tuesday, June 15.

After the motion to proceed was adopted, debate on the bill began officially—although it had in fact been going on for a week. The long debate on the motion to proceed seems to have backfired on those who had been filibustering: once the debate on the bill itself began, the proceedings moved along quickly. By Thursday night, the voting began, and during a session that lasted until nearly 3:00 a.m., the Senate rejected amendments by margins that ranged from decisive to crushing.

Senator John East (R-NC) proposed several weakening amendments, including reinstating the *Mobile* intent test (defeated 81-16); changing the venue of Voting Rights Act cases from the District of Columbia district court to courts in the covered jurisdictions (defeated 65-31); and weakening the bail-out procedure (defeated 78-19). Amendments to weaken the bail-out provisions or undermine the Act in other ways were proposed and similarly defeated—including an amendment, introduced by Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), to exempt the 40

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Bradley Wins Gubernatorial Nomination in California

by Thomas F. Pettigrew and Denise Alston

(Dr. Pettigrew is professor of social psychology at Stevenson College, University of California, Santa Cruz. Ms. Alston is an advanced doctoral student in social psychology at Stevenson. The authors will continue to follow the California gubernatorial election for Focus. *They will also produce a study of this election to be published by the Joint Center.)*

Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley has become the first black American to win his party's nomination for governor. He won the California primary on June 8 by a margin of over 1 million votes.

Bradley's next step toward the governorship, however, has been made far more difficult by the upset victory of moderately conservative State Attorney General George Deukmejian over Lt. Governor Mike Curb in the Republican gubernatorial primary. This surprise outcome guarantees a close general election in November.

Bradley's Win

The mayor's Democratic triumph was decisive, but no more so than surveys had long indicated it would be. His 62 percent of the vote was precisely the percentage estimated by the California poll from a phone survey conducted the week prior to the primary (see Table 1).

Table 1. Democratic preferences for gubernatorial candidates, 1982.

	Final Vote, June 8 (%)	Early June survey (%)	May survey (%)	March survey (%)
Bradley	62	62	75	66
Garamendi	24	15	11	11
Obledo	5	5	3	7
Others	9	2	—	2
Undecided	—	16	11	14

SOURCE: Data from the Field Institute.

What did change was the standing of State Senator John Garamendi, the leading white candidate: Garamendi's proportion of the Democratic vote rose from 15 to 24 percent. Such a substantial shift often occurs in important interracial races. Some white voters, reluctant to tell an interviewer they are voting against a popular black candidate of their own party, report being "undecided" even though they lean to the white opponent. This phenomenon is strong enough that survey results generally provide the upper limit of a black candidate's popularity among white voters.

The Mexican-American candidate, Mario Obledo, failed to mount a serious challenge. Despite open conflict between black and Chicano politicians in the state, Bradley is extremely popular as mayor in Mexican-American neighborhoods in Los Angeles. Bradley, who speaks Spanish well, outdistanced Obledo in many Mexican-American precincts and easily garnered a majority of Chicano votes.

Deukmejian's Upset

All the major polls agreed that the aggressive Curb was pulling away from Deukmejian in the final weeks of the bitter and expensive Republican primary campaign. The Field poll had Curb ahead by 47 to 40 percent a week before the election. But Deukmejian made major gains in the closing days by uncharacteristic *ad hominem* attacks on his opponent. First, he revealed that Curb had not bothered to register to vote until 1972, when he was 29 years old. What is unforgivable about this inaction for many California Republicans is that Curb could not have voted for Ronald Reagan in the gubernatorial races of 1968 or 1972.

Next, Deukmejian disclosed that Curb had not fought in the Viet Nam War because of a 1-Y draft classification given to those deemed "medically, mentally, or morally unfit for service." The Field Institute's "exit interviews" with 5,000 voters questioned at the polling sites indicated that these late revelations caused a final winning surge for Attorney General Deukmejian.

The Conservative Climate

The climate in California was definitely conservative last month. Spending money was out of favor, hardline attacks on crime in favor. Three propositions for reducing state taxes won, and the expensive Peripheral Water Canal lost—all by margins of over 1.25 million votes, or 24 percent. New bonds for constructing more prisons, restrictions on bail, and drastic new criminal code measures opposed by the California Bar Association all passed by at least 600,000 votes, or 12 percent margins.

The defeat of the long-debated proposal for a massive canal to move water from northern to southern California had little effect on the gubernatorial races. Both Bradley and Deukmejian supported the canal, while Garamendi and Curb had opposed it. And since this explosive issue has been settled, it will probably play no role in the coming campaign.

This fact aids Bradley. The issue deeply divides the huge state: 92 percent of the North opposed it, 61 percent of the South favored it. Though both candidates are from southern California, Bradley's position as mayor of Los Angeles makes him especially vulnerable on any issue that divides the state. Little wonder that his television ads stress the unity of California.

The conservative trend threatens the reelection of California's one state-level black elected official, Dr. Wilson Riles, superintendent of public instruction. Four candidates ran in a nonpartisan election for the office on June 8, and Riles captured 41 percent of the vote. But since a majority vote is required to win the election, Riles will have to enter a November run-off for the first time since he took office in 1970. He was prevented from obtaining a majority largely by two right-wing opponents: Richard Ferraro, a longtime "anti-busing" member of the Los Angeles School Board, received 12 percent of

the vote; and lawyer and school superintendent Bill Honig, who ran an expensive, back-to-basics and discipline television campaign, received 25 percent of the vote. Riles and Honig will now be in the runoff.

To complete the picture, two conservative black candidates won Republican nominations and will face incumbent white Democratic officials. James Flournoy will oppose Kenneth Cory for state controller and Donald French will oppose Jesse Unruh—to whom he lost in 1978—for state treasurer.

The Coming Race

Deukmejian's victory ensures a close gubernatorial contest. Both the preprimary and exit surveys showed Bradley leading Deukmejian with a mere 4 to 5 percent margin (Table 2). And at present, Attorney General Deukmejian is not nearly as well known as Bradley throughout the state; as the campaign progresses and he becomes better known, he may well gain support. Bradley's 52 to 48 percent exit interview margin indicates that more Democrats defected to Deukmejian than Republicans did to Bradley, because in California, registered Democrats easily outnumber registered Republicans. On June 8th, 2.7 million Democrats voted, compared to 2.2 million Republicans. If the voters questioned in Field's exit interviews had chosen along party lines, Bradley would have shown a 56 to 44 percent lead.

In November, Bradley could benefit from turnout to support two liberal propositions on the ballot. However, much of the California left does not find Bradley himself exciting. And the campaign during these conservative times is not likely to change their views. A lack of turnout on the left in November could be a problem for the whole Democratic ticket.

The Democratic ticket has another potential problem: Governor Edmund Brown, Jr., running in November's Senate race. Brown's image has been severely tarnished. He was branded "the Lord of the Flies" by Gore Vidal in the primary because of the way he handled the infestation of the Mediterranean fruit fly last year. Agriculture is, after all, the state's leading money maker.

Brown will oppose Pete Wilson, the conservative mayor of San Diego. Wilson held commanding leads over Brown in both Field's final preprimary survey (57 to 35 percent) and exit interviews (59 to 41 percent). Understandably, Deukmejian embraces Wilson's candidacy, while Bradley is keeping a cautious distance from Brown.

The campaign will center on three issues: crime, economics, and past performances of the candidates. After their primary victories, when both nominees promised "a gentlemanly campaign," Herb Caen, the popular columnist of the *San Francisco Chronicle,* predicted the campaign would be deadly dull. But the opening skirmishes suggest that there will be more fireworks than expected.

Deukmejian ("just call me Duke") opened up his campaign with his favorite issue, crime. "During these past years when we have been struggling to get strong law enforcement legislation passed, we didn't hear a word from the mayor of Los Angeles. . . . Where was he when we were getting the death penalty reinstated?" Then, forgetting that he was standing beside Pete Wilson, whose career has been largely limited to being mayor of San Diego, Deukmejian faulted Bradley for having political experience "limited to only one city." Wilson reportedly winced.

Bradley, returning the fire, charged that his opponent, as attorney general, should accept a major share of the blame for the state's crime problem. Recalling his two decades as a Los Angeles police officer, the mayor posed his own rhetorical question: "How many people has he arrested?"

Economics is what will most divide the nominees. Deukmejian sticks to the Republican hardline. He would balance California's budget (a state constitutional requirement) with further program cuts rather than any new taxes. Bradley will not rule out tax increases, resists further program cuts, and wants to concentrate on reducing the state's unemployment. With Brown promising to direct his campaign against Reaganomics, it is certain that economic issues will overshadow crime issues as the campaign progresses.

Though Bradley holds a thin edge at this point, it looks as though he may need to use all the political skills he has acquired in his two decades of elected office to become America's first black elected governor.

Table 2. Survey results for November gubernatorial and senatorial races, 1982.

	Voter exit interviews, June 8 (%)	Early June survey (%)	May survey (%)	March survey (%)
Bradley	52	49	52	50
Deukmejian	48	44	39	40
Undecided	—	7	9	10
Brown	41	35	40	39
Wilson	59	57	52	51
Undecided	—	8	8	10

SOURCE: Data from the Field Institute.

Correction

In "Black Candidates and the 1982 Primaries," which ran in May 1982 *Focus,* we erroneously stated that Julia Carson resigned her seat in the Indiana state senate to run for secretary of state in the May 4 primary. Carson did run for secretary of state but did not resign her senate seat to do so. She has lost in the primary, and she will complete her state senate term, which does not expire until 1984.

Federal Civil Rights Enforcement in Education

by Mary Berry

(The author is professor of history and law at Howard University and a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The following article is adapted from her testimony before the Subcommittee on Post-Secondary Education of the U.S. House of Representatives on May 12, 1982.)

The Department of Education for the past year has tried to narrow the definition of federal financial assistance in order to limit its civil rights enforcement efforts. Its proposals to exclude all direct aid to students were rejected by the Department of Justice. A draft proposal to exclude only the guaranteed student loan program has been under review at the Department of Justice since September.

The Guaranteed Student Loan Program

The first concrete sign of the administration's position on guaranteed student loans was a short and somewhat ambiguous footnote in a brief filed by the Justice Department before the U.S. Third Circuit Court of Appeals in the case of *Grove City College* v. *Bell.* In this now well-known "footnote two," the department stated without elaboration that it would no longer contest the district court's conclusion that guaranteed student loans could not be used as a basis for enforcing Title IX. In testimony before the House Subcommittee on Post-Secondary Education, Secretary of Education Bell did elaborate, making clear that his department would not use guaranteed student loans as a basis for civil rights enforcement.

According to the Department of Education, redefining the term "federal financial assistance" to exclude guaranteed student loans would exempt over 300 post-secondary schools from federal civil rights requirements. Much civil rights legislation—e.g., Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1974—requires schools that receive federal financial assistance to comply with constitutional and statutory mandates for nondiscrimination and affirmative action. The threat of losing federal money has been an effective enforcement mechanism.

The guaranteed student loan program is the largest form of federally sponsored student aid, with more than $2.7 billion appropriated by continuing resolution for fiscal year 1982. If the administration eliminates these funds from its definition of federal financial assistance, it will do so in violation of legislative history and uninterrupted practice since the program's inception. This substantial sum of money would then be spent without any federal restraint on discriminatory practices by the schools that benefit only from these funds.

In a report issued in June 1981, *Civil Rights: A National, Not A Special Interest,* the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights presented its view that our nation's history, constitution, and statutory law mandate a vigorous federal civil rights enforcement effort. This report describes how cuts in the real resources of federal agencies charged with enforcing civil rights laws limit actual enforcement, undermine the deterrent effect of such enforcement by diminishing the credibility of potential federal liability, and reduce, rather than increase, the motivation to comply voluntarily with civil rights requirements. Nationwide civil rights progress, this report explains, will occur only if a committed federal government presses private, state, and local entities to live up to their civil rights obligations.

The Administration's Record

The administration and its congressional supporters, however, have a distinctly different view. Instead of focusing on improving federal civil rights enforcement, they have directed considerable effort to limiting federal enforcement responsibilities. For example:

- The Department of Education, in settling the government's case against North Carolina, ignored requirements issued under court order that are crucial to eliminating the vestiges of segregationist policies, including meaningful goals for desegregating student enrollments, faculties, and administrative staffs and plans for eliminating duplicative programs at neighboring black and white colleges.

- The Department of Education announced it would consider changing its rules so that schools it assists no longer would have to file an assurance of their compliance with civil rights laws—obscuring the civil rights laws the department enforces and eliminating a tool for seeking voluntary compliance.

- The Department of Education tried to reduce its Title IX protections against sex discrimination in employment for well over 3 million women educators and to limit the federal government's enforcement tools.

- The Department of Justice settled a major school desegregation case in Chicago by accepting a plan it formerly had rejected for failure to meet its requirements. The department is now supporting state efforts, as in the state of Washington, to limit local voluntary desegregation efforts.

- The executive branch disregarded its responsibilities under the Constitution and under Title VI in insisting that Congress must specifically authorize a 10-year-old Treasury Department policy denying tax exemptions to racially discriminatory schools.

The administration's about-face on the status of guaranteed student loans is, we believe, another attempt to undermine the national commitment, achieved at such great cost to so many, to make equality a reality in our land.

In the name of reducing federal intrusion into the affairs of state and local governments and the private sector, the administration is narrowly interpreting civil rights laws. The remedial nature of civil rights laws, however, requires that they be interpreted broadly. The courts and previous administrations have read such laws inclusively; that is, unless certain activities were specifically *excluded* by Congress from coverage, those activities came within the purview of the legislation. However, this administration has taken the opposite tack. Its position is, unless the Congress has spe-

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Telescope

Supreme Court Rules against At-Large Elections in Burke County

Just two days after the passage of the Voting Rights Act extension, the Supreme Court decided *Rogers* v. *Lodge,* a case challenging at-large elections in Burke County, Georgia. By a vote of 6-3, the Court affirmed the lower court's finding that the at-large elections in Burke County were unconstitutional. Finding that "the vestiges of racism encompass the totality of life in Burke County," the Court concluded that the county's present-day maintenance of its at-large system has a discriminatory purpose, even though the system may have been neutral when it was adopted.

This finding of discriminatory purpose is, of course, required in a case decided under the 14th amendment. But under the new Voting Rights Act, although many of the same factors will be relevant, the courts will not have to go the extra step of finding that those factors prove a discriminatory *purpose.* Congress has made it clear that the new Act applies not only to future election practices but also to practices now in existence and in cases now pending in court.

The combination of the new Act and the new decision may be very important. As the *Washington Post* noted on July 2, "While the ruling does not go beyond the new amendments to the voting rights law signed . . . by President Reagan, civil rights lawyers said it could serve as an important tool in convincing lower court judges all over the South to interpret the amendments liberally on behalf of minorities."

JCPS Forum on Nuclear Arms

In May, the Joint Center sponsored a forum on the role of armaments and arms control in national security. Eddie N. Williams, president of the Joint Center, moderated the forum, entitled "Talking with the Russians: The Role of Armaments and Arms Control in National Security." The three panelists were Dr. Ronald F. Lehman, deputy assistant secretary of defense for strategic and theater nuclear forces policy; Marcus Raskin, senior fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies; and Roger Wilkins, senior fellow at the Joint Center.

Prior to the forum, Roger Wilkins and Marcus Raskin had visited the Soviet Union with other colleagues, where they spoke with Soviet leaders about arms control. Wilkins began the forum with a discussion of the highlights of that trip and some of the humanistic aspects of arms control. "I came away with a distinct impression that they are scared to death of the arms race and that on that one point, it is clear that they want to get back to the negotiating table."

Dr. Lehman, in his discussion, emphasized that the Reagan administration believes it is important that America be able to use nuclear weapons as a deterrent to nuclear war. "You don't want one nuclear weapon used, under any circumstances, ever, because the conflict would get bigger and bigger and bigger. . . . The best place to deter nuclear war is not half way up the ladder. It's before the first nuclear weapon is used. But that means you've got to have survivable systems of the right kind in the right place, so that the Soviet Union knows, no matter how desperate things are, it just doesn't make sense to turn to nuclear weapons."

Marcus Raskin discussed some of the milestones in the development of the arms race. "It is no longer the case that the American government can protect the United States from nuclear war," he said, "and that's true of the Soviet Union as well. So people on both sides are hostages to their governments, and they are hostages to the arms race itself." He said we ought to "begin to develop an alternative security system which in fact doesn't use the American people as hostages."

The Joint Center's forum was, of course, a small part of the nationwide debate that is currently raging over the issue of nuclear arms. Until now, blacks have generally tended to give priority to other issues, although they clearly stand to lose as much as anyone. Several black leaders did speak at the massive nuclear disarmament rally held in New York City on June 12. Before the crowd of 700,000, Coretta Scott King, Dick Gregory, U.S. Representative Mickey Leland, and New York State Representative Albert Vann stressed that the nuclear arms race threatens all people regardless of race.

Roger Wilkins Publishes *A Man's Life*

"In a sense I have been an explorer and I have sailed as far out into the white world as a black man of my generation could sail." So writes Roger Wilkins, currently senior fellow at the Joint Center. He has been a lawyer, assistant attorney general, officer of the Ford Foundation, member of the editorial boards of the *Washington Post*—where he won a Pulitzer Prize—the *New York Times,* and the *Washington Star.* His autobiography, *A Man's Life,* was published on June 7 by Simon and Schuster. In it, Wilkins describes his lifelong struggle to come to terms with his color in a society that never for a moment let him forget that his color made him . . . different.

Wilkins never believed that the awards he won or the positions he achieved justified his existence. "I've always thought," he writes, "that if I have fifteen lucid moments before I die, I'll want to look back and see that I tried to act with honor, fifteen minutes by fifteen minutes throughout my life. The struggle of life is not won with one glorious moment like Reggie Jackson's five straight home runs in a recent World Series—wonderful and thrilling though that was—but a continual struggle in which you keep your dignity intact and your powers at work, over the long course of a lifetime."

The book has been favorably reviewed in major newspapers around the country. "Read Roger Wilkins' record of how it is," wrote James Baldwin in the *Washington Post.* "Few documents will, in your lifetime, equal it."

The Voting Rights Act

(Continued from page 3)

counties of North Carolina from the preclearance requirements of the Act.

By mid-evening on Thursday, it was clear that, barring some accident, the bill would be passed overwhelmingly and without any significant amendments. On Friday morning, more amendments were rejected, and by 1:00 p.m., debate ended.

Final passage came shortly after 2:00 p.m. on Friday, with "nay" votes cast only by one Independent senator, Harry Byrd of Virginia, and seven Republican senators: East and Helms of North Carolina, Denton of Alabama, Hayakawa of California, Symms and McClure of Idaho, and Humphrey of New Hampshire.

In signing the bill, President Reagan said,

> It provides confidence that constitutional guarantees are being upheld and that no vote counts more than another. To so many of our people—our Americans of Mexican descent, our black Americans—this measure is as important symbolically as it is practically. It says to every individual, "Your vote is equal, your vote is meaningful, your vote is your constitutional right. . . .
>
> President Eisenhower said, "The future of the Republic is in the hands of the American voter." With this law, we make sure the vote stays in the hands of every American.

What the Victory Means

Someone looking only at the final votes of 85-8 in the Senate and 389-24 in the House of Representatives might assume that the battle was not bitter and the outcome was never in doubt. In fact, the outlook in early 1981 was grim, and it stayed that way for a long time. The changing mood of the nation, the new administration's negative views on civil rights enforcement, and the mistaken assumption on the part of many people that times had changed so greatly that the Voting Rights Act was no longer needed—all contributed to the pessimism that the Act's supporters felt.

It took much hard work before the outlook even began to brighten, and the diehard opposition of a small band of men kept the matter in doubt to the end. The victory is an example of what an aroused and organized public can do, even in the face of the most determined and powerful opposition.

Fittingly, final passage of the Senate bill by the House of Representatives came on the same day that a voting rights march led by the Southern Christian Leadership Conference arrived in Washington to begin a demonstration. That march had begun in Tuskegee and proceeded through Alabama, Georgia, South and North Carolina, and Virginia, urging support for both the Voting Rights Act and other measures critical to the interests of blacks.

The passage of the Voting Rights Act has raised those other questions to the top of the agenda. The question now is whether the political strength and organization of the coalitions that were so effective in uniting behind the Voting Rights Act can be maintained in support of other issues.

Federal Civil Rights

(Continued from page 6)

cifically *included* certain activities within the purview of the legislation, then those activities are not covered. This was the case with the administration's position on tax exemptions for schools that discriminate against minorities, and so it is again on excluding guaranteed student loans from the definition of federal financial assistance.

President John F. Kennedy eloquently stated the basis of Title VI in his message calling for the legislation in 1963:

> Simple justice requires that public funds, to which taxpayers of all races contribute, not be spent in any fashion which encourages, entrenches, subsidizes, or results in racial discrimination.

But the Reagan administration apparently sees "getting the government off the backs of the people" as a higher value than "simple justice."

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