Volume 16, No. 7 July 1988

FOCUS

The monthly magazine of the Joint Center for Political Studies®

Welfare: Dependency vs. Reform

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The Forgotten Poor: Blacks in Rural Areas

Poor Blacks in Rural America Live Under Harsh Social and Economic Conditions and Have Access to Few Public Services

Blacks and the 1988 Democratic National Convention

New JCPS Publication Documents Historic Participation in This Year's Convention and Shows That Heavy Turnout Could Decide the Presidential Election

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Perspective

ISSN 0740-0195

PRICE $1.50

Black Democrats' Expanding Participation in 1988

The Democratic National Convention was a dramatic success on a number of fronts. It was a made-for-TV spectacular; it provided a picture of a unified party; and it showcased its nominee, Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis, in a most flattering limelight. But this convention, held in Atlanta's sweltering heat, also showcased the power of the black electorate.

Regardless of the outcome of the presidential election in November, the black electorate, often personified by Jesse Louis Jackson, was a key force in American politics from January to July and especially in the Democratic convention. It promises to be an even greater factor in the election of the next president.

Most observers will recall Jackson's commanding presence throughout much of the convention and the seemingly unending stream of black speakers to the podium. But the black electorate was represented in some other ways. There were 962 black delegates, making up 23.1 percent of all convention delegates. Nearly a third of the members of the credentials, rules, and platform committees were black, and black elected officials played major leadership roles in these committees. Black leadership and participation in the Democratic National Committee itself also has grown.

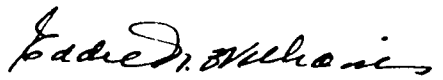
Black Democrats have every right to feel proud of their achievements in party politics this year. They also have every reason to be concerned that their participation not be taken for granted.

The 1988 presidential election matters deeply to blacks, and their votes are destined to figure prominently in the electoral arithmetic of both parties. This is true for several reasons. One is that blacks are now a larger proportion of the total electorate than at any previous time, making up 11.2 percent (compared to 10.8 percent in 1984). Another reason is that black registration and turnout have increased substantially in recent years, even as white voting levels have declined. Still another reason is that the presidential election is likely to be very close, with significant shifts in party loyalty at the polls likely among many other segments of the electorate.

A major question facing the Democratic party in this general election is whether it can retain the support of the large, growing, and increasingly active black electorate, especially at a time when it also must reach out to white conservative Southerners. Although blacks generally remain supportive of the Democratic party, surveys by the Joint Center for Political Studies show a softening of that support over the last few years. A significantly smaller proportion of the black voting population identifies itself as "strong Democrats" today than did so only two years ago.

Other factors in this election may also serve to soften black Democratic support: there are few explicitly racial issues to galvanize blacks as party voters, the Democratic party's nominee lacks strong ties to the black community, and the Republican nominee engenders considerably less fear and hostility among blacks than has President Ronald Reagan.

We'll know more about how all the various partisan strategies and scenarios unfold when the presidential campaign gets underway. Now is the time for black Democrats to bask in the sunshine of their influence in the primaries and in the national convention. Come September, their race for victory and influence begins all over again. ■



PRESIDENT

FOCUS

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Welfare: Dependency vs. Reform

At a JCPS Round Table, Welfare Administrators, Legislators, and Scholars Examine the Impact of Pending Legislation on Long-Term Welfare Recipients

by Katherine McFate

In 1969, Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then a senior White House aide in a Republican administration, was the principal author of a major welfare reform proposal that would have provided a guaranteed annual income to each family receiving public assistance. The measure passed the House of Representatives but never got through the Senate Finance Committee. Now, nearly two decades later, Moynihan has authored a dramatically different reform measure, this time as a Democratic senator. Instead of increasing the benefits of welfare recipients, Moynihan's Family Security Act of 1988 (S.1511) would require most adult recipients of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program to work in exchange for benefits. The Moynihan bill and a more generous House bill, the Family Welfare Reform Act (H.R. 1720), are now pending in a congressional conference committee (see *Focus,* September 1987, "Welfare Reform Bill Calls for New Direction").

Reform of the AFDC program has been spurred by two factors: the growth of what some describe as the long-term dependent underclass and a shift in public attitudes about welfare recipients. Over the years, the number of the nonelderly poor who are dependent on public assistance has more than tripled, rising from 1 million families in 1965 to about 3.7 million today. And researchers now estimate that over half the families receiving AFDC in any given month are long-term recipients. This means about 2.2 million American families remain on AFDC rolls for 10 years or more. Two-thirds of these Americans are children.

The shift in attitudes about welfare beneficiaries is related to the increased labor-force participation of women. As more and more mothers entered the labor force in the 1970s and 1980s to supplement family incomes, the public grew less sympathetic toward mothers who received welfare benefits but were not required to work. Today, 60 percent of all mothers are in the labor force, but fewer than one in six AFDC mothers work. The AFDC system is, in the eyes of conservative critics, an active agent in the growth of the underclass. Even as viewed by moderate and liberal members of Congress, AFDC has been a passive bystander in a growing problem.

Thus, concerns over the growth of a welfare dependent underclass and changing norms regarding working mothers have laid the foundation for reform of the AFDC program. On April 13, 1988, as Congress considered the welfare reform bills, the Joint Center for Political Studies invited over 50 national researchers and policy makers to a day-long round table to discuss two topics of direct relevance to reform legislation: recent research relating to potential long-term AFDC recipients and existing models of welfare-to-work programs which are underway in several states. The congressional legislation would provide funds for the establishment of similar programs in all states.

Long-term Welfare Dependency: Questions Remain

Research on the use of public assistance over the last few years has tended to confirm the popular image of long-term AFDC recipients as disproportionately nonwhite, unmarried mothers, many of whom bore children as teenagers. This has led many observers to assume that early out-of-wedlock child-bearing necessarily results in long-term dependency and is responsible for low educational attainment among AFDC recipients. Research discussed during the round table raised questions about the validity of this assumption.

For example, Gina Adams, senior program specialist at the Children's Defense Fund, presented findings from a Congressional Budget Office (CBO) study that refutes the perception that all teen mothers immediately go on welfare and remain there. On the contrary, she noted, there is a great deal of movement on and off AFDC among teen mothers. According to the CBO study, which examined data from a national sample of young women, a majority of unmarried teen mothers with young children managed to get off the welfare rolls for some time during a four-year period. Black teen mothers, however, were more likely to use AFDC for longer periods than white teen mothers, primarily because fewer black teens were married when they gave birth. While there is a higher incidence of white mothers "marrying off welfare," white unmarried teen

Ms. McFate is a research associate at the Joint Center for Political Studies.

mothers remain on AFDC as long as black unmarried teen mothers.

For most women, the key to getting off welfare is marriage. As Martha Burt, senior research associate at The Urban Institute, asserted, "If you are married and have another worker in the household, a mother can afford to take a low-wage job and the household will [still] be better off than depending on AFDC."

Another common misconception about long-term AFDC recipients is that there is a "lock-step" relationship between a mother's AFDC use and her daughter's use of welfare. Researchers at the University of Michigan have shown that almost two-thirds of the daughters of women who use AFDC do not go on welfare themselves. Nonetheless, although the probability that daughters of AFDC recipients will use AFDC is relatively small, it is twice that of daughters of poor, non-AFDC recipient mothers. Peter Gottschalk, professor of economics at Boston College, cautioned that these research findings are based on short time frames in the course of a daughter's experience and may not reflect the real correlation between mothers' and daughters' use of welfare over long periods.

The Cost of Reform: Lessons From State Programs

Under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1981, states were allowed greater flexibility (and some new money) to redesign the Work Incentive (WIN) program, the current employment and training component of AFDC. According to an evaluation of 11 state WIN programs conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), a New York based, nonprofit research organization, most states have only been able to afford employment services like job search, job placement assistance, and unpaid Community Work Experience (CWEP) or "workfare." These employment and training programs have been most successful at placing into jobs welfare beneficiaries who have some work experience and education.

But according to Judith Gueron, president of MDRC, such low-cost programs generally do not improve employment rates and earnings among the most disadvantaged AFDC recipients, who have no work history, few skills, and a poor education. What usually does work are comprehensive programs that provide a broader range of services, including individual assessments of the clients' skill levels and subsequent matching of employment and training services to suit their needs, day care assistance for the mothers of young children, medical coverage, and transportation vouchers. The fact that only a few states can afford such a comprehensive program has significant implications for the long-term AFDC recipients who are targeted by the new legislation.

Three State Models

The second portion of the JCPS round table was devoted to looking at the experience of three state welfare-to-work programs as models for implementing the provisions of the reform legislation. These states, Massachusetts, California, and New Jersey, with their expanding economies, have more revenues to commit to welfare programs than most other states.

The Massachusetts Employment and Training Choices (ET) program is the only welfare-to-work program in the country where participation among AFDC recipients is completely voluntary. Since the program began in 1983, it has placed 45,000 welfare recipients into full- or part-time jobs and it is in operation across the entire state. ET emphasizes training programs that upgrade skills so recipients can earn more than a poverty-level income. But the cost of success is high; the state spends an average of $6,300 in placing each participant.

Although the California legislature implemented the Greater Avenues for Independence (GAIN) program in 1985, only 26 of California's 58 counties have operational GAIN programs today. Limited by budget constraints, GAIN is not operating in the major metro areas of Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Francisco. Even with its limited geographic coverage, GAIN administrators quickly found they had severely underestimated the number of recipients requiring remedial education. The Department of Social Services found that 57 percent of new AFDC applicants and over two-thirds of continuing AFDC cases required education services. Between 1986 and 1988, the estimated cost of educational services rose from $16 million to $152 million. As a result, only 18 counties will receive full funding in FY 1989.

New Jersey's Realizing Economic Achievement (REACH) program only began in October 1987 and it will not be fully operational until the end of 1989. However, REACH has two expensive innovations worth watching. First, only women with children under two years old are exempt, which will increase the program's child care costs. Second, REACH gives 12 months of transitional medical coverage to the families of newly employed, former AFDC recipients. Both innovations contribute to a total cost per participant of $5,600 per year.

The experiences of these models demonstrate the high costs incurred by state programs that have achieved some success at moving long-term AFDC recipients off of welfare rolls and onto payrolls. The costs of these programs are $408 million for California, $90 million for Massachusetts, and $38 million for New Jersey.

Can We Pay for Reform?

The bills under consideration in the House/Senate conference committee both mandate that states provide a range of services, but there is pressure to hold funding down to the Senate proposal of $2.8 billion over five years instead of the more generous $7.1 billion level of funding called for in the House version. In addition, the legislation's cap on federal matching grants will severely curtail most states' ability to afford pro-

(Continued on back page)

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Inside This Issue

- **Some black Democrats feel they were short-changed at their national convention.**
- **Politicians and business leaders lash out at Japanese racism.**
- **More women of color are vying for congressional seats this year.**
- **Across the Nation: Federal judge Alcee L. Hastings is impeached; Donald Payne is about to become New Jersey's first black congressman; Maurice A. Dawkins' campaign for the Senate hits snags.**

Black Discontent at the 1988 Democratic Convention

Behind the sometimes spell-binding and generally well-received speeches of Democratic leaders such as Texas Treasurer ANN RICHARDS, Massachusetts Sen. EDWARD KENNEDY, Texas Agriculture Commissioner JIM HIGHTOWER, JESSE LOUIS JACKSON, and presidential nominee MICHAEL DUKAKIS—behind the endless receptions and parties and behind the show of unity as the convention ended—a question was voiced repeatedly by black delegates, alternates, and spectators: what did Jesse Jackson and black America get at the Democratic convention of '88?

Few specifics were released about the so-called "deal" between Jackson and Dukakis, leading to speculation that there was not much of a deal to begin with and that blacks will benefit little from what there was. Indeed, this convention has been dubbed the "trust me" convention by some who believe all Dukakis told Jackson was "just trust me" and that all Jackson told his delegates in turn was "just trust me." **On the other hand, some pundits reported that what Jackson and black Americans did get was a commitment for their greater participation in the party, to wit: (1) the creation of a new vice-chair of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), a post to which New Orleans Mayor SIDNEY BARTHELEMY, a Jackson supporter, will be appointed; (2) 15 additional black members of the DNC, including Jackson's son Jesse Jackson, Jr., but not former Gary Mayor Richard Hatcher, a long-time Jackson supporter; (3) support for the election of more state party chairs, vice-chairs, and other officers; (4) the integration of key Jackson staffers into the Dukakis-Bentsen campaign; (5) a commitment to provide Jackson with the funds, staff, and other resources to conduct a massive voter registration program and to campaign for the Dukakis-Bentsen ticket; and (6) a commitment to include Jackson and his supporters in the policy-making process of the Dukakis administration if the Democrats are successful in November.**

Was this enough? Some said no. Others said, "sure, we wanted more, but the gains were real." For example, former Atlanta Mayor **MAYNARD JACKSON,** describing himself as an incrementalist, concluded that he would rather take some progress than no progress, and that blacks did in fact secure some gains. And Mississippi State Party Chair **ED COLE** concluded that the additions to the DNC and the commitment to seek more party officers were important accomplishments. According to Cole, U.S. Rep. **MIKE ESPY** (D-Miss.) would not be sitting in Congress today had blacks not been among the officers of the state party to ensure a fair election and ballot count. DNC Treasurer **SHARON PRATT DIXON** added that the agreement to include more blacks in the DNC would have a major impact on party procedures and personnel over the next four years.

Still, there is no getting around some harsh realities. Outside of the Texas delegation, most blacks appeared displeased by the choice of conservative Texas Sen. **LLOYD BENTSEN** as the vice presidential nominee. And there were few visible and immediate gains for blacks at the convention. This, however, should come as no surprise because conventions have more and more become media events—with the real deals usually made before the convention begins.

In this context, a number of victories must be added to Jackson's tally. Before the convention, Jackson forces had already won greater "democratization" of the Democratic rules. Jackson finally secured a reduction in the number of superdelegates and the elimination of winner-take-all and winner-take-more systems for the next Democratic nomination contest. These changes, which he had fought for and lost in 1984, will make it easier in the future for a candidate who is not backed by the Democratic leadership to become the party's nominee. Jackson also won concessions on platform issues before the convention, including the declaration of South Africa as a "terrorist state" and the tougher sanctions that such a declaration implies. Also in the Democratic platform are same-day voter registration; affirmative action with goals and timetables; and statehood for the District of Columbia—issues that some traditional Democrats would rather ignore. Other Jackson priorities, to be sure, were defeated: his minority planks on higher taxes for the wealthy, no-first-use of nuclear weapons, and support for Palestinian rights were all rejected on the convention floor.

All in all, the convention drove home the fact that harsh realities remain in the realm of black politics. Although it is almost inconceivable that the Democrats can win without the black vote in 1988 (since they have not won a majority of the white vote since 1964), the Democrats must still win a substantial minority of the white vote (at least 40 to 45 percent) to have any chance of victory in November. For this reason, Dukakis bargained with Jackson with the white vote in mind. Furthermore, the greater the threat becomes that blacks might sit out the election or vote for an independent candidate (or even for the Republican nominee, **GEORGE BUSH**), the more important the white vote becomes to Dukakis.

In short, despite some progress and despite their impressive involvement at the convention in Atlanta, blacks still remain in a box: neither major party offers them a satisfactory alternative. To become a stronger force in American politics, blacks must find a way to get out of this predicament. They must figure out how to be better organized for the next presidential race, and how to win over enough coalition partners among Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, and progressive whites. What is clear in 1988 is that blacks are no longer satisfied with being junior partners—not even in a winning Democratic coalition.

Japanese Racial Insensitivity—Again

The Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and black business leaders recently issued a strong protest against racial slurs by Japanese government officials and manufacturers. At a Capitol Hill news conference, Rep. **MERVYN DYMALLY** (D-Calif.), chairman of the CBC, expressed outrage at the racial insensitivity of some of Japan's top leaders. Dymally also sent a letter to Japanese Prime Minister **NOBORU TAKESHITA,** on behalf of the Caucus, conveying their "distress...at the reemergence of racially derogatory comments and practices in your country."

The protests were in response to two recent incidents. The first was a public statement from the chief of Japan's ruling Liberal-Democratic Party, MICHIO WATANABE, who said that a lot of blacks do not mind going bankrupt because they take the position that "now we don't have to pay anything back." Watanabe is a former cabinet minister who held portfolios for finance and trade. The second incident involved "Little Black Sambo" caricatures produced by the Sanrio Co. and displays of mannequins characterizing blacks as having grotesquely large lips at Tokyo's Sogo department store. The mannequins were manufactured by the Yamato Mannequin Co.

These episodes echo statements made in 1986 by then-Japanese Prime Minister **YASUHIRO NAKASONE,** who said that blacks and Hispanics brought down the intelligence level of Americans. That statement prompted demonstrations in front of the Japanese embassy in Washington, D.C., threats of official congressional condemnation, and talk of boycotts against Japanese consumer goods sold in the United States. Nakasone subsequently apologized. Meanwhile, delegations of black political figures, including Dymally, Jesse Jackson, Atlanta Mayor **ANDREW YOUNG,** and a number of black business leaders held meetings with Japanese corporate executives and government officials to establish commercial links and foster better understanding between American minorities and the Japanese.

Talks centered around opportunities for blacks to secure Japanese auto dealerships, distributorships of Japanese consumer electronic goods, and subcontracts for black-owned high-tech computer and manufacturing firms. Although blacks consume about 10 percent of Japanese VCRs, TVs, and audio equipment and own 12 percent of all Japanese cars in the United States, they have been locked out of Japanese business ventures, and recent discussions have provided few keys to business opportunities. Meanwhile, the Black Sambos and the Watanabe statement have opened old wounds and damaged prospects for constructive relationships. The

chances of reaching an understanding seem remote. "Our efforts at negotiation have been most frustrating," says Dymally, whose district is about one-third Japanese-American. "We even blocked an earlier attempt to organize a boycott of Japanese products so that we could hold talks in a conciliatory, non-confrontational atmosphere, but we still have received no response from the Japanese."

Congressman **WALTER FAUNTROY** (D-D.C.) noted that "These incidents have added insult to injury. Black auto and steel workers have been injured by the loss of jobs to Japanese industries and now they've been insulted." He added that many blacks have been denied employment opportunities in Japanese plants located in America, which have been placed primarily in suburbs and small, predominantly white communities.

The concerns of the legislators were not limited to American blacks. As U.S. firms are withdrawing from South Africa, Japanese companies are rushing in to take their places. Japanese trade with South Africa has increased steadily in recent years. Fauntroy urged the Japanese to join the U.S. and other nations in imposing sanctions against the Apartheid regime and to deny the country robotics and other automation equipment.

Blacks have not been alone in their outrage. They were joined by California Democratic Congressmen **ROBERT T. MATSUI** and **NORMAN MINETA,** both of Japanese descent. "This is not fitting behavior for a great power and it has to stop," said Matsui. Mineta, who at age 11 was interned in a U.S. concentration camp for Americans of Japanese ancestry during World War II, said "the displays of Black Sambo and mannequins by the Japanese are racist and unacceptable...and my reaction to these displays is anger." He expressed dismay that the Japanese didn't seem to be willing to learn from their mistakes.

Rep. CHARLES RANGEL (D-N.Y.) voiced further disappointment: "We wanted to be conciliatory, to do it the 'Japanese way,' but we got no results. We don't want to be the vehicle for the rise of an anti-Japanese sentiment based on racism and the trade imbalance that could get out of control." This is also the concern of Black Business Council President **ALBERT NELLUM,** a Washington businessman, who said that if the Japanese do not respond to the non-confrontational approach, his organization and the CBC might be urged by some groups to pursue direct action, including a boycott of Japanese products. The council, which is chaired by **EARL G. GRAVES,** publisher of *Black Enterprise* magazine, was formed two years ago and comprises some of the nation's largest black-owned businesses. Graves and National Urban League President **JOHN JACOB** issued a parallel statement of protest at the league convention in Detroit, Michigan.

Women of Color Compete for Congressional Seats

According to the Center for the American Woman and Politics (CAWP), a growing number of women of color are contenders in this year's congressional races. At least 10 are vying for seats in the U.S. House of Representatives: five blacks, two Hispanics, two Asian-Pacific Americans, and one Native American.

The Democratic candidates include incumbent Rep. **CARDISS COLLINS** (D-Ill.); **FAYE WILLIAMS,** an attorney seeking a rematch against Republican incumbent **CLYDE HOLLOWAY** in Louisiana's 8th Congressional District; and **DOLORES SANDOVAL,** a University of Vermont professor who is seeking that state's open at-large House seat. In Wisconsin, Republican businesswoman **HELEN BARNHILL** and former Democratic Secretary of State **VEL PHILLIPS** are vying for that state's 5th Congressional District seat in Milwaukee.

CAWP reports that while 124 women have served in Congress, only 7 have been women of color—all of them members of the House. A total of 5 black women have served in Congress, all since 1968, when **SHIRLEY CHISHOLM** was first elected in Brooklyn. The others were **YVONNE BRATHWAITE BURKE** (D-Calif.), **BARBARA JORDAN** (D-Tex.), **KATIE HALL** (D-Ind.), and Rep. Collins.

At other political levels, the number of black female elected officials is also relatively small. JCPS research shows that black women hold only 95 seats in state legislatures (1.3 percent of all seats in state legislatures), and they represent 8.1 percent of all women legislators. Sixty-five black women hold positions on county governing bodies (10.2 percent of the 640 county seats held by black officials); 48, or 15.8 percent, of the 303 black mayors are women (just 3 black women are mayors of cities with populations over 100,000); and black women hold 509, or 20.5 percent, of the 2,843 municipal council seats held by blacks.

Yet, black women vote at a higher rate than do black men (45 percent of black voting-age women went to the polls in 1986 compared with 42 percent of black voting-age men) and are only slightly behind white women (at 47 percent) in their rate of voter registration and turnout. Clearly, black women are not getting their due in the political arena.

Across the Nation

ARKANSAS: LOTTIE SHACKELFORD, mayor of Little Rock since 1986, has indicated that she is undecided on whether she will seek reelection this November. But if Shackelford, a city director since 1978, should decide to run, tough opposition awaits her from two whites who have already announced that they are candidates for the post. They are assistant mayor and fellow city director **FLOYD G. "BUDDY" VILLINES** and former city director **JIM DAILEY,** who has a commercial real estate business (city directors in Little Rock are like city councilmembers in some other municipalities).

As Shackelford considers the pros and cons of seeking a second term as mayor, she must weigh her chances of waging a successful campaign in a totally new system for electing the mayor and city directors. In previous elections, mayors were chosen by the seven-member board of city directors. Shackelford was elected to her two-year term through this method.

Under the new system, the mayor, who also serves as a city director, will be elected directly by the voters at-large to a four-year term. Two other directors will also be elected at-large. In addition, Little Rock has been divided into four wards. The voters of each ward will elect a director to represent them. If Shackelford doesn't campaign for mayor under these changed election rules, sources says she may run for director from the predominantly black first ward. In the future, Shackelford, the cochairperson of the Credentials Committee at this year's Democratic convention, may extend her political career even further beyond the bounds of Little Rock—she has suggested that she may run for secretary of state for Arkansas in 1990.

FLORIDA: The U.S. House of Representatives recently voted 413 to 3 to impeach U.S. district judge **ALCEE L. HASTINGS,** the first black federal judge to be appointed in Florida. The House agreed to the 17 articles of impeachment recommended by the Judiciary Committee. The Subcommittee on Criminal Justice submitted the initial recommendation for impeachment on July 7. Before proceeding, black Congressman **JOHN CONYERS** (D-Mich.), who chairs the subcommittee and who voted for impeachment, said in a press interview, "We did not wage the civil rights struggle to replace one form of judicial corruption with another."

In an earlier trial that began in 1981, Hastings was charged with bribery-conspiracy. He was also a codefendant with WILLIAM A. BORDERS, JR., in charges of influencing, obstructing, and impeding justice. Borders was convicted of these charges in 1982, but Hastings was acquitted the following year. After Hastings' trial, an investigation by a special panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals concluded that there was "clear and convincing evidence" that he was guilty of conspiracy and perjury. Hastings has denied partaking in any improper action.

The next step in the impeachment process is a trial by the Senate. **If convicted by the Senate, Hastings will be permanently removed from his present $89,500-a-year judgeship. However, the Senate cannot impose any fine or jail term.**

MISSISSIPPI: When **ROBERT WALKER** was inaugurated as mayor of Vicksburg in late April, he became the only black mayor elected to lead that city and the only black mayor of a Mississippi city with a population greater than 25,000 (the city is 52 percent black).

The first black mayor of Vicksburg was Alderman **MELVIN REDMOND,** Walker's immediate predecessor and one of his election rivals. Redmond had assumed the post after the former mayor, **DEMERY GRUBBS,** resigned on February 14, 1988. Walker will complete Grubb's unexpired term, which ends in December 1991.

Walker has been replaced on the Warren County Board of Supervisors (District 3) by Rev. **KEMP BURLEY, JR.,** who is black. Burley must be elected in November to retain his seat on the board.

NEW JERSEY: DONALD PAYNE, a 53-year-old Newark city councilman, is set to become the first black congressman from New Jersey, having decisively beaten his fellow councilman, **RALPH T. GRANT, JR.,** in the June 7th Democratic primary by a vote margin of 3 to 1. Payne is highly favored to win the heavily Democratic 10th District congressional seat, which retiring Rep. **PETER RODINO** (D-N.J.) is vacating after 40 years. Payne's opponent is Republican **MICHAEL WEBB** of East Orange. The district has a 58 percent black voting-age population.

Payne has a long record of public service. A second-term Newark city councilman, he has been the South Ward district leader since 1970; he also served on the Essex County Board of Freeholders from 1972 to 1978, becoming the director of the board in 1977. The first black national president of the YMCA, Payne headed the organization for three terms, from 1970 to 1973, and was chairman of its World YMCA's Refugee and Rehabilitation Committee from 1977 to 1981.

If elected to Congress, Payne plans to seek positions on the Banking, Finance, and Urban Affairs Committee and on the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control. He wants to address the problems of poor housing and rampant drug abuse in his economically depressed district.

VIRGINIA: MAURICE A. DAWKINS' campaign for the U.S. Senate has run into trouble since his nomination by the Republican party on June 13. Several discrepancies between his actual background and his public representation of it have recently been revealed.

For example, Dawkins claims to have campaigned for Republican president DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER, who was elected in 1952 and reelected in 1956. But it was discovered that in 1952 Dawkins was vice chairman of the New York State Volunteers, for Ike's Democratic opponent, ADLAI STEVENSON, and in 1956 he was a member of Stevenson's Southern California Campaign Committee.

Another embarrassing item is Dawkins' claim to have been a registered lobbyist on Capitol Hill since 1975. It was discovered that he was not registered. And although Dawkins never earned a medical or doctoral degree, he has used "Dr." before his name on his campaign literature and stationery as recently as May 23. Dawkins says he did receive an honorary doctorate of divinity from the California School of Religion. But *Focus* staff have been unable to locate any institution by that name in California.

In spite of all the publicity generated by these revelations, the candidate's spokesman, **MICHAEL SALSTER,** maintains that Dawkins has not been damaged by the reports, and claims that Republican support has grown. Salster also contends that the Democratic nominee, former governor **CHARLES ROBB,** is not invincible. "He [Robb] has been off the ballot for seven years and out of office for three years," says Salster.

The Forgotten Poor: Blacks in Rural Areas

Poor Blacks in Rural America Live Under Harsh Social and Economic Conditions and Have Access to Few Public Services

by Dr. Joyce E. Allen

Dilapidated housing, poor health, limited job skills, entrenched poverty. These are the conditions normally experienced by the nation's underclass, a group whose persistent poverty has captured the attention of policymakers, researchers, and the media and whose make-up, according to the Urban Institute, is overwhelmingly urban.

Yet these conditions also apply to the rural poor. The rural poor are often ignored, largely because they are dispersed across the country in hidden pockets of blight. This is especially true of the black rural poor. While public attention is focused on the problems of the urban underclass and ways to help improve their lot, millions of people in rural America continue to languish in poverty, largely forgotten. In this article, we examine the nature and extent of rural poverty among black Americans.

A Startling Poverty Rate

In 1986, a family of four was considered living below the poverty line if their annual family income was below $11,203. Based on this measure, a disproportionate share of America's poor live in rural or nonmetropolitan areas (the terms rural and nonmetropolitan are used interchangeably in this article). Twenty-three percent of the nation's population lived in nonmetro areas in 1986, yet these areas contained 30 percent of the poor. And although the vast majority of the nonmetro poor are white, poverty in rural America falls disproportionately on racial minorities. About 2.2 million blacks in rural areas fell below the poverty level in 1986.

The poverty rate among rural blacks is startling. In 1986, 42 percent of these blacks lived below the poverty line. By contrast, the poverty rate was 31 percent for blacks living in the central cities of metropolitan areas and 15 percent for whites in rural areas.

The Black Rural Poor: Some Characteristics

The most recent census data indicate that the black rural poor are different in many respects from their urban counterparts. Although it is difficult to develop a profile of the typical black rural person living below the poverty line, some traits are salient.

One of the most notable features is their geographic concentration. Among blacks, rural poverty is largely a Southern phenomenon. Those living in the South represent 97 percent of the black rural poor, and the poverty rate of Southern blacks is about 44 percent.

A common misconception is that poor blacks in rural areas are primarily farmers. While this was once true, farmers currently account for only 3 percent of this group, primarily due to the decline in farming among blacks. However, the poverty rate among black farmers is also very high: 45 percent.

- **Rural families.** The poor in the United States have become increasingly concentrated in families maintained by women with no husband present. This is true for both urban and rural blacks. Approximately 1.2 million (52 percent) of the black rural poor live in female-headed families, and 711,000 (32 percent) live in married-couple and all other types of families. However, poor blacks in central cities are more likely to be concentrated in female-headed families than are poor blacks in rural areas. By contrast, poor whites in rural areas are concentrated in married-couple and other types of families.
- **Rural youth.** Black children in rural areas fare badly, especially those in female-headed families. About 61 percent of black nonmetro children under six years of age lived in families below the poverty level, and this figure rises to an astonishing 83 percent for those in female-headed families. While poverty rates are high for young black children (under six years) in central cities, they are well below the rates for their rural counterparts. In fact, the corresponding poverty rates for young black children in the central city are 46 percent for all young children and 69 percent for those in families maintained by women. The poverty rate for young white children in nonmetro families is 22 percent for all families and 65 percent for female-headed families.

The economic status of rural black children as a whole (ages 0 to 17) is somewhat better than among those under age 6, but for both groups the situation is worse than that of their black counterparts in central cities or their white counterparts in nonmetro areas.

Dr. Allen is a senior research associate at the Joint Center for Political Studies.

The poverty rate among black children under age 18 in families that reside in nonmetro areas is 54 percent. The poverty rate for black children under 18 climbs to 78 percent among families headed by a woman.

• **Rural elderly.** The United States has made great strides in reducing poverty among the elderly. Overall, the poverty rate for persons 65 years of age and over has fallen from 35 percent in 1959 to 12 percent in 1986. Yet poverty is prevalent among the rural black elderly. About 245,000 of these elderly people were poor in 1986, which translates into a poverty rate of 42 percent, compared to 16 percent among rural elderly whites. The 1986 poverty rate for elderly blacks in central cities was 26 percent.

Poverty is especially pervasive among the black rural elderly who are classified as unrelated individuals (persons who are not living with any relatives). Slightly more than two-thirds of all these persons have incomes below the poverty level, while more than three-fourths of the women in this category are poor. The elderly depend heavily on retirement benefits and government transfers such as social security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI). Therefore, people who worked at very low wages or never worked outside the home, such as elderly black women receiving very low or no payments from these sources, are among the poorest of the poor.

Characteristics of the Black Rural Poor, 1986

Characteristic	Percent of Total	Poverty Rate
Reside in the South	97.0%	43.6%
Reside in the North and West	3.0	21.4
Live on farms	3.3	44.5
Elderly	10.9	42.1
Family Structure		
Live in families maintained by women	52.2	65.4
Children under 18 years	30.7	77.5
Children under 6 years	11.6	82.7
Live in all other families	31.7	24.5
Children under 18 years	13.3	31.4
Children under 6 years	3.3	31.3

Note: Categories may be overlapping. Thus, they do not sum to 100.
Source: Bureau of the Census, *Poverty in the United States: 1986.*

Nature of Rural Poverty

While all poverty is harsh, regardless of location, it is especially so in rural communities. In the most depressed communities, housing often consists of rusty trailers and tin-roofed shacks. According to the Census Bureau's 1983 Annual Housing Survey (the most recent data available), which identified some of these substandard conditions, 19 percent of the units occupied by black householders in rural areas lacked some or all plumbing facilities, 19 percent lacked complete bathrooms, 11 percent lacked complete kitchen facilities, 8 percent had no piped water available on the site, and 2 percent had no piped water available within a quarter of a mile.

Severe and persistent poverty has also taken its toll on the health and nutrition of the rural poor. Research studies from the Washington-based Public Voice for Food and Health Policy reveal not only that many of the rural poor are underfed, undernourished, and in poor health, but that these problems are worsening. The studies found that the diets of the black rural poor were less likely to be adequate than those of their white counterparts. Stunted growth was found among black children in this category more often than among white children.

Problems with the delivery of social services in rural areas makes poverty among rural blacks especially debilitating. Many rural communities are thinly populated and the distances between them are often great. These factors isolate the rural poor from employment centers and from the social services designed to assist them and raise the cost to local governments for providing needed services. Unfortunately, many local governments in rural areas lack the resources to provide health clinics, subsidized housing, day care facilities, and public transportation.

Outlook for Black Rural Poor

The black rural poor are extremely impoverished and their future may be even bleaker if action is not taken to alleviate their suffering. Although they have some of the characteristics of the urban black poor, they are unique, and their differences need to be recognized when strategies to help them are being developed.

While welfare reform could improve the economic situation of the black rural poor, many of their problems can best be addressed through broad-based rural development. (See "Welfare: Dependency vs. Reform" on page 3.) Congress is currently considering legislation that would target assistance to the rural poor. One such measure is H.R. 4373, the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Act, which would establish a commission to fight poverty in that region.

Rural development efforts need to include additional federal money targeted for health care, food, housing, and education. Yet such programs are costly and funding for them must compete with other goals, such as reducing the federal deficit and assisting the urban underclass. Solutions to the problems of the black rural poor are not likely to come, therefore, until there is widespread public recognition of the severity of rural poverty and the tremendous toll that it takes, especially on the very young and the elderly. □

Blacks and the 1988 Democratic National Convention

New JCPS Publication Shows That Heavy Turnout Could Decide the Presidential Election

The recent Democratic National Convention in Atlanta was historic in the level of black participation. Now, with the general election only four months away, it seems clear that the level of black voter participation may be the deciding factor in who wins the White House. How strongly blacks are likely to turn out at the polls and why, as well as where their votes are expected to be most influential, are among the questions answered in the Joint Center's newest publication, *Blacks and the 1988 Democratic National Convention.*

Written by Dr. Linda Williams, associate director of research at the Joint Center, the book not only served as a guide for black delegates at the convention itself but promises to serve political analysts and historians as an important summary of black involvement in U.S. presidential elections over the last two decades. The book also analyzes the 1988 primary campaigns of Gov. Michael Dukakis and Jesse L. Jackson and briefly examines their views on issues important to the black electorate. Following are some highlights:

• **Blacks at the 1988 Democratic Convention.** This year there were 962 black delegates to the Democratic convention, 23 percent of the total and one-third more than participated in 1984—and the largest number in party history. Several states showed significant growth in their numbers of black delegates: New York grew by 26 new black delegates, California by 30, and Michigan by 32, even though the total number of delegates from each of these states had actually declined. Black leadership and participation increased in both the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and in the Democratic National Convention.

• **Trends in Black Voter Participation.** The book details how the gap between black and white voter participation has narrowed tremendously since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. In presidential elections, the difference between these participation rates closed from 12 percentage points in 1976 to less than 6 points by 1984. Two million new black voters have joined the rolls since 1980, so that blacks now make up 11.2 percent of the electorate.

• **States Where the Black Vote May Be Decisive in November.** In six Southern states, blacks constitute a large enough minority that, if they vote in substantial numbers for Dukakis this fall, no more than 27 percent of the white voters need to support Dukakis for him to win in those states. They are Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Alabama, South Carolina, and Mississippi (where the white vote needed is only 19 percent).

The black vote could also prove decisive in New York and Massachusetts, where the number of unregistered blacks is considerably greater than the margin of Ronald Reagan's victory over Walter Mondale in 1984. For the same reasons, increased minority registration could be pivotal in 14 other states.

• **Softening of Black Loyalty to the Democratic Party.** Although the Democratic party has gotten between 85 and 90 percent of the black vote in presidential elections since 1968, black loyalty to the party shows some signs of softening. While the white/black gap in voter participation should continue to narrow, black turnout might not grow as fast for the fall elections as it did between 1980 and 1984 without a massive push by voter registration groups. Turnout estimates from this year's Democratic primaries bear out this warning; black participation went up only 3 percentage points from 1984, as compared with the 1980-84 increase of 8 points.

Similarly, recent polls by the Gallup Organization and the Joint Center show that the number of blacks describing themselves as "strong" Democrats has declined—from 55 percent in 1984 to 41 percent in 1987. Those describing themselves as "weak" Democrats rose from 21 percent to 31 percent. Still, there is no evidence that these blacks are moving into the Republican column.

In summary, the book makes it clear that the central issue for the Democratic party this fall will not be whether the majority of blacks will vote for Dukakis but, rather, how large the black turnout will be. Unless Republican nominee George Bush and his party offer blacks good reasons to switch their allegiance over to the Republicans, blacks are likely to vote overwhelmingly for the Democrats once again. However, *if* blacks are not enthusiastic about the Dukakis-Bentsen ticket, their turnout—from the standpoint of Democratic leaders—may be perilously low. □

Copies of *Blacks and the 1988 Democratic National Convention* can be ordered through the Publications Clerk, Joint Center for Political Studies, Suite 400, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20004; telephone 202/626-3500.

This summary was prepared by Marc DeFrancis, senior editor at the Joint Center for Political Studies.

Welfare

(Continued from page 4)

grams, in which case they are likely to implement low-cost (and ineffective) job search programs or CWEP.

Round table participants expressed some skepticism about the ability of the local economies to absorb newly trained AFDC recipients even in the states that are able to implement comprehensive welfare programs as originally intended by AFDC reformers. If local economies cannot provide high enough wages, the economic incentive and logic of choosing work over welfare disappears. (It is estimated that in California, a family of three would need a wage of $10.26 an hour to have an income that exceeded AFDC cash and in-kind benefits.)

Assuming that some version of the welfare reform bill passes Congress this year and that President Reagan does not veto it, some members of the round table fear that the measure is not likely to significantly reduce long-term dependency or the cost of public assistance. It may simply transform the nonworking dependent poor into working dependent poor and increase government intrusion in their lives. □

Welfare Reform Legislation: Major Provisions

	House of Representatives Family Welfare Reform Act H.R. 1720	Senate Family Security Act of 1988 S. 1511
Education, Employment, and Training Programs	States must provide remedial and specialized education, English language, job skills training, job search and counseling. They must also provide other programs such as unpaid community work experience (CWEP) or grant diversion where AFDC grant is transferred directly to employers who make up the difference in wages.	States must provide basic education and skills training and two of the following: CWEP, job search services, or grant diversion.
AFDC Recipient Participation	Full-time mandatory for parents with children over 6; part-time with children over 3. Volunteers have first priority to participate.	Part-time mandatory for parents of children under 6 for 24 hours per week. Participation quotas for single parents that increase over time from 10% by FY 1990, to 14% by FY 1993, to 22% by FY 1994.
Unemployed Parent	Assistance extended to two-parent families with unemployed father in all states.	Assistance extended to all states. One parent must participate in CWEP or grant diversion 16 hours or more a week.
Unpaid Community Work Experience (CWEP) or "Workfare" in Return for Assistance	Limited to a total of six months per individual; work assignment must have a training component.	No time limits.
Minimum Compensation	Cannot be forced to accept a job that pays less than total value of AFDC and the value of health benefits.	Cannot be made to accept job that pays less than cash value of AFDC unless the state makes up the difference in cash.
Child Care Transition Assistance	12 months after finding employment if income under 150% of poverty level.	Nine months after finding employment, no cap on income.
Child Care Stipends	$200 per month per child for children under 2, $175 per month for 2 and up.	States will set limit; not to exceed local market rate.
Medicaid Transitional Health Care	No provision.	Six months, plus an additional six months with a sliding scale premium.
Total Cost	$7.1 billion over five years.	$2.8 billion over five years.
Date Passed	Passed on December 16, 1987, by vote of 230-194.	Passed on June 16, 1988, by vote of 93-3.

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