Volume 23, No. 7&8 July/August 1995

25TH ANNIVERSARY 1970-1995

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

Making Welfare Work

Joint Center Analysis Critiques GOP Proposals to Overhaul Welfare Programs and Presents Constructive Reform Recommendations

Community, Tolerance, and Opportunity

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER | **PERSPECTIVE**

ISSN 0740-0195

PRICE $1.50

The National Policy Institute—A Time to Focus

One of African Americans' worst living nightmares would be to wake up on November 6, 1996, to face a Clarence Thomas Supreme Court, a Newt Gingrich Congress, and a newly elected president hell bent on pandering to the far right.

With the Supreme Court rolling back hard-won civil rights gains, the Congress zapping valuable programs, and most GOP presidential hopefuls advocating anti-affirmative action positions, this nightmare is not as far-fetched as it may seem. It may well represent what the future might look like. The prospect of such a scenario should set off alarm bells calling for a dramatic increase in political action and an unprecedented "Big Vote" in 1996.

With so much at stake, the nation's six caucuses of black elected officials are convening the seventh National Policy Institute next January 25-27, to focus on "Shaping the Future Role of Government." The Institute will offer black leaders in the public and private sectors opportunities to become active participants in a national debate on issues of major significance. It will help ensure that the aspirations of the black community are represented effectively and voiced vigorously. The issues to be addressed at this nonpartisan forum go to the heart of the debate over how the nation is to progress as an inclusive, multiracial, multicultural society that guarantees justice and opportunity for all.

The 1996 National Policy Institute will be cosponsored by the Congressional Black Caucus, the Judicial Council of the National Bar Association, the National Association of Black County Officials, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, the National Caucus of Black School Board Members, and the National Conference of Black Mayors. The Joint Center will serve as convener of the Institute, which will be held at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

The event will provide a unique opportunity in the 1996 presidential election year for key leaders—elected and appointed officials, representatives from civil rights, business, labor, academic, and community organizations—to discuss public policies, to network around matters of common concern, and to increase their knowledge about issues and candidates in the 1996 campaign.

Topics on the agenda will include: affirmative action, education, job creation, keeping cities alive, minority business development, political participation, and violence as a threat to civil society. The Institute is being convened early in the presidential year to allow its participants to influence the thinking and strategies of presidential and congressional candidates. The relevance of these issues is self-evident as Congress is reducing funding for urban programs, Head Start, college student financial aid, and minority business development. And millions of African Americans will have to add their names to voter registration rolls if we are to have an impact on the primary and general elections.

If we want to keep our worst nightmare from coming true, now is the time to start shaping the future role of government and deciding who will represent our views and concerns in the governance of this nation. The struggles before us are as serious as a heart attack. The National Policy Institute is a critical response. I look forward to seeing you January 25-27, 1996. ■



PRESIDENT

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Making Welfare Work

Joint Center Analysis Critiques GOP Proposals to Overhaul Welfare Programs and Presents Constructive Reform Recommendations

by Katherine McFate

The following is a summary of a proposal for welfare reform by Joint Center senior researcher Katherine McFate.

The welfare system is broken. The poor who must rely on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), which provides cash assistance to families, know this better than anyone else. The current system does not reward initiative or hard work, and it discourages the formation and stability of two-parent families.

Americans want to help the poor, but they want public assistance to be provided in a way that helps parents support their own families. In a 1994 *Los Angeles Times* poll, almost three-quarters of Americans said the main goal of welfare reform should be "to get people into the work force," not simply to cut costs, and an equally large majority said they would favor a comprehensive welfare reform that included job training and child care, even if it cost $50 billion over ten years. Americans aren't against helping the poor, they just want a welfare system that works.

Unfortunately, the reforms pending in the Republican-controlled Congress will not deliver such a system. Current proposals include a lifetime limit on welfare use, mandatory workfare, and cuts in training and child-care assistance. A strict time limit on cash assistance, especially in areas of high unemployment, is likely to cause more homelessness, since 75 percent of AFDC recipients use their AFDC grant to pay rent; it could also send more children into foster care. And simply mandating that all welfare recipients work will not make hiring women on welfare more attractive to private employers, nor will it create more jobs for them. Without better educational credentials and child care, most welfare recipients will be unable to compete for and hold onto even low-wage jobs.

To win the approval of American citizens, public assistance must be pro-work and pro-family. Our goal should be to prepare poor parents for the labor force, help them find jobs, and ensure that their children are adequately cared for. And instead of pushing fathers away from families, our policies should encourage them to participate responsibly in their children's lives.

The current welfare system was created for another era—when jobs lasted a lifetime and marriage was for keeps. Today, we live in a world where jobs are tenuous, real wages are falling, and there are more low-skilled workers than employers need. Marriages fail, women work, and many American children grow up knowing only one parent.

Unemployment and Declining Incomes

A new welfare system must help poor parents cope with the changing economic and social environment. The job prospects for people with a high school education or less have declined dramatically in the United States since the mid-1970s. Roughly 7.5 million Americans today are unemployed and actively looking for work, while another 4.5 million part-time workers want to work full-time. Men and women without high school diplomas are five times as likely to be unemployed as those with college degrees. In general, employment opportunities have not kept pace with the large numbers of low-skilled people who need work.

Moreover, the wages of low-skilled people who do find work are often insufficient to support a family. The real value of the minimum wage fell by 27 percent over the last 15 years (1979-94). Currently, a full-time job at minimum wage pays only $8,500 a year, which is about 70 percent of the poverty level for a family of three. Low-wage jobs rarely provide health benefits, and the workers who hold these jobs are often ineligible for unemployment benefits. Only 12 percent of workers earning under $5.00 an hour receive unemployment benefits, which in fact are received by only 40 percent of all unemployed persons in the U.S.

As the bottom fell out of the labor market for low-skilled workers, the proportion of families headed by a single parent rose dramatically. Today, they make up a third of all families with children, and it is estimated that well over half of all children will find themselves living with only one parent during some part of their childhood. While the majority of lone-parent families are still created by divorce, out-of-wedlock births play an expanding role.

Single Mothers, Impoverished Children

Contrary to popular perceptions, out-of-wedlock childbearing is not confined to the poor or to women on AFDC. It cuts across lines of class and race and has increased most rapidly among college-educated women. Moreover, out-of-wedlock births increased most significantly in the 1970s and 1980s, when the value of AFDC plummeted. Thus, the "generosity" of welfare cannot be blamed for the increase in illegitimacy.

These two trends—declining wages and the growth in lone-parent families—have combined to increase child poverty. It typically takes the earnings of two adults to support children today, especially when parents lack college degrees. Unfortunately, too many lone mothers receive no support from noncustodial fathers. An estimated

Ms. McFate is associate director of social policy at the Joint Center.

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Welfare Reform

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$33 billion a year of child support goes uncollected each year, and out of this amount $7.5 billion is owed to mothers on AFDC. If every AFDC family were assured just $250 a month in child support, studies estimate that a third of AFDC families would be able to leave public assistance for work.

Lone mothers with children face several huge barriers in their struggle to become and remain financially self-sufficient. First, many do not have the education or training to compete for jobs that can pay a family wage. The jobs for which low-skilled mothers are qualified pay poorly, often have irregular hours (which makes child care difficult), and rarely offer health care coverage for their children.

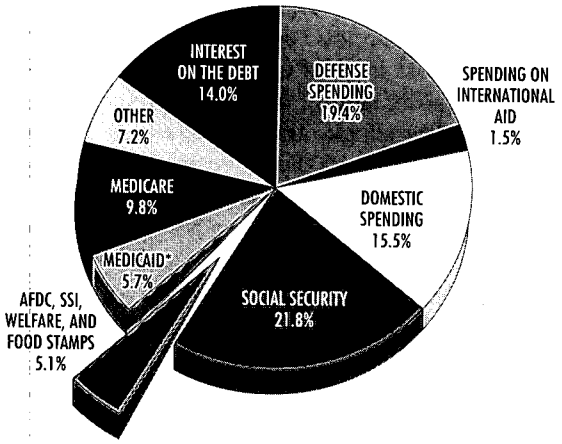
Despite these difficulties, almost three-quarters of the mothers who use AFDC leave it within two years. The majority of those who leave nevertheless end up back on the rolls later. Most recipients cycle on and off welfare, using it as a kind of unemployment insurance system because they don't qualify for regular unemployment benefits. (Only 20 percent of all unemployed women in the United States receive unemployment benefits.) Of the one-quarter of AFDC parents who do rely on welfare continuously for long periods, about 40 percent are disabled, while the remainder tend to have poor basic skills and lack high school diplomas and work experience.

In short, declining wages, high unemployment among the least educated, the lack of child support from absent fathers, and the lack of affordable health care and child care have combined to push many lone mothers onto welfare and keep them there.

An Agenda for Reform

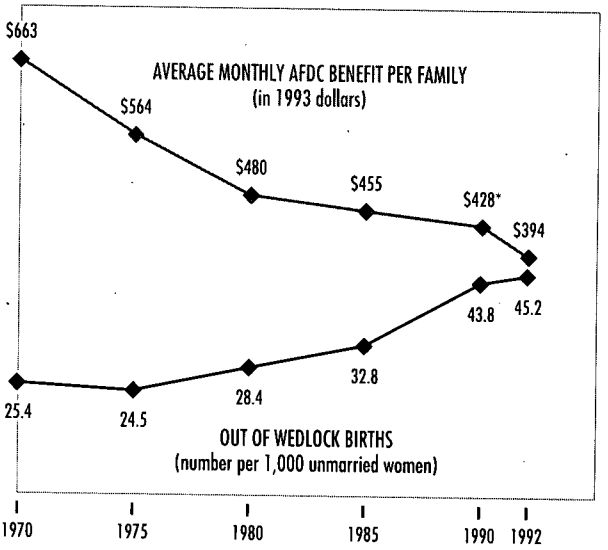
Public assistance should be pro-work and pro-family. Our central anti-poverty strategy should be to prepare poor parents for the labor force, help them find jobs, and ensure that their children are adequately cared for and are supported by both parents. The following recommendations would move us toward such a program.

How the 1995 federal budget is divided



* Two-thirds of Medicaid funding pays for nursing home care for elderly poor people.
Source: Congressional Budget Office.

Illegitimate births have continued to rise, while AFDC benefits have plummeted.



* Estimated
Sources: U.S. House Committee on Ways and Means, 1994; National Center for Health Statistics, 1995.

Welfare must be pro-family. Rules that make it difficult for two-parent families to receive help must be eliminated. Under current law, if a father has a spotty work history and therefore cannot receive unemployment insurance, his family can't qualify for income support unless he leaves the home. Likewise, his family can be denied support if he works more than 100 hours a month, no matter how low his earnings. We need to change these rules. Fathers should be encouraged to stay with their families during gaps in employment.

Children deserve to receive financial support from both parents, whether they are married or not. Pro-family reforms would ensure that paternity is established for all children and that child support is collected. A federal system of child support enforcement is the only effective way of ensuring that noncustodial parents who can pay support do so. (Too many noncustodial fathers evade their responsibilities by moving out of the states where their children live.) Any noncustodial parent who cannot afford to pay support should receive access to training and job placement services.

Pro-family reform would not reward irresponsible behavior by young mothers either. Teenagers who have children should not be allowed to establish independent households. Rather, living under the supervision of a mature adult and attending school should be conditions for receiving assistance.

Welfare must be pro-work. Pro-work reform means encouraging all forms of work, including part-time work. Current AFDC rules discourage parents from taking part-time jobs because benefits are reduced as earnings rise, leaving them little to show for their efforts. These rules deter poor parents from taking the initiative to

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July/August 1995

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

Senate Report Card

To report on the high level of legislative activity in Congress this year, *TrendLetter* is publishing a second congressional report card focusing on key roll-call votes in the U.S. Senate, which along with the House is controlled by a Republican majority. Like their House colleagues, Senate Republicans directed a great deal of effort toward balancing the federal budget by reducing funds from programs that benefit middle- and low-income Americans. However, the senators were not as extreme as House members in cutting funds for social programs and giving huge tax cuts to the wealthy. Senators rejected a balanced budget amendment, though barely, and turned down by a wide margin a measure to eliminate all minority business set-asides in federal procurement.

Key Votes in the Report Card

1. Eliminate Minority Business Set-Asides—An amendment to H.R.1854, Legislative Branch Appropriations, by Sen. **PHIL GRAMM** (R–Tex.) would eliminate all minority business set-asides in the federal procurement process. Gramm's amendment goes beyond the U.S. Supreme Court's June *Adarand Constructors* v. *Pena* decision, which upheld the constitutionality of set-aside and affirmative action programs but ruled that they must be narrowly tailored. Black Rep. **GARY FRANKS** (R–Conn.) has introduced a similar bill in the House. Roll-call vote No. 317, July 20, 1995, rejected 61-36. A vote **against** supported African American interests.

2. Cuts in Social Programs—A cloture vote to limit debate and clear the way to passage of H.R. 1158, a Supplemental Appropriations and Recisions bill that would cut $16.1 billion from funds already approved by the 103rd Congress for programs that primarily assist low-income Americans. Like the House-passed version, the bill would reduce funding for low-income housing, education, transportation, and environmental programs. Although the Senate version restored funding for Head Start, the WIC (Women, Infant, and Children) nutrition program, the Goals 2000 education reform program, and the National Service initiative, other cuts in social programs would have been detrimental to low-income Americans. Roll-call vote No. 127, April 6, 1995, rejected 56-44; debate was not shut off. (Sixty votes or three-fifths of the Senate is required to invoke cloture.) A vote **against** supported African American interests. A later House/Senate compromise measure with $16.4 billion in recisions was passed by both houses of Congress; this compromise measure would have cut funding for WIC, National Service, drug-free schools, crime prevention, and community development banks, but it was vetoed by President **BILL CLINTON** on June 7.

3. Tax Cuts for the Wealthy—An amendment on the Senate floor to budget resolution S. Con Res 13 for fiscal year 1996 by Sen. Gramm would provide a massive $312 billion tax cut to individuals and corporations. The tax cut proposal was similar to the one adopted earlier by the House, including special benefits for the wealthy, permission for families earning up to $200,000 a year to take a $500-per-child tax credit, and the lowering of capital gains tax rates. The omnibus Senate budget resolution, S. Con Res 13, proposes to balance the federal budget by the year 2002 through savings of $961 billion achieved by cutting funding for Medicare, Medicaid, and education and housing programs, abolishing the Commerce Department, and eliminating numerous federal agencies. Roll-call vote No. 178, May 23, 1995, rejected 31-69. A vote **against** supported African American interests.

4. Maintain Welfare's Entitlement Status—an amendment to budget resolution S. Con Res 13 by Sen. **DANIEL MOYNIHAN** (D–N.Y.) would preserve the status of AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) and other welfare programs as entitlements—that is, as need-based, guaranteed income-assistance programs. Republican legislators propose to convert these programs into block grants to the states, eliminating the guarantee of assistance that would grow or decline in response to changing economic conditions and rates of unemployment. Roll-call vote No. 199, May 24, 1995, rejected 41-59. A vote **for** supported African American interests.

5. Balanced Budget Amendment—H.J. Res. 1, a vote on the constitutional amendment to require the federal government to submit balanced budgets after the year 2002. Republican sponsors of the amendment refused to guarantee the measure's Democratic critics that budget balancing would not be achieved by raiding social security. Other opponents of the measure feared that the amendment would give congressional legislators political cover to slash programs benefitting middle- and low-income Americans. Roll-call vote No. 98, March 2, 1995, rejected 65-35. A vote **against** supported African American interests. (A two-thirds majority vote of those present and voting (67) is necessary to pass a joint resolution proposing a Constitutional amendment.)

6. Restore Education Cuts—an amendment to budget resolution S. Con Res 13 by Sen. **TOM HARKIN** (D–Iowa) to restore $40 billion in cuts to education programs and college loans over seven years. Roll-call vote No. 175, May 22, 1995, rejected 47-51. A vote **for** supported African American interests.

7. Restore Medicare Cuts—an amendment to budget resolution S. Con Res 13 by Sen. **JAY ROCKEFELLER** (D–W.Va.) to restore $100 billion of the $256 billion in Medicare cuts proposed in the budget resolution. Roll-call vote No. 173, May 22, 1995, rejected 46-53. A vote **for** supported African American interests.

8. Increase Military Spending—an amendment to budget resolution S. Con Res 13 by Sen. **STROM THURMOND** (R–S.C.) to inject an additional $67.9 billion in outlays for military spending over seven years. These funds would be drawn from non-defense discretionary programs. Roll-call vote No. 180, May 23, 1995, rejected 40-60. A vote **against** supported African American interests.

9. Tobacco Tax—a motion to kill an amendment to budget resolution S. Con Res 13 by Sen. **BILL BRADLEY** (D–N.J.) to express the sense of the Senate that the federal tax on cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products should be increased by $1 a pack. Proceeds from the tax would go toward restoring $75.9 billion in proposed Medicare cuts. In addition, $7.9 billion would be earmarked for the National Institutes for Health and $530 million would be set aside to help tobacco farmers convert to non-tobacco crops. Roll-call vote No. 223, May 25, 1995, motion agreed to 62-38. A vote **against** supported African American interests.

10. Nomination of Dr. Henry Foster—A cloture vote to limit debate that was blocking the nomination of Dr. Henry W. Foster Jr., President Clinton's choice for surgeon general. In large part, the debate over the nomination of Dr. Foster, an obstetrician/gynecologist who has delivered thousands of babies and has performed a small number of abortions, was really a battle over reproductive choice. Anti-choice groups lobbied vigorously against the nomination. Roll-call vote No. 280, June 22, 1995, rejected 57-43. A vote **for** supported African American interests. Since supporters of Dr. Foster did not succeed in mustering 60 votes or three-fifths of the Senate, they were unable to invoke cloture and limit the debate that finally killed the nomination.

How to Read This Report Card

In the chart below, a plus sign (+) indicates a vote supporting African American interests; a minus sign (-) indicates a vote unfavorable to African American interests; and a question mark (?) indicates that the legislator did not vote. An asterisk (*) beside a state indicates that the state's population is less than one percent black.

State	Black Pop. (%)	House Vote (See Descriptions Above) District	Party	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Alabama	25	Shelby	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Heflin	(D)	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	-	-	+
Alaska	4	Murkowski	(R)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Stevens	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arizona	3	Kyl	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		McCain	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arkansas	16	Bumpers	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
		Pryor	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
California	7	Boxer	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
		Feinstein	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Colorado	4	Brown	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
		Campbell	(R)**	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	+
Connecticut	8	Dodd	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
		Lieberman	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+
Delaware	17	Roth	(R)	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
		Biden	(D)	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
Florida	14	Mack	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Graham	(D)	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
Georgia	27	Coverdell	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Nunn	(D)	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	+

State	Black Pop. (%)	District	House Vote (See Descriptions Above) Party	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Hawaii	3	Inouye	(D)	?	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
		Akaka	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Idaho	*	Craig	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Kempthorne	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Illinois	15	Simon	(D)	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
		Moseley-Braun	(D)	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
Indiana	8	Lugar	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	+	-
		Coats	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Iowa	2	Grassley	(R)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
		Harkin	(D)	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
Kansas	6	Dole	(R)	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-
		Kassebaum	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+
Kentucky	7	Ford	(D)	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+
		McConnell	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Louisiana	31	Johnston	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
		Breaux	(D)	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+
Maine	*	Cohen	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+
		Snowe	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+
Maryland	25	Mikulski	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
		Sarbanes	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Massachusetts	5	Kennedy	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
		Kerry	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Michigan	14	Abraham	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Levin	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Minnesota	2	Grams	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Wellstone	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Mississippi	36	Cochran	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Lott	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Missouri	11	Ashcroft	(R)	?	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Bond	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
Montana	*	Burns	(R)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Baucus	(D)	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	-	+
Nebraska	4	Exon	(D)	-	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+
		Kerrey	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+
Nevada	7	Bryan	(D)	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+
		Reid	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
New Hampshire	1	Smith	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Gregg	(R)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
New Jersey	13	Bradley	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	?	+	+	+	+
		Lautenberg	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
New Mexico	2	Domenici	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
		Bingaman	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

State	Black Pop. (%)	District	Party	House Vote (See Descriptions Above) 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
New York	16	D'Amato	(D)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
		Moynihan	(D)	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
N. Carolina	22	Faircloth	(R)	?	-	-	-	-	-	?	-	-	-
		Helms	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
N. Dakota	1	Conrad	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
		Dorgan	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Ohio	11	DeWine	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
		Glenn	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Oklahoma	11	Inhofe	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Nickles	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oregon	2	Hatfield	(R)	+	-	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	-
		Packwood	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+
Pennsylvania	9	Santorum	(R)	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Specter	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+
Rhode Island	4	Chafee	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	+	+
		Pell	(D)	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
S. Carolina	30	Thurmond	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Hollings	(D)	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
S. Dakota	1	Pressler	(R)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-
		Daschle	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Tennessee	16	Frist	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+
		Thompson	(R)	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Texas	12	Gramm	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	?	?	-	-	-
		Hutchison	(R)	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Utah	1	Bennett	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
		Hatch	(R)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	+	-
Vermont	*	Jeffords	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
		Leahy	(R)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
Virginia	19	Warner	(R)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		Robb	(D)	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	+
Washington	3	Gorton	(R)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	+
		Murray	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
W. Virginia	3	Byrd	(D)	-	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	+
		Rockefeller	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+
Wisconsin	5	Feingold	(D)	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
		Kohl	(D)	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	+	+	+
Wyoming	1	Simpson	(R)	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	+	+	+
		Thomas	(R)	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

By David C. Ruffin

** Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell changed his affiliation from Democrat to Republican on March 4, 1995.

Lacretia Hill, a former intern at the Joint Center and May graduate from Howard University, assisted in the compilation of the data contained in this report card.

Community, Tolerance, and Opportunity

Norman Rice, Newly Elected President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, Outlines a Five-Point Urban Agenda

The following is an excerpt of an address that Seattle mayor Norman Rice delivered in Miami to the U.S. Conference of Mayors upon his election to the presidency of the organization at its annual convention in June. Rice, the fifth African American to head the Conference, urges his fellow mayors to promote tolerance, and calls for new partnerships between cities and the federal government, the suburbs, and the private sector.

This is a critical time for our communities and for our nation. As a nation, we are struggling to find agreement about human values, community life, and the role of government. This is a time when it's fashionable to talk about "change." Republicans, Democrats, liberals, moderates, and conservatives—every politician is running on a platform of "change." Yet, too often, it's only the rhetoric of change wrapped around the same old policies or just a different set of special interests. What I mean by change is reweaving the torn social fabric of family and community. It's time for all of us to move beyond abstract battles of words and ideology to focus on what matters most—family, community, fairness, tolerance, and opportunity. It's time to create hope and opportunity, not to use people as weapons in partisan warfare.

It's time to reconnect government to the people. We need to accept responsibility where government has overstepped its bounds or failed to deliver. But we also need to remind the American people that government is a creation of human beings. We come together as people to form government because together we can accomplish goals we cannot accomplish alone.

Unless we join together, we have no hope of protecting our quality of life or our individual freedoms. In the heat of partisan warfare, we are failing to provide the American people with a coherent vision of a better future. In the rush to score political points, we are losing sight of a shared sense of national purpose. I believe we can do better.

We don't expect the federal government to pay for everything we need. But we also don't expect Congress to just walk away as we tackle the toughest job in America—making cities work. Real change comes from the bottom up, not from top down. As mayors, we need to use our real-world experience to bring the national debate back into the real world.

So, how do we do that? Obviously, we must continue to fight our battles in Washington, D.C., to ensure that our citizens are not left behind as Congress debates some very big issues in the months ahead. Right now the needs of people are being sacrificed to the demands of politics. To help ensure that our national priorities remain in focus, during my tenure as president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors I will focus on the five following themes.

1. A Nationwide Campaign for Tolerance and Respect

Mayors need to spearhead a national movement to bring more light and less heat into our national political dialogue. The bombing in Oklahoma City has underscored the deep divisions that exist throughout our nation. In some ways, this period reminds me of the summer of 1992, when our nation was shattered by the Los Angeles riots and the awesome questions of race and anger simmering below the surface of every community. In the wake of those events, I brought together the entire community in Seattle for a series of activities to promote mutual respect and reconciliation.

In the months ahead, I propose that the U.S. Conference of Mayors initiate a similar campaign, on a national level, to promote a more constructive political dialogue and help safeguard our nation's basic values.

Fort Wayne Mayor Paul Helmke has set a strong example here at this meeting, through his eloquent defense of affirmative action and the ongoing need to promote greater diversity and equal opportunity. We have the Partnership for a Drug-Free America—we need a similar partnership to stop the cancer of hatred and intolerance that threatens our nation. Whether we agree or disagree on any given issue, we are all Americans and we all share certain basic values.

2. Streamlining the Federal Government and Focusing Federal Resources on Economic Opportunity and Growth

All of us know that the federal government must change. All of us know that the deficit reduction means fewer federal dollars to cities. But Congress cannot just walk away from problems like housing, education, and poverty—problems that are truly national and deserve national leadership.

I think most mayors would be willing to accept some reduction in overall support from the federal government in turn for greater flexibility to meet our local needs. But let's not kid ourselves—no amount of flexibility can make up for a 50 percent cut in Community Development Block Grants. No amount of paperwork reduction can make up for the proposed gutting of housing, transit, and job training programs. Seattle would lose over $40 million in housing and transit dollars under the proposed 1996 House budget. New York City would lose over $1 billion. We need to show the members of Congress how they can trim the federal budget but still address the basic needs of children, families, and communities.

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Rice

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Why not combine the best programs and resources from all across federal departments and refashion them into a seamless national approach that rewards performance and innovation? Not just the Department of Housing and Urban Development, but economic development, transportation, education, job training, and other programs as well.

If Congress wants to shift major federal responsibilities onto the local level, then they'd better shift the taxing authority and revenue sources too, so we can get the job done. Sending us all the problems without any resources isn't "devolution," it's highway robbery. Next month, I will be convening a small working group of mayors to hammer out a work plan to make our voice heard as Congress debates the future of these programs.

3. Real Tax Reform and Expanding Public-Private Partnerships

We've got to recognize that government simply doesn't have enough resources to solve every challenge. We need to marshall private resources to achieve our community goals, and do it in a fair, efficient, and non-bureaucratic way. Mayors all across America are leading the way, building new partnerships with the private sector to achieve goals that would otherwise be impossible. Now some of those private initiatives are under attack in Congress. We need to defend our existing private sector tools and create new incentives for the private sector to step up to the challenge of community development.

Let's start with the Community Reinvestment Act and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Here are two programs which cost the federal government virtually nothing, but have been major tools for revitalizing distressed communities and giving all our citizens access to capital so they can buy a house, start a business, or create jobs. Now both of these programs are under attack in Congress. Community Reinvestment works. FHA works.

And if Congress is serious about reinventing government, then let's start by reinventing our tax code. When you look at all the unmet needs facing this nation, it's clear that we need to use some tax cuts to leverage some private sector solutions. We need a tax system that does more to reward businesses that create jobs, hire people off of welfare, and provide training and child care. And we need to show Congress that cutting the Earned Income Tax Credit is just plain stupid when we're trying to fix the welfare system. We need to do more—not less—to reward people who are pulling themselves out of poverty.

4. Real Welfare Reform

We need to insist on true welfare reform, not just political grandstanding. Every mayor in America believes that the welfare system must be changed fundamentally, but not at the expense of children or the quality of life of our communities. Instead of fighting over how to eliminate welfare, we should be working together to eliminate poverty.

Simply tossing families off welfare—without job training or job opportunities—is nothing more than cynical politics. We cannot achieve real reform without focusing on health care, jobs, education, training, and day care in a holistic manner.

And despite Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole's assurances, the creation of 50 separate state welfare systems would, indeed, lead to "a race for the bottom." It's a bogus argument to say that good intentions at the local level would make everything turn out okay. With virtually every state budget stretched to the breaking point, states certainly would look for ways to encourage welfare recipients to look for greener pastures in other states. That's a recipe for chaos and human suffering. We must maintain national standards. And mayors must have a place at the table as the debate over welfare reform continues.

5. Building Stronger Partnerships Among Cities, Suburbs, and Counties

Partnerships among our people should create a true community of interests—a national community that recognizes the complex web of responsibility that binds us all together, not scapegoating or driving wedges between us.

As we work toward this goal, there's one more partnership we need to rebuild—the partnership among cities, counties, and suburbs. It's clear that the era of top-down solutions from the federal government is over. Yes, we still need national standards on issues like clean water, clean air, basic human needs, and anti-discrimination. But in the years ahead, more and more solutions will rise from the local level, through partnerships among local governments, local businesses, and local communities.

Cities and suburbs have more in common than they have in conflict. We are all wrestling with the same issues of crime, violence, economic development, education, and human services. In the years ahead, it will be cities and suburbs—not states—that will shape our economic, social, and cultural future. Regional goal-setting and regional problem-solving must be a central part of any overhaul of federal programs.

The Buck Stops in City Hall

Urban America will represent nearly two out of every three voters in 1996. Let's use that leverage to make the needs of cities and counties a key issue in the presidential primaries and party platforms next year. It's our streets and our schools that feel the consequences of national decisions. Ultimately, the buck stops in city hall, not the halls of Congress or the state house. As mayors and as leaders, we make a difference in communities where there are not enough jobs to go around, where too many of our citizens cannot read, and where violence is tearing families apart.

Through our experience, we can shift the dialogue in this country away from stalemate and toward solutions. I'm challenging all of us to step forward. I'm challenging us to speak up, to act, to organize, to fight for what we believe in. I'm challenging us to build a new vision of what urban America could be—five, ten, twenty years from now. And most of all, I'm challenging all of us to use our strength to make our vision a reality. ■

Bell Curve–Eugenics and Pseudoscience

The Questionable Science of Heredity Has Been Used Historically to Explain the Successes and Failures of People of Different Races

by Richard A. Soloway

The publication in 1994 of Charles Murray and Richard J. Herrnstein's provocative book, *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life,* has revived a recurring controversy over the role heredity plays in determining the capabilities and social behavior of individuals, classes, races, and ethnic groups. This controversy dates back to the emergence of eugenics in the late nineteenth century. In many ways *The Bell Curve* is a neo-eugenic treatise, particularly in its comparative analyses of the intelligence of racial and ethnic groups and its criticism of social and educational programs. The book's popular success illustrates the persistence of "genetic" explanations of social, economic, and political conditions, as well as simplistic biological assumptions about the characteristics and qualities of diverse peoples and their cultures.

The history of eugenics, with its conceptions of "scientific" selective breeding and of the dominance of hereditary endowment, illustrates how genuine science in any age is very much a product of the culture of that age, and as such is always in danger of becoming transformed into pseudoscience. In the case of eugenics, Darwinian theories of human evolution were linked with new theories of statistical probability and quickly became caught up in contemporary public controversies about the hereditary fitness and value of classes, races, and nationalities.

Rapid advances in the biological study of human genetics in the 1920s and '30s first began to raise serious doubts about the scientific foundations of eugenics. The rise of Nazism, with its ideology of "race hygiene," and the subsequent horrors of the extermination camps delivered an even more powerful blow to the credibility of eugenic ideas and policies. Indeed, for a generation the term "eugenics" itself largely disappeared from scientific and public discourse.

However, when theories such as eugenics are created in the popular arena in response to real and imagined public problems, and are then defeated by a changing social and political climate rather than by hard science, they are not erased from modern cultures but merely remain submerged. It should not be surprising to see them reappear at a later time, perhaps under a different name and sanctified by what appears to be scientific research, reflecting the values and concerns of a new age.

Dr. Soloway is the Eugen Merzbacher professor and chair of the History Department of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is the author of *Demography and Degeneration: Eugenics and the Declining Birthrate in Twentieth-Century Britain* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, new paperback edition 1995), in which some of this article appears.

The Bell Curve is the latest contribution to a long list of works that, buttressed by scientific-looking apparatus, attempt to explain serious social and economic problems as consequences of genetic makeup. In the 1840s the founder of eugenics, Francis Galton, came to conclusions similar to those of Murray and Herrnstein about the relative intelligence of blacks and whites after traveling in tropical Africa. But Galton did not have the benefit of I.Q. tests. Instead, on the basis of his personal recollections, Galton calculated "statistical correlations" for racial differences which he, like subsequent generations of white men and women, believed were perfectly obvious.

Had it appeared in the 1920s or 1930s, *The Bell Curve* would have been greeted as a reasonable, well-documented addition to the body of eugenic literature, like E. J. Lidbetter's *Heredity and the Social Problem Group* (1933) and Raymond Cattel's *The Fight for Our National Intelligence* (1937). The latter two works employed statistical surveys to point out the dangers of class, racial, and ethnic differences in intelligence as correlated with fertility. Lidbetter, Cattel, and others argued that government programs and policies were doomed to failure if they overlooked the dominance of heredity in explaining the economic, social, intellectual, and moral failings of the "social problem group."

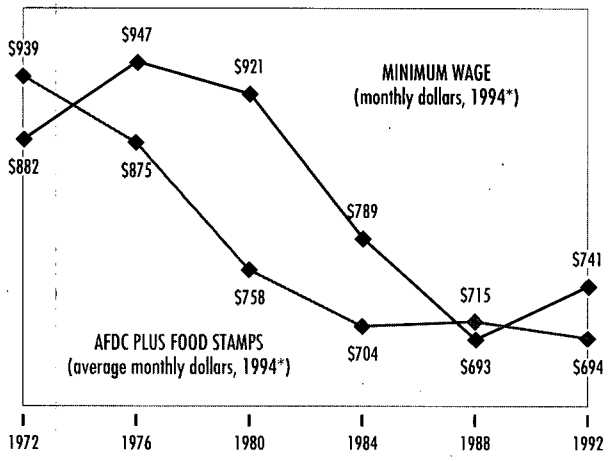
This genre of scientifically validated, cultural pessimism tells us much more about the popular anxieties of an age than it necessarily does about scientific truth. From this standpoint, *The Bell Curve* and the responses it has provoked are perhaps more valuable as commentaries on contemporary American society then they are as reliable guides to the genetic foundations of intelligence.

Like earlier eugenic and neo-eugenic writers who drew heavily upon demographic and other social statistical data, the authors of *The Bell Curve* employ questionable psychometric correlations, which they often confuse with evidence of causation. This approach provides them with hereditarian, scientific validation for their explanation of the social problems they identify in modern American society, and justifies their rejection of contemporary social welfare and affirmative action programs. The complexities of intelligence measurement are thus being injected into the turbulent forum of public opinion today in the same way that differential birthrate statistics and projections were injected earlier in the century. People now, as then, tend to find in the data confirmation of the social, political, economic and moral agendas they believe in and want to defend. ■

Welfare Reform

Continued from page 4

The real value of both minimum wage and the welfare package has fallen sharply.



* All figures adjusted according to the consumer price index, 1994.
Sources: U.S. Department of Labor; U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Ways and Means, 1993.

improve themselves. Families should be allowed to retain more earnings and have their benefits reduced more slowly, so that work always pays. Likewise, expenses necessary for seeking and holding jobs, such as child-care fees and transportation, should not be counted when determining grant levels.

Reforms must improve a parent's ability to support children by improving his or her skills and job prospects. When applying for assistance, each parent should be required to develop an "employability plan" with his or her caseworker to chart an individualized path toward full-time work. For such plans to be effective, however, parents on welfare should have access to the same kind of training and job placement services available to displaced workers generally. Individualized career counseling, assistance in the selection of educational and training programs, tuition assistance, and follow-up counseling are all vital to the task.

Pro-work reforms must include job placement and job creation strategies. The primary goal of public assistance should be to develop private-sector jobs for poor parents. The government could induce the private sector to provide such jobs by requiring firms competing for public contracts to show how they would train and use welfare parents to complete their contract work. However, when private-sector jobs are not available, work in the public and nonprofit sectors will have to be developed.

Public-sector jobs can be created by undertaking needed public investments in infrastructure repair, environmental clean-up, and other social needs. Welfare recipients who cannot be placed in private or public jobs should be required to do community service or other volunteer work, and should receive the same educational benefits as volunteers in AmeriCorps (minimum wage compensation and educational vouchers at the end of two years).

Getting Our Priorities Straight

Welfare reform requires us to examine our priorities. Getting poor parents into the mainstream work force will cost more and take more effort than simply sending out a minimal check each month. Yet it is an investment most Americans believe is worth making—they see it as the only way families can permanently escape poverty. In the end, a new system should be judged according to how well it serves welfare's original purpose: to protect the health and improve the life-chances of poor children in America.

The full proposal, Making Welfare Work, The Principles of Constructive Welfare Reform, *may be obtained free-of-charge by writing to: Book Orders, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, 1090 Vermont Ave., NW Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005. For bulk orders, please call 202-789-3500.* ■

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