

FOCUS[®]

The magazine of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

LAWMAKERS DOUBT ELECTRONIC VOTE

Paper Trail Debated; Purging Poses Problems

By Kavan Peterson

State and federal lawmakers are expressing doubts that new ATM-like electronic voting machines — once seen as a cure to problem-plagued punch-card ballots — can be trusted to accurately count the votes of 50 million Americans poised to use the touch-screen devices in November.

At the same time, civil rights leaders want to make sure that all eligible persons are allowed to vote and have their votes counted, no matter the system used.

Four years ago, “approximately 1.5 million voters left the polling place believing that their votes would be counted, but were not, because of obsolete and inaccurate systems,” Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, told a recent U.S. Commission on Civil Rights hearing.

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Perspective

Vernon Jarrett's Strong Voice Is Stilled

An insistent voice for Black political, economic and social empowerment fell silent a few weeks ago. Vernon Jarrett, a longtime Chicago columnist, lost his battle with cancer of the esophagus in May, three weeks shy of his 87th birthday.

A crusading, opinionated writer, Jarrett would have been right at home in the company of Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells and William Monroe Trotter.

He was an organizer, an agitator, an educator. His weapons were his pen, his computer and his microphone. Simply commenting on the news wasn't enough for Jarrett. He was a founder and second president of the National Association of Black Journalists, which will celebrate its 30th anniversary next year.

Upset that young scholars didn't get the recognition given athletes, in 1977 he created the Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO), an NAACP youth program that honors the intellect.

Jarrett was quick to quote W.E.B. DuBois and would just as quickly scold Black journalists for not knowing their history. He started and ended his career with the Black press at the *Chicago Defender*. In between, he worked for long stretches at the *Chicago Tribune* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and also hosted regular radio and television shows on WLS-TV, WVON-AM and WJJD-AM.

Not one to be shy about his opinions, Jarrett wrote passionate columns supporting Harold Washington and certainly helped him become Chicago's first Black mayor in 1983. Just as Jarrett took on the White power structure, he also would not spare Black leaders, including Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., from the point of his sharp pen.

It is a testament to the respect Jarrett earned that Jackson himself preached the eulogy and hosted the funeral at the Rainbow/Push headquarters on Chicago's South Side.

"Vernon is one of our stars," Jackson said. "He was the North Star as followed by Harriet Tubman to freedom. Vernon Jarrett was a star."

He also was to the end a conscientious citizen. While in the hospital, Jarrett voted by absentee ballot in the March Illinois primary. He didn't want to miss a chance to vote for Barack Obama for the Democratic senatorial nomination. Obama won and now has a good chance to become only the third Black U.S. senator since Reconstruction (as we report on page 12). In Jarrett's last column, which appeared in the *Defender* on the day he died, he wrote about his urge to vote. "That one thought became fixed in my mind along with survival of cancer itself. ... And I thought that maybe it would inspire others to vote too, that they realized the value of one vote."

He went on to unabashedly endorse Obama, saying "you have another Harold Washington in Barack Obama. Only he's younger, brighter and equally committed."

The Joint Center knew Jarrett well. He was a consummate journalist who frequently relied on our research. We salute his unwavering drive to better America by pushing it to live up to its goals and by challenging Black Americans to meet their responsibilities as citizens, parents and students.

Don Wycliff, Jarrett's *Chicago Tribune* colleague, summed up Jarrett and his impact well: "No sterile detachment from the community for him. He was involved--immersed, really--in the causes of racial justice and development of the youth of the Black community, both in Chicago and the nation. Journalism was, for him, a powerful means to those ends.

"We are all better for his having been among us." ■



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1090 VERMONT AVENUE, NW • SUITE 1100
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

TELEPHONE (202) 789-3500
FACSIMILE (202) 789-6390
E-mail: focuseditor@jointcenter.org

www.jointcenter.org

Refugees From Darfur in Sudan Flee “Ethnic Cleansing”

Petition Calls on U.S. To Declare “Genocide”

The Congressional Black Caucus has called on the United States and the United Nations to send troops to prevent massive deaths in the Darfur region of Sudan.

At a press conference in the U.S. Capitol, Rep. Donald Payne (NJ), the top ranking Democrat on the House Africa subcommittee, called on Washington and the international community “to declare that genocide was and is still being committed against” the people in Darfur.

Because of a U.N. treaty, he continued, “we have a legal obligation under international law to act.” That action, he added, should include a U.N. Security Council resolution authorizing military intervention and the use of American intelligence apparatus “to expose those responsible for the genocide.”

Several members of the Caucus urged immediate action to prevent or at least limit the 300,000 deaths the U.S. Agency for International Development estimates are likely to occur before the end of the year. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. (D.-Ill.) said conservative estimates indicate that “at least 10,000 people have been killed in the last year in Darfur, the western region of Sudan. More than one million Black Sudanese have been forced from their homes by government backed militias.”

Jackson was instrumental in the House Appropriations Committee’s approval in June of \$95 million in humanitarian aid for Sudan, including \$70 million for disaster assistance and \$25 million for refugees. “We must prevent another Rwanda,” he said.

Payne also was critical of African nations, which he said have been negligent in their criticism and too diplomatic with Sudan. “We are asking now that the Africa Union speak up more clearly,” he said, “and criticize nations when they have gone wrong.”

The story below provides some first-hand observations of the death and destruction in the Darfur region and the effect of the violence on neighboring Chad.

KOURBILEKE, Chad (IRIN) - Driving through the arid dustbowl around Birak in eastern Chad, just a few kilometers from the western border of war-torn Sudan, you could easily miss the influxes of refugees. Hidden away from the naked eye, only local people can point to where the thousands are gathering in scattered groups.

Spread out across 600 kilometers of desiccated desert, protected only by trees and bush and foraging to survive in the scrub, are up to 135,000 people from the Darfur region of western Sudan. Hidden from the outside world, and extremely hard to find for aid workers try-

ing to assist them, refugees in Kourbileke told IRIN they had fled for their lives from Sudanese bombs in January.

“The bombing was in the surrounding villages, then it came to our village [Habilah],” said Abd al-Karim Abbakar Anaw, who described himself as a Sudanese chief. “They are [still] bombing every day. We heard it today at 7:00 a.m. this morning.”

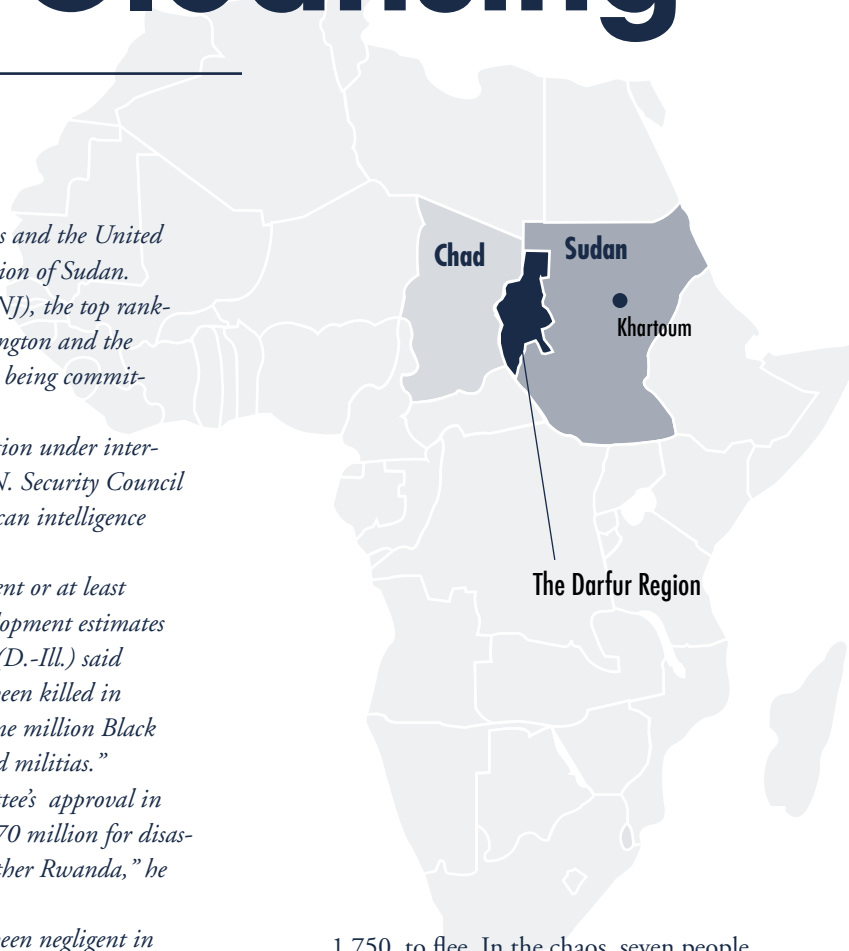
First the army came in tanks with militias on horseback, then they stole the villagers’ cattle from near the well, he said. The next day a plane dropped bombs on the village, killing eight people and forcing the entire population, about

1,750, to flee. In the chaos, seven people — four men and three women — were abducted, he added.

“The goal is to drive away the villagers so they can take over . . . They burn all the houses, steal everything, and the population flees because they don’t have anything left.”

A teacher, Muhammad Husayn Ali, said between 40 and 50 army vehicles had arrived in Habilah that day, accompanied by 500 militiamen, followed by “intense aerial bombardments” by Antonov bombers.

Those reports are consistent with others gathered by the United Nations. “We receive reports now on a daily basis from our own people on the ground in Darfur on widespread atrocities and grave violations of human rights against the civilian population,” UN Under-Secretary-General



for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Jan Egeland reported in early April. “Stopping these attacks against women, children, the displaced and refugees and ensuring their protection is our number-one priority.

“We have also seen an organized campaign of forced depopulation of entire areas that has resulted in the displacement of hundreds and thousands of people, both within Darfur and to neighboring Chad,” he added.

In the latter part of March, the outgoing UN resident and humanitarian coordinator in Sudan, Mukesh Kapila, said the violence in Darfur appeared to be “particularly targeted at a specific group based on their ethnic identity and appears to be systematized.” Because of this, he said, “it is akin to ethnic cleansing.”

Such claims have been denied by Sudanese government officials. The Sudanese under-secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, Abd al-Rahman Abu Daum, said that the situation in Darfur had been misrepresented. He said that while there was no denying that there was a conflict, there was no basis for talk of ethnic cleansing.

PETITION DRIVE

Salih Booker, executive director of Africa Action, a Washington, DC-based interest group, initiated a petition drive calling on Secretary of State Colin Powell to declare the violence in Sudan “genocide” and for the United States to intervene with a multinational military force to stop it. “The failure of the U.S. and the international community to act in Rwanda a decade ago cost 800,000 lives. Now, up to one million people face a similar fate in Darfur, western Sudan,” said Booker. “Unless there is an immediate military intervention to stop the killing and facilitate a massive humanitarian operation, the loss of life in Darfur may even dwarf the horrific toll we saw in Rwanda.”

Hounded by bomber planes and helicopters, their homes pillaged and burned by militias and the army, their women raped and shamed, pockets of Sudanese refugees have been entering Chad haphazardly since July of last year.

The refugees, as well as the over 600,000 displaced within Darfur, tell similar stories: The “Arab” militias and the army attack villages together or successively, burning them to the ground and randomly killing their inhabitants.

In Darfur, where the vast majority of people are Muslims, Arabic-speaking and share a mixed gene pool, the distinction between “Arab” and “African” is more cultural than racial. But for the victims of the conflict, the “racial” aspect of the attacks is a constant theme.

Successive northern governments began using Arab militias to crush rising dissent in the region, including a rebellion led by Sudan People’s Liberation Army rebels in 1991-1992. Analysts say this gave the Arab nomads leverage with the government, which rewarded them with local administrative positions, financial gains and arms, and lately a *carte blanche* to loot, steal and kill — all at the expense of the sedentary tribes.

“It’s a tribal problem. Black with Black, Arab with Arab,” says Muhammad Husayn. “There are no rebels in Habilah. It’s a Black population, that’s why they came and bombed,” he said. “All the Blacks they find they kill.” Government bombs and attacks are indiscriminately killing both armed rebels and innocent civilians, who are all tarnished with the same “black” brush, say the refugees.

CROSS-BORDER RAIDS

Most of the refugees in Kourbileke say their food supplies have run out, while their children have fevers and stomach bugs. Tired and hungry, sleeping in the sand with just a thin plastic floor mat to cover them, their resistance to illness is wearing thin. “It’s not good, we are here in the open, it’s cold,” said 14-year-old Fatimah Adam. “I want something to eat.”

Meantime, the refugees live in fear of bombs “accidentally” falling on the Chadian side of the border, as has happened, and of further attacks. “We are scared that the militias will come here. We have no arms, if they arrive we will have to flee again,” said Khadijah Adam. The UN refugee agency, the

office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), has reported frequent incursions across the largely unguarded border.

Aid workers seeking to move refugees away from the border must first find sites with an adequate water supply. The lack of water, remoteness of the hostile desert environment and the difficulty in finding the scattered refugees are the main hindrances to helping them.

FORGOTTEN CRISIS

The emergency in Darfur has not received sufficient publicity to generate the resources needed to deal with the crisis. “Funds are urgently needed because we are in a race against time to relocate refugees from the volatile border area to safer sites farther inside Chad,” said UNHCR spokesman Kris Janowski.

Other organizations have had similar experiences. “We in the Red Cross, up to now we’ve found it very difficult to fund-raise for Chad,” said Robbie Tomson. “It’s not headline news. Who in Europe or the US knows about this war?” he asked. “This has the potential to become a real disaster if the international community doesn’t assist.”

Observers say the international community’s determination to focus on Sudan’s ongoing north-south peace process — at the expense of the victims of the Darfur conflict — coupled with a nonchalance towards events in Chad, which is one of Africa’s least developed countries, are helping to prolong the conflict.

Compounding this indifference has been the lack of media coverage. “People are dying every day, but nobody is diffusing the information because there are no journalists here,” said the Sudanese chief, Abbakar Anaw. “Peace can only come back if the UN puts pressure on the government,” he added. ■

This story was provided by IRIN, a UN humanitarian information unit whose articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations or its agencies. Joe Davidson contributed to this report.

POLITICAL REPORT

Where Would We Be Without “Brown v.”?

By Joe Davidson

When the Supreme Court outlawed segregated educational facilities a half century ago, it set in motion a chain reaction of progress that continues to be felt far beyond the classroom.

Yet many of the recent 50th anniversary commemorations of the unanimous *Brown v. Board of Education* decision have had a somewhat negative tenor, focusing on its unfulfilled promises, on the resegregation of American schools, on the many race-based ills that continue to plague the United States.

All of those problems are certainly real. But it is also true that because of this landmark ruling, Jim Crow died, America is a different and much better place and African Americans are far ahead of where they would have been otherwise. Imagine if the ruling had gone the other way — if segregation in education and throughout American society had remained the law of the land. So important was *Brown*, that the modern Civil Rights Movement is dated from that May 17, 1954, ruling, notwithstanding the years of protests, resistance and sacrifice that preceded it.

A cursory examination of Black America’s educational attainment in the wake of the ruling demonstrates its importance. In 1952, just 15 percent of African Americans ages 25 and older had graduated from high school, according to the Census Bureau. Fifty years later, the rate had increased to 79 percent. Three years after *Brown*, 252,000 Black people had college degrees. Two years ago the number was 3.5 million.

Without *Brown*, “America would be

behind the eight-ball because the world at that time was looking very seriously at the United States of America as the beacon of democracy” says Julian Dugas, one of the lawyers involved in the *Brown* case.

A distinguished looking man with flowing white hair, a sharp tongue and a quick mind, Dugas, now 85, continues to teach at Howard University’s School of Law. He was an attorney in Washington, D.C.’s *Bolling v. Sharpe* case, one of the five school desegregation lawsuits that were consolidated under *Brown*.

Dugas was the youngest of the *Bolling* lawyers and if not the youngest, certainly one of the more youthful members of the entire *Brown* legal team. That team was led by Thurgood Marshall, founder of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, and included an array of legal luminaries. Dugas remembers it as a true team, without internal competition, one that worked intensely toward a single goal. “We had one purpose and that was to abolish segregation,” he says.

Although they were victorious in court, school desegregation was not immediate, given the resistance to the decision mounted by many politicians. Yet the ruling did provide the legal, strategic and psychological fuel for the rest of the Civil Rights Movement. “*Brown* laid the predicate for the demolition of segregation in every area of American life,” Dugas says.

Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, reminds us that in 1955 Martin Luther King “used the magic of *Brown* to help frame his arguments” for the Montgomery bus boycott. That successful fight to

desegregate the city’s buses launched King to civil rights prominence. “There is a linear progression in the growth of the Civil Rights Movement that traces its inception to the *Brown* decision,” Henderson said.

The ruling also bolstered the nerve of young people like Mary Frances Berry, who was then a high school student in Nashville. She said the court’s decision gave her and her young allies the courage to rally against Jim Crow through such activities as sit-ins. “If no sit-in movement, no Civil Rights Act of 1964 and no Voting Rights Act” of 1965, she says.

And thanks to the Voting Rights Act, millions of African Americans could register to vote, so that today we can boast of more than 9,000 Black Americans in elective office. And *Brown* has been important not only for its impact on Black and White and Brown America, but also because of its strong influence on a broad range of domestic and international issues.

After *Brown* fired up the Civil Rights Movement, women, the disabled, gays and lesbians, and other marginalized Americans were energized to push for their rights. Overseas, those fighting for freedom in South Africa and elsewhere learned from the struggle of African Americans.

Although it’s now clear that *Brown* changed America forever, Dugas recalls that when the lawyers were preparing their case they were not at all certain they would win. “We did not have the feeling,” he said, “it was going to be so momentous.”

States Face Lawsuits To Bolster Schools

By Eric Kelderman

Courts in half the country are taking on the tasks of state budget writers in public education, forcing legislatures to pump more money into elementary and high schools and deciding how much more money needs

to be spent and on which students.

Currently, 25 states are entangled in lawsuits that get judges involved in deciding how to educate students equitably. In a number of cases, the states were sued because they did not provide adequate funding for poor pupils and students of color.

State officials across the nation are worried that test scores and standards required under the federal “No Child Left Behind Act” will fuel even more litigation over schools.

Fifty years after the Supreme Court famously shook up the nation’s public schools by outlawing “separate but equal” education, courts still are reviewing the complex formulas that states use to distribute education funds. They are finding that poor and minority students don’t always get the same amount of money per pupil, as those in wealthier districts. More importantly, many courts have found that poor and minority students are not receiving the quality of education guaranteed by state constitutions.

In the view of Ross Wiener of the Education Trust, an organization that encourages higher education to support K-12 reform, state financing systems rely too heavily on property taxes, a practice that is unfair to poorer communities. Ross told lawmakers, at an April meeting of the National Conference of State Legislatures, that state legislatures have a role in equalizing education and cannot continue to pass the education buck to local and federal governments.

A Massachusetts state court ruled on April 26 that the state was paying too little to educate low-income and minority students. Last year, a district court judge ruled that Kansas provided too little money for low-income and minority students and for mid-sized school districts where those groups were concentrated, said John Robb, an attorney who represents two Kansas school districts that sued the state.

The Kansas ruling was one of many that analysts say are being decided on the basis

of “adequacy”: How much it costs to give all students the same quality of education. The concept is relatively new, emerging from lawsuits of the late 1980s. It is different from the idea of equity, which is providing the same amount of money for each student, according to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, a group that researches school financing lawsuits nationally. For example, an adequate education costs more for students in special education, low-income students and students who are not fluent in English.

Since the 1980s, about two-thirds of the adequacy lawsuits against states have been successful. Now, “No Child Left Behind” will bolster the claims of groups filing adequacy claims, Wiener warned state lawmakers. The scores of minority and disabled students who did not pass Kansas’s tests were evidence of who was not getting a fair shake, Robb said, adding, “The state [Department of Education] did our work for us.”

Nationally, states use more than a third of their budgets to supplement local property taxes to pay for educating children from kindergarten through high school. The federal government provides about 9 percent of the total \$400 billion spent annually on primary and secondary education.

According to the Campaign for Fiscal Equity, the states currently embroiled in school finance litigation as of this writing are Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wyoming.

Dean Endorses Two Black Candidates

By Joe Davidson and Eric Kelderman

Two African Americans are among the “Dean Dozen,” candidates endorsed by former presidential hopeful (and Vermont governor) Howard Dean as part of an ef-

fort to build a national progressive political farm team.

The two Black candidates are Barack Obama, who is running for the U.S. Senate from Illinois (see page 12), and Maria Chappelle-Nada, a candidate for the Missouri House of Representatives from St. Louis.

Chappelle-Nada, an aide to Missouri’s lieutenant governor, said she supported Dean during the presidential primaries, but nonetheless was surprised to be one of 12 people chosen for support by Dean’s new “Democracy for America” organization.

“We’ve raised a substantial amount of money online because of Democracy for America,” she told FOCUS. Dean’s group also supplies help with getting her message out, technical support and, in Chappelle-Nada’s words, “volunteers who will help with anything.”

In addition to Chappelle-Nada and Obama, Dean, who had lured thousands of political neophytes to his presidential campaign, wants to share his coattails with candidates for the U.S. House in Missouri and Texas, the Arizona Corporation Commission and the Hillsborough County (Florida) Board of Elections, in addition to seven statehouse candidates.

The Dean organization wants people to run and learn the ropes, spokesman Walker Waugh told Stateline.org. If they don’t win this time, their efforts will build a base for the next election, Waugh said, adding: “We’re looking long term.”

Obama stands a good chance to become the only African American in the U.S. Senate. Currently, he is a state senator from Chicago’s South Side. Dean “volunteers all over Illinois helped Obama win his primary, now it’s time to help him win the general,” says a Democracy for America statement. “Stay tuned: Governor Dean will be on the trail with Barack soon.” ■

Eric Kelderman is a staff writer with Stateline.org

ECONOMIC REPORT

Campaign 2004: Tax-Cut Path to Economic Growth

By Margaret C. Simms

In June, the Bureau of Labor Statistics announced that 248,000 jobs were added to the economy during the month of May. This increase of almost a quarter million jobs follows additions averaging nearly 350,000 in the two prior months, for a total of close to a million jobs over three months and 1.4 million jobs since August 2003.

As might be expected, however, employment numbers for African Americans remain ambiguous. While their unemployment rate has come down slightly, the number of African Americans employed has not shown a consistent upward trend.

But the small improvement in Black employment and the economy's expansion in general raise the question: If the economy continues to improve, will it continue to be a presidential campaign issue? The answer is yes, for two reasons. First, data from bellwether states suggest that job security remains on the minds of many likely voters. Moreover, the heavy reliance by both candidates on tax cuts as an economic stimulus warrants a review of the long-term impact this approach would have on economic well-being across different segments of the population.

All Economics Is Local

While economic expansion is firmly under way at the national level, the impact is somewhat uneven across the country. When voters answer the question, "Are you better off?", they only consider their family, friends and neighbors. From a campaign standpoint, it

is useful to look at how the expansion is likely to play out in various states over the next few months. With this in mind, *The Wall Street Journal* began tracking voter opinion in 16 contested states. Six of them have large African American populations, including four where the Black voting age population is over 12 percent. Together, the 16 states contain just over one-quarter of the nation's African American population.

At the time of *The Wall Street Journal's* first poll, Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry was ahead of President Bush in 12 of these states. The course of the economy over the past four years likely played a large role in this outcome. Although unemployment rates began trending downward in recent months in all 16 states, they are still above their 2000 levels in nine of them. Michigan, Ohio and Pennsylvania among the old manufacturing/industrial states and Oregon and Washington among the newer industrial states are notable for how severely unemployment increased over the past four years. Collectively, they hold about one-quarter (76) of the electoral votes needed to win in November. Large numbers of African Americans reside in the three older industrial states as well as in Tennessee and Florida. Voters in those two states are concerned about immigrant worker issues and U.S. companies sending jobs abroad.

The Bush Tax Cut Record

Bush is running on his record of tax cuts, pointing to recent job growth as evidence that his strategy is generating the stimulus our economy needs. His campaign web site points to features of

the tax cuts that are said to benefit "all Americans"—the reduction in the tax rate for married couples, the increased child tax credit, and the lower rates on dividend income and capital gains. The campaign also says the increase in the expensing limit for small business equipment purchases is an incentive for job growth. The increase in the limit allows a firm to fully deduct the cost of equipment in the year in which it is purchased, rather than depreciating it over time.

The Kerry campaign material rightfully points out that Bush's business expensing provision is not tied to the creation of any new jobs. And these provisions actually reduce the price of capital relative to labor, which could lead to the substitution of machinery or automated procedures for workers. For example, the installation of automated telephone equipment and voice or digitally activated responses could lead a small business to lay off a receptionist or customer service representative even if business picks up.

"The Ultimate Burden of the Tax Cuts," a paper recently released jointly by the Urban Institute-Brookings Institution Tax Policy Center and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), points to other problems with the Bush tax cuts. The authors say the biggest problem is that "someone, somewhere, at some time will have to pay for them." In the short term, the cuts are creating large federal budget deficits. Economic expansion will not be large enough to eliminate these deficits, and eventually the deficit will become a drag on economic growth. In this scenario, payment takes the form of lower long-term economic growth. Alternatively, the deficit will be reduced through reduced federal expenditures. In other words, some programs that are now benefiting taxpayers will be cut.

If the distribution of the tax cuts and the spending cuts were the same, then it would truly be a case of "giving the people their money back." However, the Tax

Center-CBPP study says that this is not a likely outcome. Instead, at some point people will be forced to pay for the cuts through some combination of increases in other taxes and reductions in government benefits. The authors take two different approaches to estimate the impact of the payments on households. In one case they assume that each household gives up an equal dollar amount. In the other case, they assume that each household would pay in proportion to their incomes; in other words, lower income households would lose less than upper-income households. Under both scenarios, low-income households lose a lot more than they gain, though they suffer less under the second option.

The authors estimate that 80 percent of households, those with incomes less than \$76,400, will end up being losers once the 2001 and 2003 tax cuts are paid for. Their losses will be net gains for those households in the top 20 percent of income. Over 90 percent of African American households would be in the losing category.

Kerry's Job Creation Plan

Tax cuts are also an important part of Kerry's economic growth plan. However, his cuts are more closely tied to job creation. The boldest of his proposals is a set of measures designed to return jobs from overseas. There are two major components to this proposal. The first would no longer allow businesses to defer paying taxes in the United States on income earned overseas. Instead, companies would be required to pay taxes on an annual basis, and not just when the profits are repatriated. This approach, the candidate says, would make it less attractive to keep money overseas. As additional incentive for companies to return profits and jobs to the United States, Kerry proposes a one-year tax holiday for companies that re-invest their overseas profits in the United States. These companies would only pay taxes at a rate of 10 percent for the first year, if they repatriate profits within a year of the proposed legislation's passage. Moreover, if companies with a workforce abroad were to generate new jobs in the U.S., they would benefit from a New Jobs

Tax Credit. There would be important exemptions from the new taxes, however. Companies that were investing overseas in order to serve foreign markets would not be affected by the new tax, as they need the tax break to remain internationally competitive.

Kerry says the revenues from taxes on companies with foreign earnings would be used to make other tax-and-spending adjustments needed to lower corporate tax rates and pay for the New Jobs Tax Credit. The net effect would be to generate jobs and grow the economy. The paradox in the Kerry proposal is this: If the new tax options result in companies returning their profits to the U.S., the taxes collected will be lower and that leaves less revenue to pay for other tax cuts or spending increases Kerry has in mind. Alternatively, if the incentives are not sufficient to induce repa-

triation, or if a high proportion of jobs sent overseas is related to servicing of foreign markets, then the number of jobs created from this approach will be relatively low.

Even if the current expansion continues, the evidence shows that tax credits provide only a weak incentive to hire African Americans and other workers who are near the end of the job queue. Clearly, more intense efforts will be needed to reduce unemployment among minority groups. Neither Bush nor Kerry has fully addressed these issues up to this point. ■

More information can be found at
<http://www.georgebush.com/Economy/>,
<http://www.johnkerry.com/issues/economy/>,
<http://www.cbpp.org/6-2-04tax.htm>

Economic and Political Statistics on Battleground States

State	Unemployment Rate		Black Voting Age Population, 2000 (thousands)	BVAP as % of total VAP
	April 2004	April 2000		
Arkansas	5.6	4.3	331	17.5
Florida	4.6	3.5	1,467	12.6
Iowa	3.9	2.4	81	3.8
Michigan	6.1	3.2	891	12.3
Minnesota	4.1	2.9	95	2.7
Missouri	4.7	43.0	449	11.0
Nevada	4.3	3.7	112	8.1
New Hampshire	3.9	2.9	13	1.4
New Mexico	5.6	5.0	36	2.9
Ohio	5.8	3.9	934	11.3
Oregon	6.7	4.7	34	1.4
Pennsylvania	5.3	4.0	764	8.5
Tennessee	4.9	3.8	658	15.8
Washington	6.3	5.0	123	2.9
West Virginia	5.2	5.4	43	3.2
Wisconsin	4.6	3.3	147	3.8
United States	5.6	3.8	24,132	11.9

Sources: Unemployment Rates, seasonally adjusted: www.bls.gov, Voting age population: <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/p20-542/tab04a.pdf>

HOUSE VOTES TO BAN RACIAL PROFILING

BILL ALSO FUNDS TRANSIT PROJECTS

By BRIA GILLUM

The House recently passed the first federal legislation to end traffic-related racial profiling. The “Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” ... would authorize \$275 billion in new funding for federal transportation programs for fiscal years 2004-2009.

The racial profiling provision, written by Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton (D.-DC), allows states to apply for federal funds to train police to not stop drivers solely on the basis of their race and to maintain racial data on stops made by the police. Over a six-year period, \$60 million dollars would be available. “One of the reasons racial profiling remains widespread,” Norton said, “is because federal law has been silent, unlike the case with job discrimination and discrimination in other state and federal activities.”

To qualify for the federal funding, a state must have in place its own laws prohibiting the police from using the race or ethnicity of drivers and passengers when deciding whether to make a traffic stop. Norton said that this provision is merely a first step. And she will continue to push for a ban to end all racial profiling by supporting Rep. John Conyers’ (D-Mich.) “End Racial Profiling Act of 2004.”

In addition to the anti-profiling measure, the bill seeks to shrink a transportation funding gap that critics say denies many people adequate access to transit services, thus limiting their social and economic opportunities. “The lion’s share of transportation dollars is spent on roads,” said Robert Bullard, director of the Environmental Justice Research Center at Clark Atlanta University, “while urban transit systems are often left in disrepair.” Funding for public transporta-

tion gets only 20 percent of all federal surface transportation funds, he told a Congressional Black Caucus hearing.

This has a serious impact on many communities of color and low-income individuals who depend on public transportation as their only source of mobility. A study by the Harvard Civil Rights Project found only 3 percent of Whites use public transportation, compared to 12 percent of African Americans, 9 percent of Latinos and 10 percent of Asian Americans. Furthermore, in urban areas, African Americans and Latinos make up 54 percent of public transportation users.

Individuals from these two groups also devote large portions of their expenditures to transportation. The same study cited a 1998 report by the Surface Transportation Policy Project, which found that people in the lowest income level spend 36 percent of their household budget on transportation. The highest income level spent only 14 percent. As a result, Bullard argues, “some of our transportation policies have ... exacerbated social inequities.”

The new transportation legislation, however, includes a funding increase in all transit programs of 43 percent, raising transit spending to \$51.53 billion. The House bill would attempt to improve congestion problems by increasing roadway capacity, highway infrastructure (especially in rural areas) and services for people with disabilities. It also promises to protect employment in the transportation sector and create 1.7 million new jobs.

Many of the transportation projects will be designated as federal projects that set aside a certain portion of the

work for minority contractors. “This is a good beginning... states get an improved transportation infrastructure that creates economic development, puts people back to work, enhances safety, and improves local communities,” said Corrine Brown, a Caucus member from Florida. “But I want to emphasize that this bill is just that: a beginning. The \$275 billion figure needs to go up.”

The House must now reconcile the differences with a \$300 billion Senate version of the bill, which does not prohibit racial profiling. President Bush has threatened to veto any bill that exceeds \$256 billion, because it would increase the already record high federal deficit.

Nonetheless, many in Congress argue that this bill is crucial. “These funds are critical to the everyday lives of residents and to everything we are doing on economic development,” said Norton. They will help “jump-start the jobless economy here and around the country.” ■

Ballance Quits House; Blacks Seek Seats

Frank Ballance, Jr., who was representing North Carolina’s first district, resigned his House seat in June because of his battle with myasthenia gravis, a treatable neuromuscular ailment.

A spokesman for Ballance, who was in his first term, said the resignation was not related to state and federal probes involving a state audit report that Ballance used a foundation to funnel money to relatives and political contributors.

Hoping to take Ballance’s place in the Congressional Black Caucus is G. K. Butterfield, a former state Supreme Court justice. Another candidate favored to join the Caucus is Al Green, former president of the Houston NAACP, who is running for the open ninth district in Texas. He is not the R&B/gospel singer.

Cynthia McKinney hopes to win back the Georgia district that she lost to Denise Majette two years ago. Majette is running for the U.S. Senate. Former Kansas City Mayor Emanuel Cleaver is seeking an open House seat in Missouri’s fifth district.

LAWMAKERS DOUBT

Continued from cover

But Hilary Shelton, director of the NAACP's Washington office, says that most voters will not use the new machines and that activists and officials "also must talk about the rest of the vote."

Moreover, Shelton adds, the process of purging, that is, clearing voter rolls of ineligible voters, is one that unfairly hit Black voters in 2000, preventing many of those who were actually eligible from voting at all. "We were disproportionately purged in the last election," he said of African Americans. "If you're purged you don't get to use the technology."

People for the American Way, a national civil liberties and equal rights organization, protested Florida's plan to quickly purge its voting list when, according to an organization statement, "fewer than 800 of more than 19,000 voters who may have been wrongly removed from the registration lists in 2000 and 1999 have been restored."

Just as the paper-ballot system malfunctioned in 2000, the new paperless voting machines also are vulnerable to malfunctions. Computer scientists warn that touch-screen computerized voting systems, the latest in voting technology, are just as vulnerable as home computers to glitches, hackers and viruses, all of which could call into question the outcome of what looks to be a hotly contested presidential race.

Despite reassurances from the machines' makers, mishaps in primaries across the nation have shaken confidence in the technology, which recently was installed in thousands of voting precincts.

After thousands of touch-screen voting machines malfunctioned during California's March primary, Secretary of State Kevin Shelley banned the problematic machines and ordered all counties that use similar electronic systems to provide paper ballots

as a backup.

Shelley's action is a major setback in the national movement to update paper voting systems to electronic ones, and it likely will influence policymakers in Congress and at least 20 states who are debating whether to require electronic machines to print a paper ballot to verify every vote.

While many states now are balking at switching to paperless electronic voting, based on current plans about 25 percent of America's ballots will be cast on 100,000 paperless voting machines in 31 states plus D.C. on November 2. Not all electronic voting machines are paperless. Some touch-screen devices store votes electronically and are not designed to print a paper ballot.

Hanging Chad Remedy?

After Florida's debacle with "hanging chads," electronic voting was considered to be the remedy for the ills of punch-card ballots and other older paper-based voting systems. The problem prompted Congress to pass the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in 2002. It provided \$3.9 billion for states to purchase new computerized voting systems. But many feel computer voting without a paper backup — also called a voter-verified paper audit trail (VVPAT) — could be equally dangerous in another tight presidential election.

Recent voting mishaps reported in several states have demonstrated the limits of voting technology:

- In California's October 2003 recall election, a software glitch shifted thousands of absentee votes for Democratic Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante to a socialist candidate. The votes were caught when officials compared the electronic results to the paper absentee ballots, something that can't be done in a completely elec-

tronic voting system, officials said.

- In Broward County, Florida, a January special election for a state legislative seat found that 134 people who used the iVotronic touch-screen machines didn't have a vote recorded in an election won by 12 votes. Officials say it's possible some voters went in to vote but didn't use the machine properly. The same machines in 2002 missed counting 103,000, or 22 percent, of the county's votes.
- In Muscogee County, Georgia, in 2003, touch-screen machines registered "yes" when voters voted "no." When notified of the irregularity, polling workers advised voters to cast the opposite of their intended vote, the NAACP reported.
- In Maryland, one of a few states that will use only electronic machines this year, a team of computer experts from Johns Hopkins University showed in January that hackers could guess the password needed to access Diebold voting machines, break into the results transmitted from the election site and even program the software so that a vote for one candidate was recorded as a vote for another.

Now, a chorus of warnings from computer scientists and voters' groups has caught the attention of election officials and lawmakers who are slamming the brakes on planned upgrades to their voting systems.

Until recently, voter-verified paper trails "was a side issue, but it's grown so big that many states that were planning to buy new machines have at least postponed those plans or slowed the process way down," said Doug Chapin. Chapin is director of Electionline.org, a nonpartisan election reform group whose recently published report offers a snapshot of how election officials in each state are dealing with voting security. (Electionline.org is funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts, which also funds Stateline.org.)

Election officials in Illinois, Oregon, Nevada and New Hampshire already have banned paperless electronic voting systems. Nevada Secretary of State Dean Heller

has required printers to be installed on all electronic voting machines by November, despite the fact that Nevada had experienced no problems with the machines used by 70 percent of the state's voters in 2002.

"Our citizens read the news reports in other states of breakdowns, votes cast and then changed and no way for the voter to check their vote," Heller said. "So I decided that by mandating printers for our machines for this election, our voters will know that Nevada will have the most secure elections in the nation."

California's controversy was touched off when it was learned that Texas-based Diebold had installed uncertified software in touch-screen systems in 16 counties. Later, thousands of Diebold machines malfunctioned during the March primary.

Security reviews of electronic voting machines have found vulnerabilities

in systems sold by Diebold, Election Systems & Software Inc., Sequoia Voting Systems Inc. and Hart InterCivic Inc.

Concerns about the security of electronic ballots also have spawned conspiracy theories. When Georgia first went to an all touch-screen system in 2002, voters turned out two incumbent Democrats, Sen. Max Cleland and Gov. Roy Barnes, despite exit polls indicating the candidates were ahead. The upsets prompted partisan speculation of a rigged election.

It didn't help when Wally O'Dell, chief executive officer of Diebold, which manufactured Georgia's machines, said in a Republican fund-raising letter last August that he is "committed to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president next year." Critics also point out that Diebold's board of directors and corporate officers have personally contributed money to President George W. Bush's re-election campaign,

according to Political Money Line, a campaign finance tracking web site.

Voting-machine vendors and some voting officials oppose paper-verified ballots, however. Election chiefs in Florida, Georgia and New Mexico are outspoken supporters of paperless voting machines. They say that printers are expensive and can jam or run out of ink, causing voting machines to go down during elections.

Henderson, at the Leadership Conference, says that while arguments for voter verified paper trails are appealing, those systems "do raise concerns, particularly given the long history of lost, mangled, and manipulated paper ballots, as well as the difficulty of recounting paper ballots accurately." ■

Kavan Peterson is a staff writer with Stateline.org, which provided this story. Joe Davidson contributed to this article.

Top Five Risks to Voters in 2004 and Their Remedies

The following is from the League of Women Voters and the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights.

Problem 1: VOTER REGISTRATION DIFFICULTIES.

Remedies:

- Ensure that voter registration applications are transmitted and acted on in a timely manner by voter registration authorities.
- Ensure that all application forms that include eligibility information (name, age, residence and citizenship) are accepted.
- Maintain communications on Election Day between each polling place and the registrar's central office.

Problem 2: ERRONEOUS PURGING OF VOTING ROLLS

Remedies:

- Provide timely notice to persons being purged before so that corrections can be made.
- Ensure that any list of potentially ineligible voters is screened and checked for accuracy.

Problem 3: DIFFICULTIES WITH THE NEW ID REQUIREMENT FOR FIRST-TIME VOTERS

Remedies:

- Educate voters on the ID they should bring to the polling place.
- Train poll workers on the proper rules for nondiscriminatory application of ID requirements.

- Recruit and train bilingual poll workers to assist voters with limited English proficiency.
- Ensure that voters who do not bring IDs can cast a provisional ballot that will be counted if they are eligible to vote.

Problem 4: DIFFICULTIES WITH VOTING SYSTEMS

Remedies:

- Educate voters and poll workers on how to operate the voting systems.
- Institute management safeguards and testing of all machines.

Problem 5: FAILURE TO COUNT PROVISIONAL BALLOTS

Remedies:

- Provide a "federal" provisional ballot so that no voter is disenfranchised from voting in the federal races because that voter went to the "wrong" polling place.
- Ensure that voter eligibility rather than administrative convenience is the test for counting each provisional ballot.
- Set a statewide, uniform, nondiscriminatory process for issuing and counting provisional ballots.
- Provide transparency to ensure that the public knows how many provisional ballots were issued in each jurisdiction on Election Day and to ensure that the process for counting provisional ballots is open to public scrutiny.

OBAMA FAVORED FOR SENATE SEAT

WON STRONG VICTORY IN ILLINOIS PRIMARY

By JOE DAVIDSON

CHICAGO -- When Barack Obama spoke at the funeral of Vernon Jarrett, a longtime Chicago columnist, part of Obama's remarks seemed as autobiographical as they were eulogistic.

"It's easy to stand on the sidelines and make commentary. It's harder to apply oneself to bring about change in the world," Obama, a former community organizer and civil rights lawyer, said. "That in the end was Vernon Jarrett's legacy."

Obama, a state senator from Chicago's South Side, is shaping his own legacy by running for the U.S. Senate. His victory would not change the world, but it would integrate what has been called the world's most exclusive club, a club that currently has no Black members.

Obama has a good chance to do just that. He surprised many by trouncing six opponents in the March Democratic primary, winning 53 percent of the vote. A Chicago Tribune/WGN-TV poll in late May said Obama led his Republican opponent, Jack Ryan, by 22 points, 52 percent to 30 percent.

If he wins the Senate seat, Obama will probably be one of the body's more liberal

members. He strongly opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq, though he recently told FOCUS: "Now that we're in we have an obligation to make it work." While he's glad President Bush is working to involve other nations in post-war Iraq, Obama says his "primary criticism" of the administration is its "track record of disdain for diplomacy."

Obama is also critical of an economy that has "people in hock to their eyeballs," and a Republican-devised tax system that benefits the wealthiest Americans. He favors an industrial policy and tax code that would encourage domestic, rather than foreign, investment and a national program to rapidly upgrade the quality of elementary and secondary schools.

A Harvard trained civil rights lawyer, Obama challenged U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush in 2000, after only three years in the state senate. Obama took a beating then, but he didn't burn any bridges. Rush supported one of Obama's opponents in the primary this year, but is now solidly behind his candidacy along with the rest of his party.

Obama's campaign defies the conventional wisdom, which says it's very difficult for African Americans to be elected in any statewide contest. Across the country, there were only 40 such Black elected officials in

2002, according to the Joint Center's most recent census of Black elected officials. And there have been just two Black U.S. senators elected since reconstruction, Edward Brooke, of Massachusetts, and Carol Moseley Braun, of Illinois.

The fact that both Moseley Braun and Obama are from Illinois is no surprise and demonstrates the weakness of conventional wisdom. "Illinois voters are willing to vote for somebody who is a minority group member," said David Bositis, a Joint Center senior research associate. "They've already shown that almost more than any other state."

Challenging conventional wisdom is par for Obama. He is running on a liberal platform at a time when many Democrats still cringe at the label. He represents Chicago's largely Black South Side, but polled well in the primary in predominately White suburban counties and the ritzy White precincts along the city's north shore. As for his African name, he has found that it "was as much, if not more of a problem in the African American community than the White community." Some biased Black people, he explained, thought he was a Muslim. He is not.

Obama is biracial. His father was born in Kenya, his mother in Kansas, and he grew up in Hawaii. He credits that background with an ability to relate to a variety of people. "I just look like your usual South Side brother," he says. But, he adds: "My mixed race background has given me insight to how White voters think. I don't see them as some different constituency that I've got to figure out." ■



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