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FOCUS

BLACK POLITICS



- Parker-Coltrane PAC Lifts Off
- Operation Big Vote: *Crusade '82 Begins*
- VRA Extension Fight: *The Final Rounds*

Joint Center for Political Studies

Perspective

This issue of *Focus* carries three articles that, read together, signal the potential power of blacks in the 1982 elections and beyond.

The first is John Dean's article on the new Parker-Coltrane Political Action Committee. That blacks are forming this and other such PACs is an important development on the political scene. It has always been clear that politics in America involves far more than the casting of ballots, and over the past several years, PACs—especially conservative PACs—have become a significant factor in our elections and in the public policy arena. The Parker-Coltrane PAC and the Congressional Black Caucus PAC are signs of increasing political organization among blacks.

The second article is Gracia Hillman's announcement of the incorporation of the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation. This is another important step toward increased black political clout, for it makes possible the on-going coordination of nonpartisan voter education efforts across the country.

These efforts have been fruitful in the past. Last month, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that black voters were the only major demographic group to show increased voter participation in the 1980 presidentical election. According to the bureau, "The percentage of voting age black Americans (16.4 million) who reported casting ballots (8.3 million) rose to 51 percent from 49 percent in 1976, marking the first increase since the 1964 (Johnson vs. Goldwater) election, when 59 percent said they voted. The 1980 white turnout totaled 61 percent and among Hispanics the turnout was 30 percent, roughly the same as in 1976."

The bureau also reported on voter participation in congressional elections in nonpresidential years (1966, 1970, 1974, 1978). The percentage of blacks who voted declined from 42 percent in 1966 to 34 percent in 1974 but rose to 37 percent in 1978, suggesting that the decline may have bottomed out and perhaps presaging a significant increase in 1982. The white vote followed the same overall pattern, but it rose from a low of 46.3 percent in 1974 to only 47.3 percent in 1978.

The increases in black voter participation in 1978 and 1980 lead some observers to conclude that blacks are moving toward November 2 with considerable momentum.

The third article is Armand Derfner's update on the Voting Rights Act extension fight. As Mr. Derfner notes, the civil rights community as a whole racked up a major victory when the Senate Judiciary Committee voted 17 to 1 to report a strong voting rights bill to the full Senate. Although hailed as a "compromise" bill which drew public support from a reluctant President Reagan, the Senate legislation closely parallels the House bill passed overwhelmingly last October.

While a handful of conservative senators are threatening a last-ditch attempt to water down the bill, they are likely to fail for the same reasons that a strong bill emerged in 1981 and has survived this far despite a conservative and largely antagonistic White House. These reasons include a strong national commitment to voting rights, a well-organized campaign to extend the Voting Rights Act, and an aroused black electorate willing to go to the political mat on this issue.

These are all signs of black political muscle-flexing that are beginning to attract the attention of candidates seeking votes this fall as well as those who may be on the hustings two years from now. Both the Democrats and the Republicans are making some attempts to attract black votes or at least to avoid driving blacks into the waiting arms of the opposition. Thus there is the promise and the possibility of blacks casting the deciding votes in a number of elections this fall. That is why the black political presence in 1982 could be formidable.

Eddie N. Williams
President

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The Parker-Coltrane PAC

by John Dean

(The author is a consultant on political campaign organization and techniques.)

The outcomes of the 1980 elections were substantially influenced by a large number of conservative political action committees. In response to that situation, and recognizing the serious erosion in the progress and programs wrought by the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Congressman John Conyers and other labor and civil rights leaders began to discuss the formation of a black political action committee.

In May 1981, the Parker-Coltrane Political Action Committee (PCPAC) was registered with the Federal Election Commission as an independent political committee. PCPAC is named after two famous jazz musicians, Charlie Parker and John Coltrane. The organizers of the committee hope to translate the creativity and courage of these great artists into political life by bringing together the arts, grassroots politics, and professional campaign assistance to further political changes in the South.

Other political action committees are being formed to further black political interests. The Congressional Black Caucus, for example, recently announced the formation of CBC-PAC, aimed particularly at maintaining and expanding black membership in the U.S. Congress.

What Are PACs?

Political action committees—PACs—are a relatively new force in American politics. In 1971, Congress passed the Federal Election Campaign Act, which contained a number of election finance reform measures. Its primary thrust was to limit the amount of money that any one individual could contribute to a political candidate. In addition, the act provided for the creation of political action committees. Such committees could be:

a. principal campaign committees, associated with a particular candidate for federal office;
b. authorized campaign committees, in addition to the principal campaign committee of a candidate *and* authorized by the candidate;
c. separate, segregated-fund committees, established by an on-going organization or business for political purposes; and
d. other political committees, both local political party committees and independent political committees not associated with any organization, business, or political party.

PACs are now formed by professional and trade associations, labor groups, corporations of all kinds, and special interest groups.

Since the 1971 legislation, the number of PACs has grown rapidly. In March of this year, there were 3,115 PACs—five times the number in existence in the mid 70s. Over 350 PACs have formed since 1981. In the elections of 1980, PACs spent 55 million dollars, and it is estimated that over 100 million will be spent this election year.

Most PACs raise contributions through individual solicitations and special event fund-raisers. The larger, more sophisticated PACs mount massive direct-mail campaigns using computer listings of millions of names. With these funds, the PACs attempt to influence public opinion in a variety of ways—such as seminars, direct mailings, and newsletters—as well as contributing to candidates of their choice.

Any committee, club, association, or other group of persons may form a PAC by registering with the Federal Election Commission in Washington, D.C. Registration consists of filing a "Statement of Organization" form with the commission. The statement, signed by the treasurer of the PAC, indicates the name and type of committee, the keeper of committee records, and the bank where funds will be deposited. The commission assigns the PAC an identification number, and thereafter the PAC is required by law to make periodic reports to the commission.

The Birth of PCPAC

The initial National Advisory Committee of the Parker-Coltrane PAC included Congressman Conyers, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Johnny Hartman, Joe Williams, Stanley Sheinbaum, Rosa Parks, Marc Stepp, and Nancy Wilson. Since then, the committee has received expressions of support from John Kenneth Galbraith, Ed Asner, and others. New members of the advisory committee include Mayor Coleman Young, William Lucy, Sarah Vaughn, and Congressional representatives Shirley Chisholm, Donald Edwards, Ronald Dellums, Mervyn Dymally, Charles Rangel, and Morris Udall.

The goal of PCPAC is to elect black and progressive candidates to local, state, and national offices. The primary focus is to be on the South, where 53 percent of all black Americans still live. The South is also the only area of the country experiencing a rise in black voter turnout. Yet while there are over 30 congressional districts in the South with a black population of 30 percent or more, there is only one black Congressional representative from that area and relatively few black state legislators in proportion to the black population. By tapping the large pool of political talent at the local level, PCPAC hopes to provide a springboard for new black and progressive leadership in the nation.

PCPAC will seek to assist this leadership by contributing funds to campaigns, conducting training conferences for candidates and campaign workers, and providing campaign experts to render on-site technical assistance to candidates during their campaigns.

Planning began in the summer of 1981 to organize a candidate and campaign-worker training conference in a major southern city. After discussions throughout the South, Jackson, Mississippi was selected as the ideal place for the first PCPAC effort. The 1981 election in Jackson had brought to office state Congressman Wayne Dowdy, a progressive candidate who won through the mobilization of a strong coalition of black and labor support. Moreover, black leadership throughout Mississippi was already engaged in a great deal of political activity.

In November 1981, representatives of PCPAC helped residents of Jackson to begin planning and making necessary arrangements for the conference. In the months that followed—with PCPAC financial

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Operation Big Vote: Crusade '82 Begins

by Gracia M. Hillman

(Ms. Hillman has been appointed executive director of the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation.)

The National Coalition on Black Voter Participation, sponsor of Operation Big Vote, is becoming an independent, nonprofit corporation. During the 1981 legislative debate over extension of the Voting Rights Act, members of the National Coalition realized that a more systematic approach to voter education was needed than had existed in the past. The coalition, formerly a loosely structured alliance, was incorporated in February 1982 and has been granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization.

The Origins of Operation Big Vote

The National Coalition on Black Voter Participation was formed in 1976. At the time, research conducted by the Joint Center for Political Studies showed that black voter participation had been on a steady decline since at least 1964. In response to this situation, the heads of several national black organizations created Operation Big Vote, and 50 national organizations joined this nonpartisan, single-purpose effort to increase black participation in electoral politics.

Although informal and substantially underfunded, the National Coalition demonstrated in 1976 and again in 1980 that its objectives were achievable and that, even where achieved only modestly, a valuable contribution to black political awareness and participation could be made. The coalition also showed that a self-help enterprise, drawing largely upon the financial and human resources of its member organizations, could be viable and productive.

In 1976, Operation Big Vote campaigns were organized in 36 cities. By mid-October of that year, the coalition estimated that black voter registration in these areas had increased by at least 12 percent. In 1980, the National Coalition grew from 50 to 85 members. Fifty cities had Operation Big Vote campaigns, and it was estimated that black voter registration in these areas increased by at least 14 percent. The Census Bureau recently reported that blacks were the only major group to show an increase in voter participation in the 1980 elections.

The Newly Incorporated Coalition

The National Coalition has been and remains a membership association. Its members are organizations whose programs are national or regional in scope and consistent with the mission and goals of the National Coalition.

The activities and policies of the National Coalition are supervised, managed, and controlled by a board of directors. Prior to incorporation, the National Coalition was guided by a steering committee. The organizations represented on that steering committee now comprise the board of directors. The present chair of the coalition is Eddie N. Williams, president of the Joint Center; the vice-chair is Maudine Cooper, vice-president of the National Urban League; the treasurer is James Carter, political education committee chairman of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity; the secretary is Geraldine Thompson, executive director of the Voter Education Project. A complete list of board members follows this article. The board will meet quarterly.

The first annual meeting of the full membership of the coalition will be held in February 1983. Elections for the board of directors will be held each year at the annual meeting.

As in past years, the Operation Big Vote program and fund-raising activities are being conducted under the aegis of the Joint Center for Political Studies, also a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization. When the National Coalition receives sufficient start-up funds, it will manage its own affairs, although it will remain housed in the offices of the Joint Center.

The primary objectives of the National Coalition are, first, to increase the level of voter participation activities of all national black organizations, especially those that do not now have voter education programs, and, second, to create cooperative coalition efforts at the local level that will increase political awareness and participation. The Operation Big Vote activities of the National Coalition are designed to complement and enhance the voter participation activities of organizations that have long-standing interests and programs in voter education, such as the NAACP, the National Urban League, and the Voter Education Project. The coalition creates an atmosphere and a vehicle through which all organizations committed to increasing black voter participation can share resources, strategies, and expertise.

Through Operation Big Vote, organizations without established voter education programs can work systematically with those which are already actively engaged in promoting voter participation. While each organization "does its own thing," Operation Big Vote works to ensure that there is a network of activities across the country.

On a national level, the coalition will develop and disseminate training materials and other voter education materials designed to meet the needs of the member organizations. It will provide technical assistance to member organizations that have not traditionally engaged in voter education activities. The coalition will also serve as a national clearinghouse to collect and publish information about voter participation activities being conducted by its members across the country. Among the coalition's publications will be a monthly newsletter. The coalition will also revise and reissue its manual *How to Organize a Successful Nonpartisan Voter Participation Campaign.*

The National Coalition will be supported by dues and other contributions from member organizations, by foundation grants, and by private donations. All organizations that have been members of the National Coalition in the past have been invited to continue membership. Invitations to join the coalition are also being extended to other national and regional black organizations.

Local Operation Big Vote Coalitions

As in past years, local Operation Big Vote coalitions will be organized in areas where the black voting-age population is relatively large and where research indicates the need for increased voter participation. A committee of the national board of directors will identify the target areas for 1982. Efforts will also be made to reactivate many of the local coalitions that operated in 1980.

The local Operation Big Vote coalitions consist of groups in the target areas that are willing to set aside partisan concerns for the sake of achieving a single purpose: increasing black voter participation. The local coalitions set up their own structures, under the guidance of a convenor. The convenor is usually, but not always, a local branch or chapter of a national organization that is a member of the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation. The effectiveness of the local coalitions is generally enhanced by wide diversity in the groups involved.

In some ways, the success of the Operation Big Vote coalition activities is easily measurable: How many blacks registered to vote? How many actually voted? But in addition to those concrete results, the participating groups knew that increased political awareness would be beneficial for both the individual citizens and the community at large.

Beyond Crusade '82

In the past, Operation Big Vote was active only during national (congressional and presidential) elections. With its incorporation, the National Coalition will work with its membership and with the local coalitions to sustain ongoing voter education activities. Local coalitions will be encouraged to maintain their voter participation programs and to use the off years to develop systematic approaches to voter education.

During the past 18 months, a great deal of time, energy, and resources have gone into efforts to make certain that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is extended. Many national black organizations, including the NAACP, National Urban League, Operation P.U.S.H., Southern Christian Leadership Conference, National Bar Association, Voter Education Project, and others, made extension of the Voting Rights Act a priority issue. The Joint Center for Political Studies conducted extensive research to inform the public as to why the Act is still needed. These organizations have worked hard, singly and in coalitions, to ensure continued protection of minority voting rights.

Operation Big Vote is a logical extension of these efforts. Blacks must use the votes they have fought so hard to protect.

Further information on Operation Big Vote can be obtained by writing:

National Coalition on Black Voter Participation
1301 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20004

National Coalition on Black Voter Participation Board of Directors

The members of the Board of Directors of the National Coalition, as well as the members of the coalition as a whole, are *organizations.* This list is therefore alphabetical by the names of the member groups. The individuals listed have been designated as representatives by their organizations. The public members were elected by the rest of the board.

Barbara K. Phillips
Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority
Hanley Norment
Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity
William Pollard
American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations
William Lucy
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
Norman Hill
A. Philip Randolph Institute
LeBaron Taylor
Black Music Association
Leonard Ball
Coalition of Black Trade Unionists
Bishop John Hurst Adams
Congress of National Black Churches
Walter E. Fauntroy
Congressional Black Caucus
Amelia Parker
Democratic National Committee
Eddie N. Williams
Joint Center for Political Studies
James Carter
Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity
Joseph E. Madison
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
Robert L. White
National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees
Dorothy Height
National Council of Negro Women
M. Carl Holman
National Urban Coalition
Maudine Cooper
National Urban League
Thomas A. Hart
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity
LeGree Daniels
Republican National Committee
Marc Stepp
United Auto Workers
Robert Brannum
United Negro College Fund
Geraldine Thompson
Voter Education Project
Ofield Dukes, public member
Yvonne Price, public member
Edward Sylvester, public member

VRA Extension: The Final Rounds

by Armand Derfner

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

On May 4, 1982, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted 17-1 to recommend passage of a bill—backed by civil rights groups—to extend the Voting Rights Act. But the lopsided vote obscures the bitter opposition that the bill faced in the committee. When the bill comes up for debate in the full Senate—probably in the second week of June—opponents of the Act, led by Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), are expected to launch an all-out attack on it. Supporters of the bill say there is a real danger of damaging amendments slipping through, and they are working hard to make sure that the bill's backers resist any efforts, however subtle, to water it down.

The bill reported by the Judiciary Committee is the result of an agreement between Senators Charles McC. Mathias (R-MD) and Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA), who originally introduced the Voting Rights Act extension bill in the Senate, and Senator Robert Dole (R-KS), a member of the Judiciary Committee. The senators worked out a bill identical to H.R. 3112—the extension bill passed by the House of Representatives—with certain modifications. Language is added to clarify the "results" test in Section 2, and a 25-year time limit is placed on the extension of Section 5. This version is generally satisfactory to civil rights representatives, who believe it does not weaken the House bill.

The Dole-Kennedy-Mathias bill is now called S. 1992. If the Senate passes this bill, the House is expected to agree to all the Senate language. President Reagan, too, has said he supports the Dole compromise.

Section 5 Preclearance

S. 1992 extends the special coverage provisions, which include not only Section 5 preclearance but also the authorization for the Justice Department to send federal examiners and federal observers where needed. These are the provisions that apply in 9 entire states and parts of 13 others; they are due to expire in August unless the extension legislation is passed before then.

The major changes that the House of Representatives made in the current law were in the length of coverage and the bail-out formula. Under the current law, bail-out provisions have applied to virtually all the covered jurisdictions for the same set period of time. The House extended coverage indefinitely, but allowed each covered state or county to bail out when it could show a satisfactory record of nondiscrimination. Detailed standards were set for showing complete compliance with the Act for 10 years, and guidelines were established for showing that positive steps had been taken to eliminate vestiges of voting discrimination. Under this approach, jurisdictions that have a good record and history of nondiscrimination would be able to bail out relatively soon, while jurisdictions that do not have a good record would be covered until they can meet the tests.

The Senate bill retains the essentials of this provision, including every detail of the bail-out procedure. Coverage is limited, however, to 25 years, and Congress must review the situation at the end of 15 years. The review will not automatically lead to any changes; if changes are wanted at that point, Congress will have to pass new legislation.

Section 2 Standard of Proof

Section 2 has been amended, both by the full House and by the Senate Judiciary Committee, to respond to the 1980 Supreme Court decision in *Mobile* v. *Bolden,* which said a claim of voting discrimination must be based on proof of discriminatory intent. Up until that ruling, it was generally understood that an election system or practice could be challenged by proving that the system discriminates *in fact.* The "intent" or "purpose" standard is harmful because proving the intent behind a measure is extremely difficult and because focus is placed on an issue that ought to be irrelevant—if there is discrimination now, it ought to be eliminated regardless of whether voters can prove what the intentions behind it were.

Section 2 had not originally specified what type of proof was required in challenges to electoral systems not subject to Section 5 preclearance. The House amended Section 2 to state explicitly that proof of discriminatory *results* was sufficient. The term *results* in that section does not mean simply election results; it means the results of the "totality of circumstances" in a jurisdiction. Thus, whether a system is discriminatory is determined by whether minority voters have an equal opportunity for full participation in the local political system as a whole.

A number of people were concerned that the term *results* might lead to a requirement of proportional representation. To eliminate this doubt, the House added a sentence to Section 2 making it clear that no proportional representation is called for.

The Senate Judiciary Committee amendment makes the same changes as the House amendment but makes the language even more explicit. Specifically, a subsection (b) is added, which includes some of the language from a 1973 Supreme Court decision in a case called *White* v. *Regester* to make it clear that the standard to be applied is the one the Court used in that case. In addition, the language of the "no proportional representation" disclaimer is refined.

All in all, the changes made by the Senate Judiciary Committee do not *change* the meaning of Section 2 but simply eliminate any doubt about what it does mean. Those who support an effective Voting Rights Act but who have had genuine concerns about how the amended Section 2 might be interpreted have generally agreed that the Senate clarification has settled their questions.

Language-Assistance Provisions

Under Section 207, jurisdictions with large populations of language-minority citizens (chiefly Hispanics, Asian-Americans, and Native Americans) are required to provide language assistance in

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Telescope

Sole-Source Awards Will Not Be Eliminated for Minority Firms

The U.S. Department of Commerce, which had initially decided to eliminate sole-source grant and contract awards to minority firms and organizations and to require competitive bidding on all contracts, has now decided to maintain policy as it was before the new policy was proposed, according to the National Business League. If the proposed policy had been implemented, larger, nonminority firms would have been able to compete for all contracts and to acquire a larger share of federal contracts at the expense of qualified minority firms. The National Business League, an organization for minority business people that promotes the economic development of minorities, had objected to the proposed policy change, stating that it would be "injurious to minority business firms and should be rescinded immediately."

JCPS Releases Two Reports on Voting Rights

"A results test in Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act will lead not to racial quotas but to a legal basis for protecting the fundamental right to vote. A continued intent test will frustrate that fundamental right."

These are two of the major conclusions of a new study published by the Joint Center for Political Studies entitled *The Voting Rights Act and Black Electoral Participation,* which discusses the consequences of the adoption by Congress of either a "result" or an "intent" test in cases brought under Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act in the future. The study, which was prepared by Kenneth H. Thompson, a senior research associate at the center, also assesses the impact the Act has had on black electoral participation since its passage in 1965 and its likely impact in the future.

The second study, entitled *Vote Dilution, Minority Voting Rights, and the Courts,* examines the mechanisms of vote dilution and problems with the determination of vote dilution. It analyzes the Supreme Court's treatment, under both the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act, of legal issues with regard to vote dilution. The report was prepared for the Joint Center by Stephen L. Wasby, professor of political science at the State University of New York.

Copies of both reports are available for $3.00 each from the Joint Center.

Melvin L. Bradley Appointed Special Assistant to the White House

To ensure that minority interests are represented at the White House in the future, President Reagan has appointed Melvin L. Bradley, formerly policy advisor to the Office of Policy Development, to the position of special assistant to the president. Bradley served as then Governor Reagan's assistant for community affairs from 1970 to 1975.

One of his primary responsibilities will be to monitor the impact of the administration's policies on minorities and the disadvantaged.

Bradley's appointment represents a change from the administration's original policy, which was not to appoint members of minorities to represent their ethnic groups, since the administration believed such special representation was unnecessary. Nevertheless, black officials in the administration have often been criticized by those outside the administration for not voicing the opinions of the black community.

Although Bradley will not participate in Reagan's daily cabinet briefings in his new position, he is the first black presidential aide with access to cabinet council meetings. He will report directly to the assistant to the president for policy development, Dr. Edwin L. Harper.

The president also selected another black, Wendell Wilkie Gunn, as special assistant to handle commerce and trade policy issues. Gunn's appointment brings the number of black presidential aides to six.

Congressional Black Caucus 1983 Alternative Budget

On May 19, Congressman Walter Fauntroy (D-DC) introduced an alternative budget for FY 1983 on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus. The CBC budget would return billions of dollars to social programs by closings tax loopholes and reducing defense spending. According to Fauntroy, chairman of the caucus, the Democratic leadership has shown an interest in pieces of the budget, which has been endorsed by many groups, including civil rights organizations, labor unions, the NAACP, the National Urban League, and the Children's Defense Fund, as well as the Democratic Study Group.

The CBC budget as a whole was defeated in the House of Representatives by a vote of 322-86. But while it is unlikely that any of the alternative budgets that were submitted will be adopted in its entirety, the CBC is working to preserve the major principles of its budget.

By closing tax loopholes and give-aways and restructuring individual tax cuts, the CBC budget raises approximately $82 billion in revenues. It has a deficit of $72 billion, compared to the projected Reagan budget deficit of $132 billion. Defense spending is held down to $200 billion—$72 billion less than the amount proposed by the Reagan administration. Additional revenue is used to restore funds to programs for those who the Congressional Black Caucus feels need them most because of the 1982 budget cuts and the declining economy: the poor, the unemployed, the elderly, small businesses, and middle-income taxpayers.

The caucus believes that two decisions made by the government in 1981 under the Reagan administration are responsible for the current recession. They were the Federal Reserve Board's decision to fight inflation with tight monetary policies, which resulted in high interest rates, and Congress and the administration's decision to cut taxes for the well-to-do and for profitable corporations by $750 billion over the next five years, while increasing defense spending to a record $1.6 trillion. According to the caucus, four "records" were established in 1981 as a result: record cuts in so-called "safety net" programs, record give-aways of tax resources, record increases in defense spending, and record projected deficits through 1985.

Parker-Coltrane

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assistance made possible by a Nancy Wilson fundraiser—the local groups acquired a conference site, planned the kinds of workshops to be held, mailed invitations to prospective conference participants, and produced various instructional documents with the assistance of Jackson State University.

PCPAC assembled a roster of political technicians with national, regional, and local perspectives to conduct the conference. The presenters included representatives from the AFL-CIO, the A. Philip Randolph Institute, AFSCME, the Carpenter's Union, the National Education Association, the League of Women Voters, the Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights, the NAACP, the Voter Education Project, and the Children's Defense Fund. National and local black elected officials also served as presenters.

The conference was held April 2-3, 1982. Over 250 people attended, from Alabama, Tennessee, Louisiana, Georgia, and Arkansas, as well as throughout the state of Mississippi. The two days of conference activity were coordinated by local and national representatives of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. Funds for the training conference were provided by the UAW, the International Association of Machinists, the United Food and Commercial Workers, and the Service Employees International Union.

The conferees attended nuts and bolts workshops focusing on demographics, targeting, candidate selection, filing procedures, women candidates, campaign organization, media, coordination of volunteers, campaign strategies, election-day activities, and fund raising.

Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm gave the keynote address and presented the first annual Parker-Coltrane Political Leadership Award to Mississippi State Senator Henry Kirksey. The conference was covered by the local press, the *Washington Post,* and the *New York Times.* Conference proceedings also appeared on the national NBC evening news.

PCPAC has received commitments from many leading black entertainers to do fund-raising concerts. A Johnny Hartman concert will take place in Washington, D.C. on June 28. Continuing assistance, is also being provided to the planning group in Jackson as they move to set up a local counterpart to the national Parker-Coltrane Political Action Committee.

For further information about PCPAC, write to the committee at P.O. Box 50523, Washington, D.C. 20004, or call Andy Luger at 202 347-3395.

Voting Rights Act

(Continued from page 6)

registration and voting (such as bilingual ballots or oral translation) to those who need it. This section was originally passed in 1975 for 10 years, and the House-passed bill extends coverage for an additional 7 years, through 1992. The Senate Judiciary Committee bill does the same thing.

Assistance to Blind, Disabled, and Illiterate Voters

The Senate bill adds a new Section 208, which provides that voters who need assistance because they are blind, disabled, or unable to read or write are entitled to receive assistance from a person of their choice. This is the rule in a number of states, but the amendment will be important in other states where assistance has been provided by election officials or someone chosen by those officials. This section replaces the restrictive "Fenwick amendment" adopted in the House of Representatives over civil rights opposition.

On May 29, the Senate Judiciary Committee issued Senate Report 97-417, an 87-page explanation of S. 1992 prepared by Senator Mathias on behalf of the committee majority for the bill. Senator Mathias's report is "the statement for the record of the intended meaning and operation of this bill." Printed with the report are the views of several other individual senators on the committee. Among these "additional views" are lengthy statements by Senators Hatch and East on why they oppose the bill, which will probably be the basis of the filibuster they and their allies are expected to carry on when S. 1992 comes to the floor for action by the full Senate.

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