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

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The Mississippi Flag Vote

The recent referendum in which a substantial majority of Mississippi voters chose to keep the Confederate battle cross prominently displayed in the state flag was disappointing. It perpetuates a painful symbol of slavery and racial injustice and sends a message that the state still has a long way to go in bridging its racial divide.

To be sure, for many white Mississippians, their denials notwithstanding, race was the issue. Through their words and ballots, they made it clear that they continue to fight the Civil War almost a century and a half later and that racism's ugly face still has a lengthy shelf life in that state. It was, I suspect, fear of racist retaliation that played a role in depressing the turnout among poor black Mississippians, who saw the referendum as having little to do with their daily economic struggles and, thus, not worth the risk of alienating those with the power to retaliate.

But more needs to be said about this vote. A significant number of white Mississippians joined with black leaders to try to change the flag. Among them were former Governor William Winter, appointed by current Governor Ronny Musgrove to lead the effort to re-design the flag, and native Mississippian James Barksdale, the business whiz behind the growth of Netscape, who raised a half million dollars for the campaign to rid the flag of its symbol of hate.

In fact, despite the vote, Mississippi has changed. According to the Joint Center's Black Elected Officials Roster, Mississippi has more black elected officials than any other state in the nation. The state's judicial system finally brought to justice the killer of legendary civil rights leader Medgar Evers and is attempting to bring to justice the killers of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman, and Michael Schwerner, the three civil rights workers slain nearly 37 years ago. Thanks to the efforts of former Governor Winter, who served on President Clinton's Advisory Board on Race, Mississippi now has mandatory kindergarten, which largely benefits black youngsters, and the University of Mississippi, once the scene of ugly violence when James Meredith tried to integrate the campus, has created an Institute for Racial Reconciliation and Civic Renewal.

This is not to minimize the racism that still exists in Mississippi. But, in truth, racism remains a problem everywhere in this country. One could argue that some places in Mississippi are more hospitable to African Americans than many northern communities.

Some people advocate an economic boycott of Mississippi by tourists and conference planners until the flag comes down. Such action worked in South Carolina, and the fear of such action probably inspired the recent change in Georgia. If major organizations like the NAACP recommend that course of action, all fair-minded Americans should respect the recommendation.

There may be another way to approach this matter, however. Rather than punish all Mississippians, particularly those who earn their living in the tourist and conference

industry—many of whom are poor and black—some people are suggesting a creative way to help people like Winter and Barksdale and other progressive Mississippians in their quest to help the state confront and deal honestly with its past and present. They suggest that every conference held in Mississippi include prominently in its program a session focused on educating all attendees about racism and its ramifications. They suggest that each conference include, as well, an event designed to raise public awareness in Mississippi of the healing power of acknowledging and dealing with the legacy of its painful history. This strategy may not feel as good immediately to those of us who feel disheartened about the way the flag vote turned out, but in the long run this alternative, if pursued vigorously, just might yield greater benefit at lower cost than an economic boycott. ■



PRESIDENT



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Subscription price: U.S. \$15.00 per year.

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Federal Funding for Faith-Based Programs

Black Clergy Disagree on Whether Initiative Is a Blessing

By Antawn D. McCullum

More than 400 African American clergy, dignitaries, and politicians from across the country gathered in Washington, D.C., April 19-21 to attend a conference on “Politics and the Black Church in the New Millennium.” The event was sponsored by a project known as The Public Influence of African American Churches, based at Morehouse College, in Atlanta, Georgia. The project seeks to stimulate discussion and scholarship about the relationship between African American churches and American public life since the civil rights movement.

Although they sounded much like Sunday morning sermons, the conference speeches addressed the essential purpose or mission of the black church and how to define the church’s appropriate political role in today’s climate. Chief among the issues on the minds of most attendees was the recently announced federal funding for faith-based initiatives and its long-term effect on the church’s ability to fulfill its mission. Knowing that both pastors and congregants are increasingly concerned about the issue, conference planners devoted one seminar solely to discussion of the initiative.

Two months before the conference convened, President George W. Bush fulfilled a campaign promise to create a White House Office of Faith-Based Programs and Community Initiatives and appointed University of Pennsylvania professor of political science John J. DiIulio, Jr., to head up the effort. The purpose of the office is to integrate the social service efforts of religious institutions and other nonprofits with those financed by the federal government.

Throughout his campaign and during the early days of his presidency, Bush repeatedly expressed his desire to use taxpayers’ dollars to fund social services provided by religious groups and organizations. The faith-based initiative reflects a fundamental difference between Democrats and Republicans about the role of the government in meeting social needs. In response to questions from reporters during the early days of his administration, Bush stressed that he considered his faith-based initiative as one of his most important. “When we see social needs in America, my administration will look first to faith-based programs and community groups, which have proven their power to save and change lives,” he explained. He said that he hopes to spend \$8 billion in his first year in office on this endeavor.

Bush’s faith-based initiative raises a number of difficult constitutional, political, and theological concerns for all

people within the faith community. However, it is of particular interest for the black church, which has traditionally been the source of many social services for black communities. In inner-city and low-income areas throughout the country, black churches run drug and alcohol treatment programs, operate homeless shelters, and distribute food and clothing to the needy in addition to meeting spiritual needs. Many religious organizations, including black churches, have taken on tough problems such as gang violence, domestic violence, drug abuse, and homelessness. Their programs have often outperformed traditional government-funded social programs. Nevertheless, while many African American churches already have social programs in place, church leaders hold widely divergent views on the advisability of accepting money from the government to operate them.

As an African American youth minister myself, I attended the conference and made use of the occasion to interview others about their views on this timely and controversial topic. Before asking them about their response to the initiative, I gave attendees a list of questions to draw their attention to the central issues:

- How do you feel about religious groups providing services with your tax dollars? These might include after-school programs for children, job training, drug treatment, prison, rehabilitation programs and abstinence programs.
- Do you believe that President Bush’s faith-based initiative violates the First Amendment, which deals with separation of church and state?
- To avoid charges of discrimination, a federal program to fund religious groups must fund every religious group in the United States. In your view, where must the line be drawn?
- Many religious leaders fear that if faith-based groups accept federal money, private donors will lose interest and private donations will dwindle, leaving the groups, in essence, captives of federal bureaucracy. Do you share in this concern?
- What effect, if any, would Bush’s faith-based initiative have on the traditional black church if their leaders accepted federal money?
- Do you believe that your age has any bearing on your decision to either accept or reject Bush’s faith-based initiative?

Antawn D. McCullum, student at the Howard University School of Divinity, was an intern in the Joint Center’s Office of Communications and Marketing this past spring.

First Amendment Issues

A frequently cited reason for opposing federal aid for social services performed by religious organizations is that it would violate the constitutionally mandated separation of church and state. One of the conference's speakers, nationally known preacher Rev. Carolyn N. Graham (age 54), also happens to be Washington, D.C., deputy mayor for children, youth, and families. She believes that the government has an obligation or "calling" to fund community enrichment programs. "I don't believe that Bush's faith-based initiative violates the First Amendment," Graham said. "The state can ask for anything. The church's response to the state's request is another thing."

Yolanda Hinton (age 44), ordained deacon and minister of Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago, Illinois, which boasts more than 20,000 members, strongly disagreed with Rev. Graham, asserting unequivocally that Bush's initiative is directly in violation of the First Amendment. "However," she added, "no matter what we do, we cannot really separate church and state. Clergy frequently go to the government to have things changed morally and socially. The civil rights movement is a great example. Many participants in the movement were people from African American churches. They joined with government officials and religious leaders from around the world to change things. There must be an attempt to join the two entities for the betterment of the people."

But Rev. Matthew Watley (age 27), youth minister at Reid Temple A.M.E. Zion Church in Lanham, a Maryland suburb of Washington, D.C., expressed the view of many younger members of the clergy: "I don't solely tie faith-based initiatives to Bush. The black church throughout history, from generation to generation, has always provided social services. Bush is proposing nothing new. Tax dollars only help to undergird the work that has long-since been initiated by such faith-based groups. It offers a greater opportunity for more people to be touched."

Who Gets the Money?

Not all questions about the initiative can be answered by the faith community. Many issues need to be addressed by the administration. For example, what about government funding for agencies that counsel women on reproductive choices? Would the pro-choice and pro-life advocates both be satisfied to see funding going to programs that support the opposing position? Would American taxpayers support funding for an organization viewed by many as a cult, if it provided clothes to the homeless? In short, which organizations will be considered as candidates for receiving federal monies? What are the criteria? The answers to these questions will have to come from the Bush administration.

During a press conference in early April, John Dilulio, director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, talked about the administration's plan to let churches, synagogues, and mosques, along with foundations

and other nonprofits, help deliver \$250 billion in federal social programs. "Muslims, Mormons, Methodists, or good people of no faith at all collaborating together across the usual denominational, racial, urban, and suburban lines to make things happen for needy people—that's the model," said Dilulio. "What we propose is to open every dollar the government spends on domestic and social programs to anybody who can do the work. We don't ask who you are. We ask, what can you do?"

While the administration may be content to avoid the question of who these people are, others clearly do want to ask that question. Minister Alexis Archer (age 31) from Virginia Beach, Virginia, said, "I need to know specifically what organization is getting the money. Secondly, besides service, what else are they providing?" Archer takes issue with providing tax dollars to non-Christian organizations. "I am a Christian. I want to support Christian organizations that provide services to those who need help." She stressed that she is opposed to providing money or opportunities for non-Christian organizations that may use that money in ways that promote their religious views.

Staying Independent

Although circumstances and needs have changed, the black church is still a vibrant, strong voice in the black community. Rev. Graham voiced concern that with federal money would come a diminution of the church's historical role. "The black church has historically been the alternative voice that pricked American conscience and focussed attention on what is right and righteous. If black church leaders accepted federal money, we would eventually lose our prophetic edge. We certainly cannot bite the hand that feeds us," she said.

The possibility of a loss of control or change in mission was also expressed by others. "The black church should not receive any money from the government to fund such programs," said the Rev. Dr. Morris L. Shearin (age 60), pastor of Israel Baptist Church and president of the D.C. chapter of the NAACP in Washington, D.C. "The black church is the only thing that the African American community has left. If historically black churches start taking money from the government, before you know it, the black church will be run by the government."

Rev. Watley takes a different view from his elders. He contends that there is nothing unconstitutional about Bush's faith-based initiatives and that Bush is just seeking to centralize the efforts of everyone who has a desire to help others. He directs those opposing Bush's initiatives to read the book *Cultural Disbeliefs* by noted African American author, Steven Carter. "Carter says that the First Amendment was designed to protect the church from the state, not the state from the church," Watley said. "This fear of the government taking control of the church, if the church accepted federal money to fund social programs, has not stopped the Jewish or Catholic community from using the money for various charities. And we know that they value autonomy." He asked the question "What is there to fear?"

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Postal Reform: A Black Union's Perspective

How Will Black Postal Workers Fare Under Reform Proposals?

By Marcia Johnson-Blanco

After years of debate, a consensus has emerged that the United States Postal Service is in a state of crisis and badly in need of reform. What remains to be agreed on is what kind of reform will work. At an April 4 hearing before the House of Representatives Committee on Government Reform, witnesses discussed the long list of woes facing the Postal Service. In response, committee chair Dan Burton (R-IN) vowed that the committee would consult with Postal Service stakeholders and devise a bipartisan solution.

As a key postal stakeholder, the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees is concerned about what that solution might be. The last time Congress enacted substantive postal reform, this 87-year-old, independent, predominantly African American union found itself outside the collective bargaining process. With the help of friends in the Congress, the National Alliance was able to retain its dues check-off status and continues to serve its members today, although without the benefit of the formal recognition it once enjoyed from the Postal Service and the federal government.

From its inception, the National Alliance has combined the trade union struggle with the civil rights struggle. It believes that no discussion of postal reform should be limited to monetary concerns. Rather, proponents for reform must ensure that the civil and procedural rights of workers, particularly those of the Alliance's predominantly African American members, are protected rather than undermined.

The Postal Service Today

With more than 800,000 employees, the Postal Service is a \$65 billion behemoth charged with binding the nation together through correspondence. In 1970, Congress passed the Postal Reorganization Act, which directed the Postal Service to become self-sustaining and conduct itself like a business, under the guidance of a nine-member board of governors, the Postal Rate Commission (PRC), and a system of binding arbitration. Today, Postal Service spokesmen argue that this system hampers its growth and prevents it from responding to market pressures in a changed landscape of increased competition and the rising use of electronic technology.

Postal Woes

David M. Walker, Comptroller General of the U. S. General Accounting Office (GAO), has declared that the

Postal Service requires structural transformation to remain viable and has placed the service on its high-risk list. Earlier this year, many in the postal community were astonished to hear that in a four-month period the projected financial loss of the Postal Service for fiscal year 2001 had escalated from \$480 million to as much as \$3 billion—with greater losses predicted if the economy continues to soften. According to the Postal Service, the primary cause of this revised projection is the denial of the rate hike requested from the PRC. The Postal Service argues that because the rate hike was not granted, it must reduce revenue projections by \$1 billion.

According to Walker's testimony, the challenges go well beyond denied rate requests. With its net income having declined over the past five years and its outstanding debt having grown since 1997, the Postal Service is projected to reach its statutory debt limit of \$15 billion by the end of fiscal year 2002. External market forces that have fueled this debt include greater competition from domestic and foreign-based enterprises and the rising use of electronic means of communication. But the Postal Service worsened matters by its own unsuccessful attempts to generate revenue from e-commerce, failure to capitalize on savings opportunities, and its conflicts with key stakeholders, including the PRC and postal unions.

In light of its enormous projected deficit, the Postal Service has frozen capital commitments on more than 800 facilities, pledged to reduce costs by \$2.5 billion by 2003, and divulged plans to cut 75,000 employees over the next five years. Outgoing Postmaster General William Henderson argues that these are only stop-gap measures and that Congress must address the legislative limitations that hamper the Postal Service's ability to control labor costs and pricing and, thus, compete in changing economic environments.

The Cost Argument

Since 1996, Congressman John McHugh (R-NY) has led the Congressional effort to reform the Postal Service. During this time, there has been a prolonged debate about whether reform is necessary, with advocates of privatization on one extreme and defenders of the status quo on the other. The projection of huge budget deficits for this year and concerns that the Postal Service will soon reach its statutory budget limit, however, seem to undermine the arguments for no change. Yet, even among those who agree that the Postal Service must cut costs and increase efficiency in order to survive, there is little agreement on the particulars.

Ms. Johnson-Blanco is the legislative assistant for the National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees.

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Postal Reform

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While labor accounts for three-fourths of the Postal Service's operating expenses, the Inspector General has uncovered major cost inefficiencies in multibillion dollar expenditures for automation that labor can point to as equally responsible for rising costs. Additionally, a controversy is brewing over the enormous bonuses paid to managers at a time when the Postal Service is losing money.

A report prepared by the Inspector General for this past April's Postal Oversight Hearing discussed some of these non-labor-related cost inefficiencies. Over a four-year period, the Inspector General discovered that the Postal Service did not always monitor contractor performance and billing in its \$8 billion-a-year contracting program. He found that some contractors were providing multimillion dollar services without formal contracting agreements, which resulted in weakened internal controls. The Inspector General also discovered that a program designed to repair postal equipment, which was estimated to save \$300 million over a 10-year period, would instead cost the Postal Service \$1.1 billion over the life of the program. Further, the Postal Service's performance-incentive program garnered Congressional criticism for paying \$197 million in bonuses at a time when the Postal Service lost \$199 million. The Postal Service justified these payments as crucial incentives for achieving productivity goals. At the same time, the Postal Service experienced an increase in the number of grievances and Equal Employment Opportunity complaints, as well as a general decline in morale. The cost of employee discontent may be difficult to assess, but its impact on the bottom line is unmistakable.

Lessons From the Past

On October 6, 1913, at the foot of Lookout Mountain in Chattanooga, Tennessee, black railway mail clerks from 13 states gathered to found the National Alliance. At that time, the Post Office Department, as it was called then, permitted blacks to work in the Railway Mail Service as clerks. The job was particularly dangerous because the wooden cars broke apart easily in collisions and caused severe injuries, even death. As a result, whites were reluctant to take such jobs. However, in 1913, two changes jeopardized the jobs of these black workers. First, the railways began converting from wooden to steel railway cars, which made the jobs more attractive to white workers. Second, President Woodrow Wilson appointed a new Postmaster General, Albert B. Burleson, who instituted a program designed to make all the railway lines "lily white."

With their livelihoods threatened and lacking access to union membership since the Railway Mail Association excluded blacks, the black railway clerks decided to organize. The first order of business for the newly formed National Alliance of Postal Employees was to prevent the black workers from losing their jobs. The new union also sought to establish effective means for presenting workers' grievances and petitions to the Post Office Department. It also

fought against obstacles to black employment and provided insurance and other benefits to workers' families.

Founding President Henry L. Mims was able to intervene successfully with Postmaster General Burleson to save jobs, and in 1923, the National Alliance opened its membership to all postal workers regardless of race, sex, creed, or religion, becoming the first industrial union in the federal service. Although unions whose members engaged in a particular craft or trade had been around for a long time, the practice of unionizing according to industry was new. Open membership was a position not shared by the craft unions in the Post Office Department at the time.

From its inception, the National Alliance contributed greatly to worker rights within the federal government. In 1940, after a three-decade battle, it was successful in eliminating the photograph requirement on civil service exams. In the 1950s, it successfully defended its leaders who were targeted and fired during the Red Scare and McCarthyism. In the 1960s, the National Alliance was instrumental in the desegregation of post offices and gained frontline positions for blacks who worked in them. The union, whose membership was broadened to include federal workers in 1965, worked with John F. Kennedy, first as a Senator and then as President, to institute an Equal Employment Opportunity program within the federal government.

In 1970, when President Richard M. Nixon began his postal reform initiatives, the National Alliance had formal and informal recognition as a trade union in the Post Office Department and was actively involved in the collective bargaining process on the local level. It was prevented from gaining national exclusive status because this was granted only to craft unions, not industrial unions. But a political deal nearly killed the union. In return for their support of his postal reform legislation, President Nixon granted exclusive bargaining rights to the craft unions, effectively shutting the National Alliance out of the collective bargaining process. After years of ensuring the rights of black workers and fighting against racism in the federal government, the National Alliance faced the possibility of its imminent demise.

Ironically, one of the reasons cited for postal reform at the time was to prevent direct intervention in the running of the Postal Service by Congressional representatives on behalf of their constituents' interests—a practice that was said to have led to a system of patronage and corruption. Without the direct intervention of Robert N.C. Nix, (D-PA), however, the National Alliance would not be alive today. He inserted a provision in the 1970 Postal Reorganization Act that allowed the National Alliance to retain its dues check-off status. Today, the National Alliance represents its members, outside the collective bargaining system, under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Merit Systems Protection Board, the Office of Workman's Compensation Program, and the National Labor Relations Board.

Given this history, when we hear talk today of postal reform, we at the National Alliance worry about whether the interests of all postal workers, including our members, will

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The Cost of Preventing Teen Pregnancies

Joint Center Analysis Helps Prevention Programs Gauge Per-Client Costs

By Wilhelmina A. Leigh

How does a teen pregnancy prevention program go about determining whether it is effective? And just how much does it cost, per client, to implement an effective prevention program? Although the answer to the first question often is elusive, the Joint Center has developed a tool to help programs estimate their per client costs and thus begin to address the latter question.

Despite a decline in the teen pregnancy rate of 14 percent since 1990, the United States still has the highest rate of any industrialized nation. About a million young American women, ages 15 to 19, become pregnant each year. During the 1990s, the rates of childbearing among African American teens declined notably, dropping from nearly 120 per 1,000 women in 1991 to 84 per 1,000 women in 1999. This decline is mainly attributable to the improved availability and use of injectable and implantable contraceptives by these young women.

Over the last few decades, many prevention programs have sought to address the problem of teen childbearing. However, no consensus has emerged on how to approach the problem or even how to define it or measure program success. It thus is difficult to assess a program's effectiveness, and comparing programs becomes extremely difficult without consistent definitions, goals, and measurements.

Originally, the goal of the Joint Center's research was to estimate the cost per pregnancy prevented for programs that have been evaluated as effective. It soon became clear that there wasn't sufficient available data to accomplish this task. Thus, the project sought to determine the cost per client for effective prevention programs. We believed that developing a worksheet for estimating costs for pregnancy prevention programs would enable program staff to rigorously assess both total and per client costs. Further, creating this tool could foster the systematic collection of cost-related data by program operators.

First, we sought to identify effective teen pregnancy prevention programs. We began with a database of 159 programs that each met several criteria: (1) pregnancy prevention was to be an explicit goal; (2) the program specifically targeted teens; (3) the program operated in a particular location or locations. Programs that exclusively offered abstinence-based instruction or focused on adoptions or abortions as solutions for pregnancies were excluded.

Once the database was constructed, various criteria were successively applied to select a program for cost analysis. Programs were removed for the following reasons: (1) no available evaluation findings, (2) pregnancy prevention not a primary goal, (3) outcomes limited to acquiring knowledge about sexuality, (4) health information about contraception

not provided, (5) limited effectiveness, (6) incomplete information, and (7) not currently operating. Three programs remained: Children's Aid Society Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (Carrera Model), Girls Incorporated Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy (PAP) Program, and Teen Outreach Program (TOP).

After reviewing the scholarly literature about the costs of teen pregnancy and of teen pregnancy prevention, we developed the framework and worksheet for our cost analysis. As the structural basis for the worksheet, we were guided by *Cost Analysis Step by Step: A How-to Guide for Planners and Providers of Welfare to Work and Other Employment and Training Programs*, prepared by David Greenberg and Ute Appenzeller for the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation in 1998. The final form of the worksheet was largely shaped by feedback from our advisory workgroup and the input and suggestions from the program staff, who provided the data to test the worksheet. We field-tested the worksheet with the PAP program, an ongoing multicomponent program that uses a standard curriculum at multiple sites around the country.

Our final worksheet is designed to capture the costs of as many of the items associated with implementing a teen pregnancy prevention program as possible and to allow comparison of those costs with enrollment data to determine per-client cost. The worksheet has three parts. Part I is for recording information about each program component or for the program as a whole. The main expenditure categories in Part I are: personnel; professional fees/contract services; occupancy; equipment; communications; supplies/incentives; meetings, conferences, and training; local transportation; and general miscellaneous. Within each category, expenses are itemized. The totals from Part I are used in Part II to yield total program expenditures, which are then used with program enrollment data to calculate per-client per program cost and then adjusted for inflation. Part III includes questions to more fully describe or characterize the program, including the number of times during a year the program was offered, length of sessions, setting, and intangible items essential to operation. To assist program staff in filling out the worksheet, complete line-by-line and column-by-column instructions were prepared.

Upon completion of the project products in 2002, a user-friendly version of the worksheet and a detailed instruction booklet will be available to teen pregnancy prevention programs. Program personnel also will be able to compare their costs with those for PAP. ■

Faith-Based Programs

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For Minister Veronica Slater (age 38), the fear is the church will become more accountable to the government than to God. "If traditional black churches accept federal money," said Slater, from Atlanta, Georgia, "the devil will be sitting on the main board in their church. The pastor will be censored as to what he or she can say for fear of offending the system. . . . Finally, the church will be accountable to the government and not to God." added Rev. Archer "I am very leery of the results from a spiritual point-of-view. Regardless of the ethnic makeup of the church, the results of accepting any money from the government to fund the ministry, would not be positive."

Different Perspectives

Are the perspectives on the controversial issue of faith-based initiatives shaped by the age of the individual? Or does it all boil down to how informed individuals are as to the connection of political and spiritual issues? Or perhaps it is a matter of priorities. For individuals who want to clothe the homeless, help individuals fight drug abuse and alcoholism, and pursue other noble social goals, the lure of federal money is tempting. For others, governmental control is the greater evil. They fear that the black church will lose its independence and unique role. ■

Postal Reform

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be considered. The past suggests that this cannot be assumed. When the Postal Service begins discussions about reducing its workforce in order to reduce costs, the National Alliance must worry about whether its members will be at the forefront of these reductions. This is not an idle concern. During the reinventing-government program of the Clinton years, a disproportionate number of blacks were released under the program's initiatives. And this occurred during an administration seen as friendly to the interests of African Americans.

During the April Postal Oversight hearings, Chairman Burton vowed to alert the Bush administration to the problems facing the Postal Service and to ask for the White House's support for the reform process. It remains uncertain how the Bush administration will respond, though one can assume that it will be generally favorable to the idea of reform. At the beginning of the administration, Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao promised to be accessible and listen to labor's concerns. But she has sought to downplay the notion that the Labor Department will focus only on unions. So far, actual policies of the administration, such as repeal of ergonomics laws and the ban on project labor agreements for federally funded construction, have placed the administration at odds with organized labor.

As discussions on postal reform heat up, it is unclear what proposals will gain acceptance, given the diverse interests of the stakeholders. While the privatization movement is gaining ground, such a move seems unlikely at this time. For the National Alliance, the issue is as basic as retaining its right to represent all its members and to protect the rights of African American workers against discrimination. ■

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TRENDLETTER

POLITICAL REPORT

Senate Control Shifts

By Mary K. Garber

Before May 24, Senator James Jeffords couldn't even get an invitation to the White House for an awards ceremony honoring a teacher from his home state. Republicans openly talked about "making him pay" for his lack of support for Bush's tax bill. Increasingly out of step with his party's conservative bent, Jeffords announced on May 24 that he would leave the Republican Party and become an independent. His decision abruptly shifted control of the U.S. Senate to the Democrats, shook the GOP to its foundations, and prompted a spate of fingerpointing over who was responsible.

While the actual membership of the Senate remains the same, the effect of Jeffords' defection is enormous. Democrats will now chair the Senate's committees and control what legislation makes it to the floor. Pundits, journalists, and politicians from both parties are now trying to figure out what this shift means for the major issues facing the Senate and for the political landscape of the future. At the very least, the prospects for judicial appointments, election reform, patients' rights, campaign finance reform, energy policy, missile defense, environmental protections, and a host of other issues have been radically altered.

Changes in the leadership of the committees illustrate the possible impact of this shift. Judiciary will go from conservative Orrin Hatch to the more liberal Patrick Leahy (D-VT). Armed Services will now be headed by Carl Levin (D-MI), a vocal opponent of Bush's missile defense plans. Frank Murkowski (R-AK), an advocate of drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, will lose the chairmanship of the Energy Committee to Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), an opponent of drilling. Joseph Biden will take over Foreign Relations, replacing ultra-conservative Jesse Helms. Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), who will chair Governmental Affairs, is expected to bring a renewed emphasis on environmental and consumer protections. The Senate's best-known liberal, Ted Kennedy (D-MA), will assume the leadership of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee, which will enhance his ability to push patients' rights, a Medicare prescription drug benefit, an increase in the minimum wage, and other issues long associated with the Massachusetts senator.

For African Americans, the most significant shift may be in the Judiciary Committee. Under the chairmanship of Orrin Hatch, the committee had failed to act on many Clinton nominations to the bench. The practice of "blue slipping," long a Senate courtesy extended to the senators from a nominee's home state, had kept many of these ap-

pointments from even being considered. The goal of many Republican members of the committee was to block all nominees to the bench until after the election, when they hoped to fill these slots with more conservative appointees.

Bush's first round of judicial nominations were announced just days before Jefford's bombshell. The administration had taken the further step of declaring that it would not consult the American Bar Association prior to placing names in nomination, a long-time practice for screening nominees. With Democrats now controlling the committee, the ABA is back in the picture.

David A. Bositis, the Joint Center's senior political analyst, notes: "The Judiciary Committee contains some of the Senate's most liberal members—Ted Kennedy, Patrick Leahy, Herb Kohl. Tom Daschle will have the opportunity to appoint a new member to the committee, and he's not likely to choose one of the more conservative or even moderate Democrats for the slot."

One crucial effect of Jeffords' switch has been to increase the power of moderates in both parties. Ignored, threatened, and marginalized by the politically dominant right wing of their party, the GOP moderates now clearly understand how much influence they can wield. With a razor-thin margin that can change in a flash, the center of both parties is in a position to ensure that government does not stray too far from the middle.

Report Finds Racial Disparities in Florida Election

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' final report on the 2000 Florida election concludes that the Florida election was rife with injustice, ineptitude, and inefficiencies and that Florida's minority voters were the principal victims of the system's inadequacies. Much of the blame for the election day mess is assigned to the state's top election officials, Secretary of State Katherine Harris, and Governor Jeb Bush.

The study found that 54 percent of Florida's rejected ballots were cast by African Americans, who constitute only 11 percent of the state's voting population. It concludes that widespread voter disenfranchisement resulted from the failure of Florida election officials to take action, even when alerted to the extent of the difficulties. Lack of preparation for the large voter turnout, unequal access to well-maintained voting equipment, and poorly trained poll workers are cited as possible causes for the election problems. Although the report finds no conclusive evidence of a conspiracy, it calls for further investigation by the Justice Department into whether Florida officials violated the Voting Rights Act. In addition, the commission's chair, Mary Frances Berry, announced that the commission intends to monitor the status of reforms up to the 2002 election.

The Commission's report includes an epilogue that reviews reform actions since the election, including the newly enacted Florida Election Reform Act signed into law by Gov. Jeb Bush on May 9, 2001. The report commends many aspects of the new law, which improves absentee voting, military and overseas registration and voting, poll worker education and training, and maintenance of voter

rolls. It notes, however, that a number of issues were not addressed, including disenfranchisement of former felons, failure to provide language assistance for voters, and lack of accommodations for voters with disabilities. Most important, the report points out that there still is no process in place for voters denied the right to vote to challenge that denial on election day.

The eight-member commission voted six to two to accept the report, with the six members appointed by Democrats voting for the report and the two appointed by Republicans voting against it. The two Republican appointees considered the analysis flawed and plan to put their dissent in writing and have it included with the final report.

Rally Protests Felony Charges Against Picketers

On June 9, approximately 7,000 union members and community activists rallied to protest felony charges leveled against five members of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) arrested for protesting at the Charleston, South Carolina, port against the use of nonunion labor. Joining the rally were representatives from civil rights groups who believe that racial factors played a part in the unusually harsh charges brought against the men. Among those attending the rally in the state capital of Columbia were AFL-CIO executive vice president Linda Chavez-Thompson, ILA president John M. Bowers, president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union James Spinosa, Southern Christian Leadership Conference former president Joseph Lowery, NAACP regional director Nelson Rivers III, and Joseph Neal, chair of the South Carolina Legislative Black Caucus.

Dubbed the "Charleston Five," the five men belong to the largely African

American local 1422 of the International Longshoremen's Association (AFL-CIO) in Charleston. They face criminal charges stemming from a union protest held in January 2000, when 125 members of the local union tried to picket at the port to protest the use of nonunion workers. They were met by 600 armed state and local police in riot gear. Union spokesmen claim that the ensuing fight was initiated by the police when they clubbed Ken Riley, the local union president, who was attempting to set up a buffer between the workers and the police. The police insist that the protestors started the violence by hurling bottles and bricks at them.

Nine workers were arrested and initially charged with misdemeanors. However, South Carolina attorney general Charlie Condon, an announced Republican gubernatorial candidate, intervened and charged the men with inciting a riot, a felony charge that carries a sentence of up to five years in prison. Although a judge dismissed the charges for lack of evidence, Condon convened a grand jury, which handed down felony indictments against five of the workers.

Many observers believe that the attorney general's actions were calculated to give him a "tough on crime" image. Furthermore, the nearly all-black union has earned the ire of the state's Republican party through its involvement in state politics. South Carolina is a strong right-to-work state, with a history of anti-labor sentiment. Riley, the local president, believes that the union's very visible involvement in efforts by civil rights groups to remove the Confederate flag from the state capitol played a part in the reaction by the police and attorney general. The incident took place only two days after 47,000 people marched in the state capital to urge the legislature to remove the Confederate flag. ■

ECONOMIC REPORT

Reauthorizing Welfare Reform: Part 3. Bringing Fathers into the Debate

By George Cave

So far, very little of the welfare reform debate has focused on the fathers of children in families who receive federal and state cash assistance. With Father's Day falling in this month, it seems an opportune time to discuss policy issues concerning "welfare fathers."

Most families receiving cash welfare (TANF) have only one parent, usually the mother, living with the children. During the fiscal year ending September 1998, the average number of two-parent TANF families was under 200,000, while the average number of single-parent families receiving TANF was over 2.2 million. Thus, the vast majority of welfare fathers are noncustodial parents. Many of these fathers are too poor to provide steady child support, but with simple policy changes, more of these fathers could pay or pay more than they do now. Some might even be able to pay much more. Changing the TANF law on passing through child support payments would improve the chances that noncustodial welfare fathers would pay child support and remain involved in their children's lives. The result would not only save money for the federal and state governments, but lead to healthier children with better prospects for success in school and life.

Welfare Fathers and Poverty

Welfare fathers make up a fairly small fraction of all noncustodial fathers. According to the latest national data from the Census Bureau's biennial child support survey, as of spring 1998, an estimated 14

million parents had custody of 23 million children under age 21 whose other parent lived elsewhere. Although welfare fathers make up a small portion of noncustodial fathers, they account for about half of all noncustodial fathers whose children live in poverty. About 4 million custodial parents—29 percent of the 14 million total—had family incomes below the poverty line.

Eighty-five percent of these custodial parents are mothers. More than half of these custodial parents (7.9 million) had some type of child support agreement or award. Among the remaining custodial parents (6.6 million) who had no support agreements or only had informal, nonlegal agreements, 17.5 percent had not established legal paternity, 15.9 percent wanted no contact with the noncustodial parent, and 12.7 percent said the child stays with the other parent part of the time.

Child Support Payments

About two-thirds of custodial parents who were due child support in 1997 received some payments: 41 percent received full payments, and 27 percent received partial payments. Thus, one third (2.3 million) of custodial parents received no payment whatsoever through the government child-support collection system. More than a third (36 percent) of these parents had family incomes below the poverty threshold.

More than half of all custodial parents, however, received some type of noncash support from noncustodial parents for their children. These noncash payments typically consisted of clothes, food, and gifts. Fewer than a quarter (3.3 million) of noncustodial parents provided health insurance for their children.

Payment of full or partial child support through government child-support collection was most likely when

the noncustodial parent had arrangements for joint child custody and visitation. About 83 percent of custodial parents with such arrangements received full or partial support payments, as opposed to 36 percent of those with neither shared custody nor visitation.

Benefits of Father Involvement

Research has confirmed what common sense suggests: children do better in school and in life generally when their fathers are a part of their lives. Children whose fathers spend time with them are more likely to get good grades in school and are less likely to have behavior problems. Teenage daughters who live apart from their fathers may be more likely to become mothers at an early age. Moreover, children of single mothers whose fathers do not pay child support are more likely to grow up in poverty, which is associated with reduced life chances, especially when poverty is extreme and continuous throughout the first five years of a child's life.

For noncustodial fathers, paying child support and being involved in their children's lives are usually linked. One reason is that fathers who know about major purchases their children need (such as shoes, schoolbooks, and dental care) are more likely to help pay for those needs. Many noncustodial fathers may fear that custodial parents are "wasting" their money on expenses that do not help the children. Thus, if they are paying child support, it may increase their motivation to visit their children to make sure that they are actually benefitting from their payments.

Fostering Father Involvement

Historically, the welfare system in this country began with "widows pensions" provided by the federal government during the 1930s. In many cases, state welfare programs still treat fathers as if they were deceased. Child support enforcement often is

run from county district attorneys' offices rather than from human services agencies, with little coordination of efforts. These activities rarely focus on improving children's lives by helping both parents support them.

Unfortunately, the 1996 TANF law actually eliminated an important incentive for fathers to pay child support voluntarily. According to this law, states must share child-support payments received from noncustodial parents with the federal government, but not necessarily with the custodial parent. This provision of the TANF law was a sharp break from the practice from 1984 to 1996, when states were required to pass through to the custodial parent at least the first \$50 per month paid by noncustodial parents.

Wisconsin Child Support Demonstration Evaluation

A recently released report from a Wisconsin study confirms the value of child-support pass-throughs in providing incentives for voluntary payment. When welfare reform was implemented in Wisconsin in 1997, custodial mothers were randomly assigned to two groups. One group had all of the child support payments made by noncustodial parents passed through to them, while a control group had only a limited amount passed through, with the government keeping the rest.

The study found substantial increases in child support compliance and payments among newcomers to the child support and welfare systems, attributable to the pass-through arrangement. Further, these benefits came at little or no cost to government, for two reasons. First, because of the full pass-through arrangement, the government collected from some fathers who otherwise would not have paid. Second, having steadier child-support because of the full pass-through resulted in some mothers

relying less on cash welfare from the state. So even though the full pass-through lowered the government's share of collections slightly, the government both collected more dollars from fathers and had to pay fewer dollars to mothers in the full pass-through group.

The research design of the study strengthens the credibility of the findings. Since custodial parents were chosen for the full pass-through or the control group at random, any difference in outcomes thereafter can be attributed to the pass-through program, rather than to pre-existing differences between the two groups.

Among those cases in which the mother had not received cash assistance in the two years prior to entering the program, 58 percent of the fathers in the full pass-through group paid child support in the first year of the study. Only 48 percent of fathers in the control group paid child support during the same period. The following year, the differences between the two groups remained significant and in many cases widened. In addition, after two years, significantly more mothers in the full pass-through group than in the control group had established paternity for their children.

As positive as these findings are, they are actually likely to understate the beneficial effects of institutionalizing a full pass-through for three reasons. First, the positive effects were considerable for those parents who had not already established behavioral patterns in response to the old system, and much smaller for mothers and fathers who entered the welfare and child-support collection systems before the pass-through reform. The amount of time parents can remain in these systems is limited by the mother's income and, ultimately, by the child's age. Over time, as younger parents enter the welfare and child-support collection systems and older parents

"age out," an increasing number of cases will be those showing the greatest beneficial effects.

Second, there were start-up problems in the research sample that would not be repeated with an institutionalized pass-through program. Many caseworkers in Wisconsin in 1997 did not initially understand the program or explain the implications of having the pass-through or being in the control group to their clients. If the pass-through program were institutionalized, caseworkers and clients would have a much better understanding of the implications. Finally, even the control group in Wisconsin received a pass-through, albeit a reduced one. In most states, TANF participants do not receive any of the child support paid on behalf of their children. Had it been possible to have a control group that received no pass-through, the effect would likely have been even greater.

Implications for Reauthorization

These findings are important because they show that this simple change in policy would result in more responsible actions by fathers and better outcomes for children, at little or no cost to government budgets. They provide evidence for repealing the current TANF reimbursement provision, in favor of passing through 100 percent of noncustodial parents' child support payments to the custodial parent and, thus, directly to the child. Because payment pass-throughs improve the chances that fathers will pay support and because that increases the likelihood that they will be involved in their children's lives, this policy change could also lead to stronger family relationships and healthier children with better chances of succeeding in school and life. ■



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