

FOCUS[®]

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

LOSING PARADISE?

HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean

By Liselle Yorke

Although the devastation and tragedy of HIV/AIDS in both Africa and among African Americans has been well documented, there has been considerably less focus in the United States on the disease's impact on our Caribbean neighbors. Without much notice, the Caribbean has become the second hardest hit region in the world behind sub-Saharan Africa.

Worse yet, researchers and caregivers fear that without strong and sustained intervention, the Caribbean could soon face the same type of economic and social devastation—weakened public healthcare systems, ravaged working populations, and rising numbers of AIDS orphans—that plague African nations such as South Africa, Botswana, and Lesotho.

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Growing Democracy: The U.S., Zambia and Zimbabwe

One thing our last presidential election demonstrated is that democracy is a process, not an end. It is a work in progress that needs frequent tune-ups and sometimes major overhauls.

This country has been working to get democracy right for well over two centuries. That shows how difficult is the task. African nations have been at it for much less time and their growing pains can be stark and worrisome. They can reduce that pain, however, if they learn from other nations rather than repeating mistakes that diminish democracy.

Currently, Zambia is adjusting to a new administration that was elected in December amid charges of vote fraud. Across the border in Zimbabwe, the elections this month already are under a cloud of suspicion because of pre-election violence and various governmental actions that have slashed confidence in the country's ability to produce a free and fair election.

Both countries—particularly Zimbabwe—are still young as far as nations go. Youth, however, is no excuse for actions that intentionally undercut the people's will. Measures by President Robert Mugabe's government in Harare have undermined the political process, weakened his claim on legitimacy and resulted in U.S. and European Union sanctions against Zimbabwe.

A political system that is well grounded in law is essential for good governance and democratic participation to thrive. Despite its problems, the election in Zambia was relatively peaceful and is another step toward better government. As traumatic and frustrating as was the United States' own 2000 presidential vote, it demonstrated that the legitimacy of the process can survive even the installation of a president who was not popularly elected, because the process is secured in laws deemed to be fair.

Fairness is the reason our Congress and state legislatures are reconfigured every 10 years. The current legislative redistricting is one of those regular tune-ups that keeps this republic vital. An example of a major overhaul was the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which produced a growth spurt of black elected officials. As this issue of FOCUS notes, the number of black elected officials broke the 9,000 mark in 2000.

These officials are among the most vocal advocates for additional tune-ups to correct problems the last presidential election exposed. Though controversy surrounding that election was considerable, our citizens never worried that the military would attempt to force a solution to its liking. That remains a looming problem for Africa's fledgling democracies, particularly Zimbabwe.

During Zimbabwe's current political turmoil, it's easy to overlook the fact that the last vote there elected a large contingent of opposition parliamentarians. This should be the foundation for the continued building of a strong democracy.

Instead, Mugabe and his supporters seem intent on doing what they can, not just to win back more legislative seats in a fair contest, but to force continuing control through a variety of legislative, military and violent measures. Unfortunately, that has detracted from the imperative issue of a just land reform plan that would provide long overdue benefits to the nation's Black majority. To effectively deal with that problem, Zimbabwe needs what all countries, including the United States, could use—more democracy, not less. ■



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Joint Center Roster Shows GROWTH IN BEOs

INCREASE DUE TO RISING NUMBER OF FEMALES

By DAVID A. BOSITIS

This article is adapted from Black Elected Officials: A Statistical Summary, 2000, a survey of black elected officials that the Joint Center will publish this month.

Thirty years ago, when the Joint Center published the first edition of *Black Elected Officials: A National Roster*, it reported that there were 1,469 Black elected officials (BEOs) in the United States. This year's roster publication, which offers the most current count of BEOs available (those in office as of January 31, 2000) reports 9,040 BEOs, a more than sixfold increase.

The growth in the number of BEOs over this period is even more impressive at the state level. In five southern states—Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and Texas—the increase in the number of BEOs between 1970 and 2000 was over tenfold. In 2000, just two states, Mississippi and Alabama, had more Black elected officials, 1,628, than the national total in 1970.

Between the 1999 count released a year ago and the one being released this month in *Black Elected Officials: A Statistical Summary 2000*, the number of BEOs in the U.S. grew by 104 to 9,040—a 1.2 percent increase. That number represents a historic high, and the first time the number of BEOs exceeded 9,000.

Female Elected Officials

Since 1970, one of the most dramatic increases among BEOs has been among women. Of the net increase of 104 between 1999 and 2000, all were women.

In fact, there were 122 additional female BEOs and 18 fewer male BEOs.

The year 2000 marks the second year in a row in which there was a net decrease in the number of male BEOs, and all of the gains were due to female officeholders. In 1970, there were only 160 female BEOs in the U.S., 10.9 percent of the BEO total. In 2000, there were 3,119, or 34.5 percent of all BEOs—an all-time high.

While there were many more women in office, their representation varies significantly by category and state. In four categories of office—federal, municipal, state level and judicial/law enforcement—their proportion roughly approximates the overall average, just over one-third. The proportion is substantially lower at the county level, only 22.1 percent, though

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these numbers are increasing rapidly. In the category of education, 43.2 percent of all BEOs were women.

Among the top ten states in number of BEOs, the representation of women ranged from a high of 43.2 percent in Michigan to a low of 23.5 percent in Louisiana. Of the 25 top states (including the District of Columbia and the Virgin Islands), the District of Columbia had the highest percentage of women, with 53.4 percent. And just over half (50.5 percent) of BEOs are women in Ohio.

Black Mayors in 2001

Since the last survey, the number of Black mayors nationwide remained essentially unchanged, increasing from 450 to 451. There have been several significant other changes, however. For large cities (populations of 50,000-plus), the Joint Center was able to track mayoral posts as current as January 2001. Three such cities that had Black mayors in 2000 have departed the 2001 list—one comparatively large city, St. Louis, one medium-sized city, Rockville, Illinois, and one comparatively small city, Victorville, California. Eight new cities are on the list of Black mayors in 50,000-plus cities: Jersey City and Camden, New Jersey; Richmond and Hampton, Virginia; Oceanside and Carson, California; Hempstead Village, New York; and Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

In six of these cities, the Black mayors are presiding in offices previously filled by non-African Americans. However, two of these cities—Eden Prairie and Hempstead Village—have long-serving Black mayors who were not previously listed because their

Black Elected Officials in "Top 20" States, 2000*

State	Female BEOs		All BEOs (Number)
	Percent of Total BEOs	Number	
District of Columbia	53.4	109	204
Ohio	50.5	156	309
New York	45.0	144	320
Michigan	43.2	147	340
Illinois	42.5	264	621
New Jersey	41.7	103	247
Pennsylvania	40.9	76	186
Maryland	39.8	70	176
California	39.5	94	238
Oklahoma	38.5	40	104
Arkansas	35.7	179	502
Missouri	34.7	68	196
Virginia	34.4	86	250
Florida	33.6	76	226
South Carolina	32.4	175	540
Georgia	30.4	177	582
Mississippi	29.8	267	897
Texas	29.7	141	475
North Carolina	28.9	144	498
Alabama	28.2	206	731

*"Top 20" states defined as those with largest numbers of BEOs.

Source: David Bositis, *Black Elected Officials: A Statistical Summary, 2000*.

cities were too small. Following the 2000 Census, both cities now exceed 50,000 in population and therefore qualify for the list.

Among Black mayors on the 2001 list, 57.4 percent have been elected in cities that do not have a Black majority. In addition, there are Black county executives of large (and wealthy) counties, including Virginia Fields, Manhattan Borough President; Ron Sims, King County (Seattle), Washington; and Wayne Curry in Prince George's County, Maryland.

Generational Change

The listings from the 1970 Roster are very instructive as to the workings of generational change among elected Black leadership. From the perspective of the city council members and state legislators who were still young politicians in 1970, Reps. Bill Dawson, of Chicago, and Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., of Harlem, having already served about a quarter of a century in the U.S. House by then, signified the older generation of Black elected leadership. Most of those younger Black elected

officials from 1970 who moved into increasingly influential positions in later years have now retired from office, died, or moved on to other pursuits—and have been succeeded in turn by younger generations. In 2001, Michigan State Rep. Kwame Kilpatrick, who was born the year our first roster data was published, was elected mayor of Detroit.

The nationwide increase in BEOs between 1999 and 2000 reflects increases in 19 states. Mississippi accounted for 47, almost half the nationwide growth. Other states with noteworthy increases were Pennsylvania, 13.4 percent; Ohio, 8.8 percent; and New York, 4.9 percent.

The 10 states with the largest number of Black elected officials in 2000 were: Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, Illinois, Georgia, South Carolina, Arkansas, North Carolina, Texas and Michigan. Of the top 10 states in 2000, only Mississippi reached a historically high number of BEOs. The number of officials actually dropped in 14 states, led by Louisiana, Maryland and North Carolina.

Overall Trends

One trend evident from the discussion above is that significant generational change is taking place among Black elected officials. Among Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) members, over 80 percent have been elected since 1990. The six senior CBC members who retired or died over the past five years (Reps. William Clay, Louis Stokes, Ronald Dellums, Barbara Rose Collins, Harold Ford Sr., and Julian Dixon) had accumulated over 150 years of seniority.

A trend related to generational change is the consistently—and at times dramatically—growing number of Black women in elected office, whose numbers are at an all-time high. For two years in a row, Black women have accounted for all the growth in the number of BEOs; during 1999 and 2000, the number of female BEOs increased by 195 while the number of male BEOs declined by 23.

A third trend, less dramatic but consistent throughout the 1990s, is the increasing number of elected officials from non-Black-majority constituencies. This can be seen most clearly among Black big-city mayors, whose ranks grew smartly between 1999 and 2001, almost three-in-five of whom have been elected in cities without Black majorities. Similarly, 12 of 39 Black U.S. House members currently represent non-Black-majority districts.

This trend can be seen as well among Black statewide elected officials, whose numbers are increasing, albeit much more slowly. Given that Hispanics have become the nation's largest minority group, and that the potential for growth associated with the Voting Rights Act and redistricting is diminishing, the greatest growth potential for BEOs will likely be in districts without Black voting majorities.

Black politics has taken on a new meaning in many corners of the nation. In a variety of locations, the increasing number of Black elected officials and their evolving trends are reshaping both Black politics and politics generally. ■

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POLITICAL REPORT

Few Gains Likely Among Black Legislators

By David A. Bositis

A number of factors have combined to make it likely that there will be no new Black-majority House districts when the 2000 redistricting process is complete. Only minimal gains in Black representation in the state legislatures are expected as well. Any gains in African American legislators probably would develop in districts that are not majority Black.

The redistricting process following the 1990 Census was a historically favorable one for Black representation in the House and in state legislatures. The Voting Rights Act was revised in 1982 with provisions ensuring the Black vote was not intentionally diluted—and Black voters denied representation—in the redistricting process. In its 1986 *Thornburg v. Gingles* decision, the U.S. Supreme Court interpreted the revised Voting Rights Act in a way most favorable to the creation of districts where minority group members were in a numerical majority. Also, the members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), Black state legislators, and civil rights groups aggressively pushed for the creation of as many of these so-called majority-minority districts as possible. In some instances, Republicans encouraged these efforts, because they also produced solid GOP districts.

The results of these efforts were remarkable. The number of Black elected officials (BEOs) nationwide increased from 7,370

(pre-redistricting in 1990) to 8,015 (post-redistricting and including the results of the 1992 elections)—an 8.8 percent increase. The results for the CBC were even more dramatic, with Caucus districts increasing by 54 percent to 37. There were also impressive increases in the state legislatures, with the number of Black members growing 25.7 percent to 533.

No such increases are likely following the current redistricting process. These are the key factors limiting Black gains post-2000:

- The gains of the post-1990 redistricting were challenged as soon as they were realized, and in 1993 the Supreme Court, in *Shaw v. Reno*, questioned the use of race in redistricting. Further decisions throughout the 1990s continued to undermine the gains of the early 1990s until the Court returned to a more supportive view in 2001 with *Easley v. Cromartie*. Though *Easley* was favorable to majority-minority districts, the legal environment remains less favorable than earlier in the post-1990 period.
- When the Republicans captured the House in the 1994 midterm election, the merit of majority-minority districts began to be questioned by many people, including some Black elected officials. They suspected that the districts may have been a contributing factor to the GOP takeover, by taking reliable Black Democratic voters away from White Democrats in the House.
- During the decade of the 1990s (especially after 1994), Republicans captured

control of many state legislative bodies, and the GOP effectively controls the redistricting process in several states, including Florida, Virginia, Michigan and Pennsylvania.

- The final factor limiting gains post-2000 is that Black advances in the state legislatures, especially in the South, have resulted in near racial parity. The proportion of Black members equaled or approximated the Black voting age populations in many states. Hence, the probability of further gains is small.

Because of these points, enthusiasm among Black officials for creating new majority-minority districts has recently diminished.

At this time, there are no new Black U.S. House districts in any state that has completed its redistricting process, and in the remaining states, there are no proposals that include a new Black-majority district that are likely to become law. The state legislative redistricting could see a single additional Black majority district in some, mostly southern, states—but the dramatic gains of the post-1990 period are unlikely to be repeated. These and other issues will be discussed at a Joint Center redistricting conference in May.

No Apartheid

In her 1993 *Shaw v. Reno* opinion, Associate Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor characterized majority-minority districts as representing “racial apartheid.” Her characterization led to considerable public discussion and media coverage, and contributed to a public impression that Black voters reside in majority-minority districts and that they are represented by Black members of Congress. Her characterization, however, was wrong.

Prior to the post-1990 redistricting, only 25.3 percent of the Black voting-age population in the United States lived in districts represented by Black members.

Following the large increase in the number of majority-minority districts after 1990, the percentage rose to 42.4. This was the historical high point in the concentration of Black voters in majority-minority districts, and did not represent “racial apartheid.” Most Black voters lived in districts represented by White members of Congress.

Following *Shaw* in 1993, majority-minority districts were redrawn in North Carolina, Florida, Georgia, Texas and Virginia, diminishing the number of Black voters in those districts; one district in Louisiana was eliminated. Thus, the percentage of the Black voting-age population represented by African American members declined to 39.3 percent in 1999. When the 2000 Census was conducted, the Black districts created after 1990 were shown to have only 35.8 percent of the Black voting-age population.

White Support for BEOs

Because there is unlikely to be any significant increase in the number of Black-majority districts, gains in the number of Black legislators, federal or state, would have to come in White-majority or

multiracial districts. Throughout the 1990s, there have been modest increases in the number of Black elected officials from non-Black majority constituencies.

This can be seen clearly among Black big city mayors, whose numbers have recently risen. According to the most current data (dating from 2000), almost three-in-five have been elected in cities without Black majorities. In addition, 12 of 39 Black House members represent districts where the portion of the voting-age population that is Black is 50 percent or less; in other words, they represent districts that are either majority White or multiracial. While racially polarized voting remains strong in certain localities, it has diminished somewhat in others, and that has improved the prospects of many Black candidates.

CBC’s Prospects

CBC members have reexamined the value of maximizing the number of Black majority districts following the Republican takeover of the House in 1994. The crux of their concern centers on two important points.

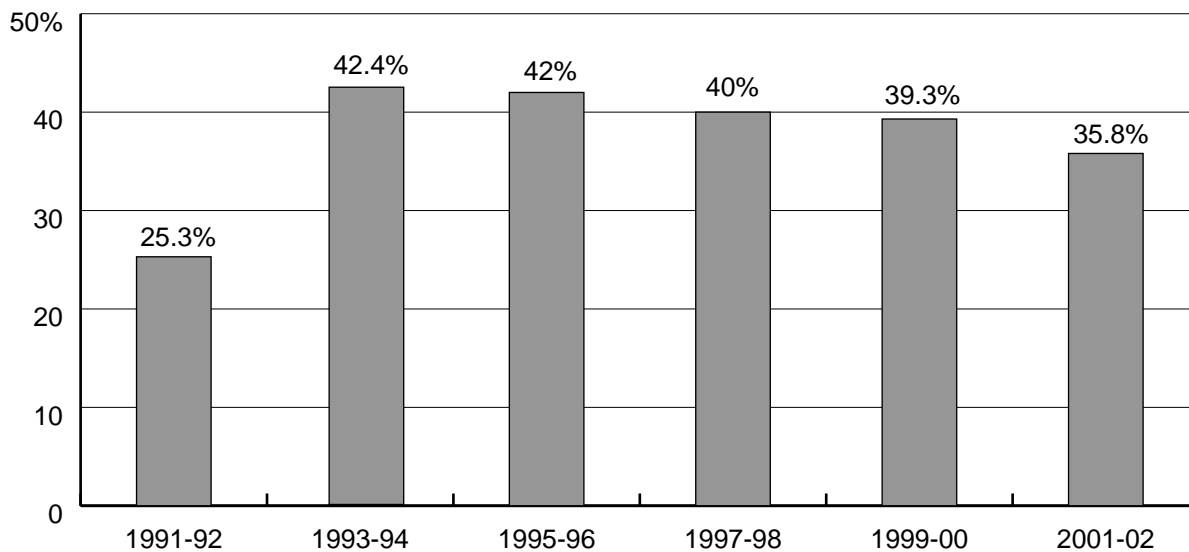
First, all of the members of the CBC are Democrats (Rep. J.C. Watts, R-Okla., is not a

member). With the Republicans in control of the House, CBC members are in the minority party. In the House, members of the minority party have little power and influence, although this is less true in the Senate.

Second, influence within each party is largely determined by seniority and committee assignment. Several members of the CBC are senior Democrats on several House committees and subcommittees, including Judiciary and the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, arguably the most influential panel. If the Democrats were to regain the majority, the influence of the CBC—and the representation of African Americans’ interests—would be greatly enhanced.

Thus, during the post-2000 redistricting, there has been an increased willingness within the CBC to support districts that are White-majority and Democratic-leaning, in an effort to regain a Democratic majority in the House. If this strategy succeeds, it will be hard for proponents of increased Black representation to deny that the gains in power and influence for the CBC were not worth the tradeoff of a few additional Black congressional seats. ■

Percent of Black Voters Residing in U.S. House Districts Represented by Black Members



Source: David Bositis, Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

ECONOMIC REPORT

Social Security Reform: Beginning a Year of Dialogue

By Margaret C. Simms

When the President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security was formed last May, conventional wisdom held that it would make a single recommendation for reform, one with individual private accounts as its main focus. In fact, the prerequisite for membership on the Commission was a predisposition toward private accounts.

So it was somewhat of a surprise when the Commission was unable to agree on a single recommendation in this area. Instead, in its final report issued in December, it proposed three models. And rather than urging quick action, the Commission recommended "that there be a period of discussion, lasting for at least one year, before legislative action is taken to strengthen and restore sustainability to Social Security."

Social Security's politics are a hot "third rail," because its reach is so pervasive. Last year, \$439 billion was paid to 45.4 million people. Private and some public-sector workers paid \$604 billion into the Social Security Trust Fund.

Economics of Social Security

While the focus of the few popular discussions on Social Security reform has revolved around the value of individual accounts, there are other looming problems that will become more pressing as each additional year of discussion passes. The

Trust Fund is currently running a surplus, but the tide will turn in about 2018. At that point, the payments going out will start to exceed the incoming revenue and, in the absence of action, the Trust Fund, currently holding about \$1.2 trillion, will start to shrink. Under current law and projected payment schedules, the Trust Fund will be depleted before 2040.

The challenge for proponents of individual accounts is to develop a plan that addresses the need for fiscal sustainability at the same time as it provides opportunity for individual workers to create and build private accounts to supplement their retirement incomes. The Commission asserts that all three models proposed in their final report improve fiscal sustainability, but some analysts disagree. In addition, these critics challenge the

Commission's assertion that its alternative approaches to retirement security would improve the position of minorities, especially African Americans.

Model #1. The Commission's first model would allow workers to voluntarily invest 2 percent, for example, of taxable wages in a personal account, with Social Security benefits on retirement reduced by the value of the personal account contributions. Under the assumptions made about the value of personal accounts, overall retirement benefits would rise, but the projected Trust Fund deficit would fall due to the assumed faster appreciation of the private accounts. However, the Trust Fund as a whole would continue to shrink, since this model proposes no changes in benefits for future retirees or increases in revenues collected. To preserve the Trust Fund's solvency, infusions would be needed in the 2030s.

Model #2. In this model, the worker would redirect 4 percent of his/her payroll taxes to a personal account. The maximum amount that could be diverted would start at \$1,000 annually, but would be indexed to wage growth. Social Security benefits would be offset by the contributions from the personal account. A minimum long-term benefit also would be established at

Commission Reform Models of Personal Accounts

	Model #1	Model # 2	Model # 3
Personal account size	2%	4% up to \$1000 annually (indexed to wages each year)	1% new contribution plus 2.5% up to \$1000 annually (indexed to wages each year)
Voluntary?	Yes	Yes	Yes
Additional contributions required	This is a generic 2% plan that can function with or without new contributions	None	1% of wages required to participate (subsidized through income tax system)
Real return that makes person better off with accounts than without (\$5 defined benefit offset rate)	3.5%	2.0%	2.5%

Source: President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security

120 percent of the poverty level for low-income workers.

The Commission says the individual “can reasonably expect combined benefits greater than those paid to current retirees” or future retirees under the existing system and to people who opt not to participate in the personal account program. Because of the greater reliance on private accounts, the Trust Fund would be large enough to handle remaining payments after 2054.

Model #3. The third model combines voluntary additional payments by workers with a diversion from the Social Security Trust Fund. For workers who choose to contribute 1 percent of salary to a personal account, 2.5 percent from the payroll tax (up to \$1,000) would be deposited as a match. There would be a refundable feature for low-wage workers who choose the add-on contribution.

In this version, the minimum Social Security benefit for long-term low-wage workers would be 100 percent of the poverty level. This model would include a number of other modifications to the traditional program: adjusting the growth in benefits downward to compensate for increases in life expectancy; decreasing benefits for early retirement and increasing them for late retirement; and lowering the rate at which the benefit formula increases.

Assessing the Plans

The Commission’s report is open to criticism. It is not clear where money from the general fund to cover fluctuations in the Trust Fund would be found, because the projected budget surplus was depleted by President Bush’s tax cuts even before the decision to expand federal expenditures on national security. This is particularly troublesome since the new tax cuts will have the biggest impact during the later years, the time when the Trust Fund will be most in need of transfers.

In the plans that have the lowest negative impact on the Trust Fund, the savings are achieved primarily by reducing a retiree’s

initial monthly benefit through a move from “wage indexing” to “price indexing.” In other words, instead of having Social Security benefits for future retirees calculated on the basis of changes in average wages over their working lives, benefits would be determined by increases in prices, which have historically been lower.

For example, under Model #2 the average wage worker who retired in 2040 would receive a benefit that was 24 percent lower than the current formula would provide, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Although the Commission indicates at the end of the report that the Disability Insurance program should be systematically reviewed, it urges that these disability payments be adjusted downward so there is no incentive for workers with disabilities to shift from the retirement to the disability program.

The Commission asserts that its proposals would be advantageous for African Americans and others because the recommendations correct for what the Commission says are negative features of the current Social Security system. One frequently cited feature is the fact that African Americans have shorter life expectancies than White Americans and therefore receive less total payments.

Moreover, Social Security benefits cannot currently be transferred to heirs as bequests, unlike private accounts. Proponents of private accounts also argue that the rate of return on workers’ investment in Social Security is much lower than the return they would receive on such personal accounts as IRAs.

These positions are refuted in a July report issued jointly by the Century Foundation and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, which critiqued the Commission’s draft report. In *Perspectives on the Draft Report of the President’s Commission to Strengthen Social Security*, they contend the assertion that African Americans and Hispanics receive lower payouts is based on comparisons of minorities and Whites with the same income. Because

African Americans and Hispanics, on average, earn less than Whites, average rates of return on payments into Social Security are actually higher for minorities, even after adjusting for differences in life expectancy.

Moreover, the economists who wrote *Perspectives* counter the bequest argument by noting that Social Security survivors’ benefits are fully protected from inflation under current programs, while private annuities and personal accounts are not, nor do they offer any guarantees.

The Coming Debate

Congress may avoid doing anything about Social Security this year, but every year that passes without action brings the day of reckoning closer. While the debate over the Commission’s recommendations is likely to be highly technical and revolve around issues of assumptions and projections, that should not deter individuals from participating in the debate. To learn more, there are plenty of sources from which to obtain information, including the sources used in this “Economic Report.”

Other reports on Social Security may be found on the Joint Center website, including one from the presidential election campaign at www.jointcenter.org/2000_election. The full report of the President’s Commission can be obtained on-line at www.csss.gov. Critiques by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities can be found at www.socsec.org and www.cbpp.org. Additional views and information are posted on the websites of the National Academy for Social Insurance (www.nasi.org), the Cato Institute (www.cato.org), and the Concord Coalition (www.concordcoalition.org). For perspectives from younger Americans, go to the website of the Third Millennium (www.thirdmil.org). ■



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AFRICAN GROWING PAINS

ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE STRUGGLE WITH DEMOCRACY

BY JOE DAVIDSON

The fast moving Zambezi River and the awesome Victoria Falls mark the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe. The unending rush of the river, the majesty of the falls' thunderous roar and the striking rainbows formed overhead provide a natural sense of endurance, stability and hope—a sense unmatched in the political realm.

Mother Nature can only do so much. When it comes to the endurance of democratic ideals, the stability of democratic governments and the hope for a future based on justice, the politicians take over. Lacking Mother Nature's experience and skill, the politicians in both countries have produced an uneven record.

Last December, Zambia elected a president in a process observers say was flawed, though not fatally. The run-up to Zimbabwe's national elections, slated for this month, has produced such controversy that many analysts worry democracy itself is at risk. Deficient as it was, the Zambian experience nonetheless has several lessons for the smaller but more affluent Zimbabwe.

Zambia and Zimbabwe are so closely linked by history, that their colonial names were Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia, respectively. In Zimbabwe, attacks on opposition politicians, harassment of journalists, legislation restricting the press and political expression, and limitations on foreign election observers have generated fears that the vote will not be free and fair.

Zimbabwean human rights organizations documented 48 deaths from political violence last year, according to a Human

Rights Watch report. During the last three months of 2001, there were 533 reported cases of unlawful detention and 333 cases of torture.

"In almost all cases, the perpetrators of organized violence are state agents or supporters of the ruling party," said the report. "In almost all cases, the victims are supporters of the MDC (the main opposition party), farmworkers, and civil society activists such as students and trade unionists."

Though many Zambians believe the election there was rigged in favor of the ruling party's candidate, their protests have been peaceful. Stoney Cooks, who was in Zambia with the Joint Center's election training team, said the most important thing about the vote is that it was "the third consecutive election that has been accepted by the public."

The team was part of a larger effort by the Joint Center's Office of International Affairs to promote democracy in Africa. The International Affairs office works to increase living standards by promoting peace, stability and security.

Another important lesson Zambia has for Zimbabwe is to keep the military out of the election. The Zambian army made no attempt to influence the voting. Ominously, the military in Zimbabwe has indicated it would not recognize a victory by President Robert Mugabe's opposition.

"We will not accept, let alone support or salute, anyone with a different agenda that threatens the very existence of our sovereignty, our country and our people," the commander of Zimbabwe's Defense Forces, Gen. Vitalis Zvinavashe, told reporters.

Zimbabwe's ambassador to Washington said what the general's statement means is "you may have civil war" if the opposition wins. "I'm not comfortable with that," Simbi Mubako added. But he said he is equally uncomfortable with what he charges is British and American interference in his country's political affairs.

Because of that perceived interference, Zimbabwe has strictly limited foreign observers. Mubako said only observers from the NAACP and the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help, founded by the late Rev. Leon Sullivan, would be welcome from the U.S.

In contrast, "Zambia was one of the first countries that put into law the rights of monitors and observers," Cooks said. "That would certainly be a positive aspect for a country like Zimbabwe."

Zambia currently is on its third president, after founding father Kenneth Kaunda's 1964-1991 reign. Zambia's constitution now prevents presidents from staying in office more than two five-year terms. There is no such limitation on Mugabe's tenure. Zimbabwe's parliament, however, is much more politically diverse. The main opposition party holds 56 of the 120 elected seats.

Another major difference concerns land, which Black people have long controlled in Zambia. In Zimbabwe, a tiny White population, descendants of colonial settlers, holds the best ground. "That's really the main issue," the ambassador said. "Mugabe cannot step down because that is not resolved."

Yet the critical need for fundamental land reform does not justify measures that erode democracy.

"On the eve of the presidential poll, we are now actually in the concluding phase of what is virtually a slow-motion coup d'etat," Eliphaz Mukonoweshuro, a University of Zimbabwe political scientist, recently told a Capitol Hill audience. "Under the prevailing conditions on the ground in Zimbabwe, there can never be free and fair elections." ■

LOSING PARADISE?

Continued from cover

Almost 20 years after the first case was recorded, UNAIDS, the United Nations AIDS program, reports that there are now 420,000 persons living with HIV/AIDS in the Caribbean, 60,000 of whom are newly infected. Because of under-reporting, the real total might be closer to half a million, based on unofficial estimates.

While the situation is far from the stereotype of a Haiti consumed by AIDS that many Americans held until the early 1990s, the epidemic now affects more than two percent of the region's 36 million inhabitants. And there were more new cases reported between 1995 and 1998 than in the first decade after the disease emerged. Nine of the 12 countries with the highest HIV prevalence in the Americas are in the Caribbean, which includes the mainland nations of Belize, Guyana, and Suriname.

Unfortunately, the outcry which spurred U.S. efforts to fight the African epidemic has been significantly muted for the Caribbean, even though an estimated four million Americans, 40 percent of whom are African American, vacation there each year. This may be attributed to the sheer volume of death and suffering in Africa, the scope of the problem in Black America, and a general unawareness of Caribbean issues.

With the exception of the Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, and Jamaica, very little American aid has targeted HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment campaigns throughout the region. Between 1995 and 2001, USAID budgeted just over \$43 million for programs in these countries. Although additional funding from Canada and the European Union has covered more countries, it has not sufficiently met the region's needs.

Conservative estimates by the University of the West Indies (UWI) indicate that the

Caribbean receives merely one-tenth of the estimated \$250 million it will need to spend annually to mount a comprehensive program.

Caribbean governments responded early by establishing national AIDS programs and ensuring a safe blood supply, but danger remains on several levels. Because more than 80 percent of the HIV/AIDS cases are in the 15-54 age group, Caribbean economies could lose a significant proportion of their workforce. In addition, the region's population growth is threatened by the growing number of children and women infected with and affected by HIV/AIDS.

Using Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago as models, the UWI Health Economics Unit has forecast a four percent decline in gross domestic product (GDP) by 2005 because of AIDS, an increase in HIV-related illness expenditure over the next five to 10 years, and a 15 percent decline in investment. Overall, the service industries, including the major tourism sector, are expected to suffer most.

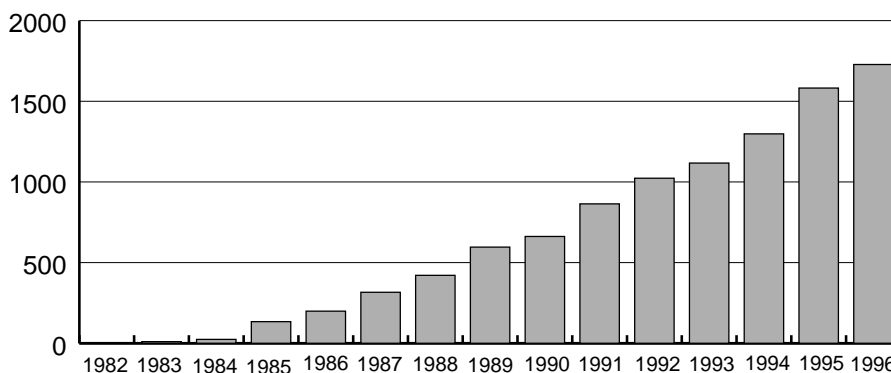
The Caribbean is one of the United States' smaller trading partners, but its

economic contractions would affect the U.S. because the region is an important source for certain products. For example, Trinidad and Tobago is the United States' main supplier of methanol, used in fuel and antifreeze, and anhydrous ammonia, a nitrogen fertilizer. Similarly, the Dominican Republic and the Bahamas, two countries with high HIV infection rates, are the principal suppliers of solid raw cane sugar and expandable polystyrene, a Styrofoam ingredient, respectively.

The epidemic's impact on children and women is of particular concern for these relatively young populations. An estimated 20,000 children are currently living with the HIV virus, and as of 1999, more than 83,000 children had been orphaned by age 14 due to the AIDS-related death of their parents. Women make up 50 percent of the HIV-infected adults largely because of social and cultural attitudes that often force them to accept a partner's infidelity and refusal to use condoms. Their risk of infection is also increased by the fact that gay and bisexual men often marry or have girlfriends out of fear of social castigation for their orientation.

While Caribbean leaders have been vocal about the virus's impact on their societies, experts feel that they have not effectively used their bully pulpits to strengthen HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns in their countries, either because of fear of breaking taboos or fear of scaring off tourists. Few governments have established mandatory reporting systems, and there are no

Reported New AIDS Cases, English Speaking Caribbean and Suriname

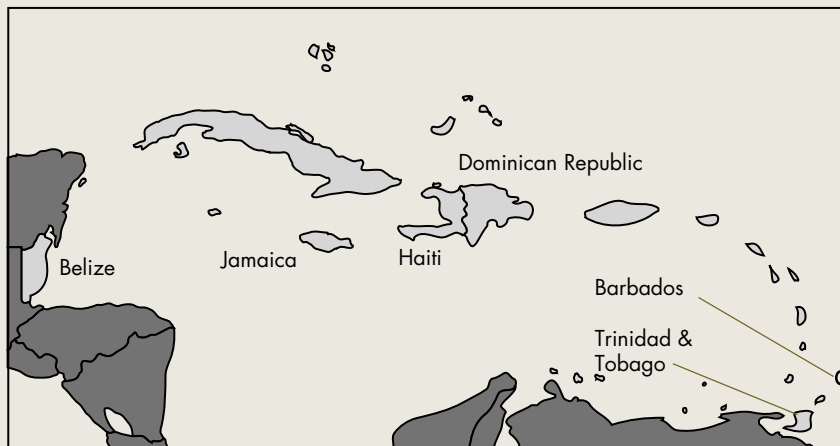


Source: Caribbean Epidemiology Center

HIV Prevalence in the Caribbean, Selected Countries, 1999

Country	Rate (%)
Haiti	5.17
The Bahamas	4.13
Guyana	3.01
Dominican Republic	2.80
Belize	2.01
Suriname	1.26
Barbados	1.17
Trinidad & Tobago	1.05
Jamaica	0.71

Source: Caribbean Epidemiology Center



systematic approaches for addressing stigma and discrimination. The political leaders have also been slow to adopt comprehensive programs requiring the coordination of multiple government agencies.

“No government in the region gets high marks for the national response to HIV/AIDS,” says Dr. Farley R. Cleghorn, an assistant professor of epidemiology at the University of Maryland’s Institute of Human Virology in Baltimore. Cleghorn, who has been engaged with AIDS research in the Caribbean since 1984, adds, “There are some specific successes in many territories, but none by itself has translated into success at a national level.”

The stigma attached to AIDS, poor surveillance by authorities, and hostility toward men having sex with men make it difficult to develop efficient programs to combat it. “It is widely recognized that no effective strategy for prevention should exclude people living with HIV/AIDS, yet it is difficult and often dangerous for people living with HIV/AIDS to be open about their status,” says Yolanda Simon, regional coordinator of the Trinidad and Tobago-based Caribbean Regional Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS.

The combination of limited government resources and inadequate programs and policies has led to gaping holes in the system. The lack of mandatory testing and reporting causes late diagnoses of HIV infection, increasing health costs, while public concern

about confidentiality also keeps many away from existing treatment facilities. Finally, the prohibitive cost of the anti-retroviral drugs that are commonly used in the United States makes them virtually inaccessible. To date, only the Bahamas, Barbados and the Cayman Islands provide such drug therapy. A Jamaican firm also recently began selling LASMED, an Indian-produced anti-retroviral, at up to 80 percent lower than the cost of other brands.

Local groups, such as Project Hope in the Bahamas, Care in Trinidad and Tobago, and the Jamaica AIDS Support, have been important allies, but also face funding dilemmas and must often rely on grants from international organizations. Other organizations have also weighed in on the issue, such as the Law Commission of Trinidad and Tobago, which urged the attorney general to give rape victims the legal right to request HIV testing for their accused attackers. The Law Commission also recommended that gay men be given protection from discrimination under the country’s Equal Opportunities legislation. No final decision has been taken on these proposals, which were made in 1998.

In response to concerns about inadequate resources, varying standards of services, and high migration among the countries, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat, a political and economic bloc for the English-speaking countries, has launched regional initiatives. One pro-

gram, the Caribbean Task Force on HIV/AIDS, was developed with the Dominican Republic to expand national multi-sectoral programs, increase the pool of skilled personnel, and improve surveillance.

Another initiative, Pan-Caribbean Partnership Against HIV/AIDS, aims to improve the region’s ability to contain and reduce the epidemic’s spread and care for those infected with and affected by the virus. The coalition has set target dates for several goals, including a 25 percent reduction of HIV prevalence among 15-24 year olds by 2005 and a 50 percent reduction in transmission to newborns by 2003. It also hopes that 90 percent of young people aged 15-24, one of the most vulnerable populations, will have access to information and services by 2005.

Many hope that a 2001 World Bank pledge of \$155 million, for a prevention and control lending program, is a sign that the Caribbean will receive more international funding. “As governments operate with resource constraints and fixed budgets,” says Patricio Marquez, a health specialist at the World Bank, “the call for greater actions in health protection and promotion and disease prevention cannot ignore their cost and how these services will be paid for.” ■

Liselle Yorke is a staff contributor.

GOOD BET

NEXT OHIO LT. GOVERNOR — BLACK AND FEMALE

By Joe Davidson

It's too early to tell who will win this year's Ohio gubernatorial race, but it's a good bet that the next lieutenant governor will be Black and female.

Both the Democratic and the Republican candidates for governor have chosen African American women as their running mates. Both women are members of the Columbus City Council.

Republican Gov. Bob Taft picked Jennette B. Bradley for his reelection bid, after the current lieutenant governor decided to seek election to the state Supreme Court. Bradley is a longtime City Council member and once was a Taft campaign worker.

Democratic challenger Tim Hagan chose Charleta Tavares. She joined the City Council in 1999 and was a state representative for five years before that. In 1998 she lost a secretary of state race against J. Kenneth Blackwell, who is currently the only Black person elected statewide in Ohio.

An African American lieutenant governor would be a rarity in American politics and a Black female would be a first. There have been only nine Black lieutenant governors in the nation's history, according to the National Conference of Lieutenant Governors. Joe Rogers, in Colorado, is the only one in office at the moment.

Bob Bennett, the GOP's state chairman, said his party's team "truly reflects the people of Ohio in race, gender, geography and ideology. But even more, it's a team that has assembled a record of accomplishment unmatched by the competition."

Not all Republicans are quite so happy with Bradley's selection. Some Republicans harshly criticized her position in favor of abortion rights and her vote for a City Council measure that permitted benefits for same-sex partners of city employees. She later agreed to the measure's repeal.

Hagan said having African American women as lieutenant governor candidates for the two major parties "is a great moment in Ohio history, the kind of moment that forever changes the political landscape of the state. The tickets of both parties are finally beginning to represent this state's great diversity and truly resemble Ohio." ■

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