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Poverty in the U.S. Is More Severe and Long Term Than in Europe, Where Governments Protect Their Citizens from Hardship Better

Redistricting Victories

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Perspective

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Investing In Our Human Capital

For many black Americans, the bridge to good jobs is short and the ladder of upward mobility is low. This state of affairs is, in part, attributable to inadequate education and to racism, as documented in numerous studies over the years and most recently in the U.S. Labor Department's "Glass Ceiling" report. But there's something else at work that impedes blacks from entering and moving up in the workplace—the restructuring of the U.S. economy. The steel mills of Pittsburgh have been leveled, auto plants in Flint have been closed, and Japanese tires are advertised on American TV.

Twenty years ago, U.S. manufacturers of steel, automobiles, rubber and other products enabled many blacks, even those who hadn't finished high school, opportunities to provide their families with middle-class lifestyles and a chance for their children to attend college. But in the 1970s and '80s, the U.S. economy has undergone a process of restructuring away from traditional manufacturing and toward new ventures in high-tech industries and services. In this great national shuffle, too few black men and women have been brought into the employment profiles of these emerging businesses as technicians, professionals, and managers.

This situation brings up a critical challenge that corporations based in our major urban centers must face: to ensure that ladders of upward mobility accommodate more black professionals and executives. This supports one of the main conclusions of a unique Joint Center study of five urban areas with large black populations—Atlanta, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Richmond, and St. Louis. The portion of the study that relates to Baltimore was released September in a special report: "Moving Up With Baltimore, Creating Career Ladders for Blacks in the Private Sector," which focuses on career opportunities for black professionals and managers in that city's private sector.

In Baltimore, since World War II, there has been a loss of over 50,000 manufacturing jobs. New companies specialize in life sciences, financial services, and biotechnological manufacturing. There has also been a growth in the professions—architecture, engineering, and legal services. Baltimore's economic restructuring has displaced black workers from blue-collar occupations (operators and laborers) without recruiting blacks in expanding senior management and high-paying professions.

The Investing in Baltimore Committee (IBC), a small corps of the city's black business executives who supported a portion of the study, was established over two years ago to pursue ways to narrow the gap between blacks in the public and private sectors. The committee has also sought ways to increase the number of black managers in Baltimore companies. In 1988, blacks only comprised 4.2 percent of the officials and managers in private firms compared to 14.4 percent among whites. Similarly, during the same year, blacks made up only 5.1 percent of professionals, while the comparable figure for whites was 18 percent. In a city that has nearly a 60 percent black population and a high percentage of blacks in its public leadership, there should not be such a scarcity of black professionals and managers in the private sector.

This problem is not unique to Baltimore. It is incumbent upon corporations across the broad spectrum of the business community in every city to develop strategies that tap all the human resources available.

The onus to recruit and retain high-quality and diverse managerial and technical staffs, however, rests with senior corporate executives. Central to any strategy for improvement must be a commitment from top management to change a company's employment practices. With 85 percent of working Americans now employed in the private sector, the stakes are very high indeed. ■

Eddie N. Williams
PRESIDENT

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First World Poverty

Poverty in the U.S. Is More Severe and Long Term Than in Europe, Where Governments Protect Their Citizens from Hardship Better

by Katherine McFate

During the 1980s, poverty and economic inequality increased in most Western democracies, raising the specter of expanding First World poverty. The wrenching economic restructuring that has taken place in industrialized nations, brought on by rapid changes in global trade and production, has left a large proportion of working-age citizens unemployed, underemployed, and economically insecure. This, in turn, has placed a tremendous strain on traditional welfare and support programs.

In 1989, the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies launched a three-year research project to document these changes, and government responses to them, in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, France, West Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden. The project was cochaired by sociologists William J. Wilson of the University of Chicago and Roger Lawson of the University of Southampton (England) and involved over 30 distinguished scholars from North America and Europe. The summary that follows has been adapted from "Poverty, Inequality, and the Crisis of Social Policy," a report of selected study findings (available from the Joint Center).

Although the U.S. experienced more steady economic growth and lower unemployment than most of Europe in the early 1980s, by mid-decade the U.S. poverty rate was more than double that of every continental European country examined. (Poverty in this study was defined as household income that fell below one-half a nation's median income). The governments of the countries studied have responded differently to the pressures created by economic restructuring. Advanced Western democracies vary in their capacity and willingness to use political institutions to mediate the effects of economic change, and this has caused wide disparities in the incidence, duration, and distribution of poverty in these countries.

The U.S. today has a higher incidence of poverty in every nonelderly segment of its population than each of the other nations studied: one in every five U.S. nonelderly households is poor, one in four young households (headed by 20 to 29 year olds) is poor, and over half of all households headed by a lone parent are poor. The U.S. is also the country in which the poor experience the longest spells of poverty and the only Western democracy that has failed to provide a significant proportion of its poor people with an adequate income.

Ms. McFate is a senior research associate at the Joint Center and coordinator of the International Poverty Project.

U.S. Poverty: Long-Term and Severe

It has often been argued that the economic inequality and high poverty rates suffered in the U.S. are the price paid for greater upward mobility, but the research found that for the poor no such trade-off exists. In the 1980s a much larger percentage of poor households with children remained poor for an extended period in the United States than in Western Europe and Canada. During a three-year longitudinal study conducted in the mid-1980s, more than 14 percent of all families with children in the U.S. were poor every year, compared to less than 2 percent of families with children in West Germany, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. Whites in the U.S. were twice as likely to be persistently poor as foreign immigrants in West Germany (predominantly Turks), while black Americans were 10 times as likely to be persistently poor as foreigners in West Germany.

Not only is poverty in the U.S. more long-term, it is likely to be more severe than in continental Europe. Almost 14 percent of all households in the U.S. have incomes less than 40 percent of the national median; less than 7 percent of the households in Western Europe have incomes that low. (See table 1.)

In responding to poverty, European welfare systems provide higher minimum standards of income support than are available in the U.S. or Canada. In sharp contrast to

Table 1. Percent of households in *more severe poverty, mid-1980s, by nation and household structure.**

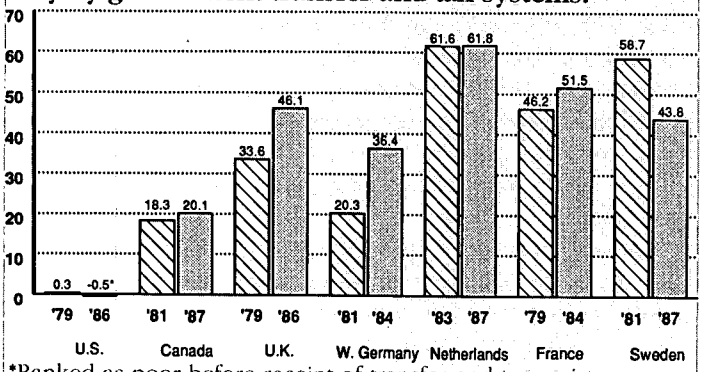
	All Households	All Families with Children	All Lone-Parent Families with Children
United States	13.6	17.5	44.9
Canada	8.9	9.3	29.4
United Kingdom	7.0	8.6	7.7
West Germany	3.2	3.1	12.5
Netherlands	5.7	3.9	5.1
France	6.1	5.3	10.7
Sweden	5.9	2.9	3.6

* *More severe poverty* is defined as household income of less than 40 percent of national adjusted median income.

(Continued on next page)

other Western democracies, government policies in the U.S. failed to reduce overall poverty levels in the 1980s (See Table 2). In every European country studied, at least a third (and in some countries almost two-thirds) of nonelderly poor households were lifted out of poverty by income transfers (these include welfare and unemployment benefits). Even in Canada, whose poverty rates (before income-transfer assistance) most closely approached those of the U.S., one-fifth of poor households were helped to achieve minimum income security. In the U.S., less than 5 percent of lone parent-families with children were lifted out of poverty by government transfers, and no other category of nonelderly families was given enough income assistance (by welfare, unemployment insurance, or social security payments) to remove them from poverty.

Table 2. Percent of poor households* lifted out of poverty by government transfer and tax systems.



*Ranked as poor before receipt of transfer and tax assistance.

The Challenge for American Policymakers

The study's findings demonstrate a simple fact that seems to have been lost in the ideological battles of the 1980s: government policies can and do make a difference. Citizens in all these countries experienced greater labor-market insecurities as a result of global economic restructuring. The U.S. economy was performing better and creating more jobs in the period covered by this research than the other countries. But the market does not distribute jobs or wages equally, and many U.S. citizens—especially young people, minorities, and the least skilled—were not included in the 1980s recovery. Government assistance was the only source of support for many of these individuals and families, but U.S. social programs did not serve them well. Over 60 percent of unemployed people in the U.S. today do not receive unemployment insurance benefits, and income support for families with children has diminished over the decade. It is because the United States' "safety net" programs are so meager relative to European countries' that poverty rates here are so much higher.

What can be learned from the Europeans about policies to help the poor? The answer varies according to the specific target group. Minorities are disadvantaged on both sides of the Atlantic; ongoing discrimination in the private labor market and persistent educational deficits reinforce one another to leave minorities everywhere standing behind whites and native citizens in the employment queue. The Netherlands and West Germany have followed an alternative path: by regulating wage differentials and offering generous social assistance to the jobless, they have prevented minorities from falling too far below the mainstream standard of living. These policies have ensured that minority families in these two nations are not trapped in persistent poverty as are so many black families in the United States.

Changed economic circumstances have created special problems for new labor-market entrants, particularly the unschooled and unskilled. Many governments have established training and school-to-work transition programs to improve skills, increase access to on-the-job training, and circumvent long-term idleness among the young. The experiences of France, Italy, and West Germany suggest that such programs are only effective when they have the active support of private employers and are carefully monitored by the government. Indeed, the most successful apprenticeship program—West Germany's—has institutionalized a tripartite relationship among business, government, and labor unions to ensure that a modern system of training integrates non-university-bound young people into core sectors of the economy.

Needed: A Family Policy

It is in the area of family policy that the U.S. clearly has the most to learn from Europe. All the continental European countries offer universal access to health care, and most have state-guaranteed advance child-support payments for lone parents with absent spouses. All have universal child allowances, entitlements given to all families with children.

In European countries where mothers are expected to work, high-quality public day care is provided, and parental leave policies further increase the ease with which mothers can return to the labor force after child-bearing. France has created time-limited programs, designed to meet the varying needs associated with a family's lifecycle. Special allowances are given when a child is young (under three years old) or when the mother is in transition (newly divorced or widowed).

In countries where mothers are not expected to work, the government provides generous income assistance through tax and income-transfer systems. In the U.K., 75 percent of the lone-parent families have been lifted out of poverty by government income-support programs. In the Netherlands the figure is 90 percent.

(Continued on back page)

November 1991

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Inside This Issue:

- Women make significant gains in the ranks of elected black officials according to the newest edition of the Joint Center's annual *Black Elected Officials: A National Roster.*
- Amnesty International reports that torture, extrajudicial executions, and other human rights abuses are widespread on the African continent.
- Across the Nation looks at the reelection of mayors Richard Arrington in Birmingham and Kurt Schmoke in Baltimore; the election to Congress of Philadelphia's Lucien Blackwell, and the victory of Willie Herenton as mayor of Memphis; and the Houston mayoral runoff involving Sylvester Turner.

Female BEOs Make Inroads in High Level Offices

The number of black elected officials (BEOs) in the United States continues to grow. As of January 31, 1991, 7,490 BEOs were in office, which is a 1.6 percent increase over last year's count of 7,370 according to the 1991 edition of the Joint Center's annual volume, *Black Elected Officials: A National Roster.* As in previous years, most of the BEOs are found in the South, which has the nation's largest concentration (52.8 percent) of blacks of voting age. The South accounted for 67.6 percent of all BEOs. The Midwest, with 18.7 percent of the nation's blacks of voting age, had 17.7 percent of the BEOs. The Northeast, with 19.4 percent (population), continued to be underrepresented with only 10 percent (BEOs), as did the West, with 9.6 percent (population) versus 4.7 percent (BEOs). The ranking of the 10 states with the largest number of black elected officials has remained virtually unchanged from previous years. And as in the past, they are concentrated in the old Confederacy. Alabama led the way with 707 BEOs, followed by Mississippi (691), Louisiana (551), Georgia (511), Illinois (476), North Carolina (443), South Carolina (405), Arkansas (351), Michigan (305), and Texas (298).

While the 1990 roster year (February 1, 1989, to January 31, 1990) represented breakthroughs in black electoral progress, with more blacks being elected in predominantly white jurisdictions than ever before, the 1991 roster year (February 1, 1990 to January 31, 1991) witnessed substantial gains by female BEOs in high-level offices. Since 1970, the number of elected black women has been growing rapidly: the ratio of women to men among black elected officials in 1970 was 1:12, but today it is less than 1:4. Not only has the gender gap narrowed but women are being elected to higher positions than before. In the past, they were concentrated at the local level, mostly as school board members. Black women are now making their presence felt in the federal and state legislatures and as leaders of large cities.

The number of elected black women rose between 1990 and 1991 from 1,950 to 2,054. This 5.3 percent increase was recorded mainly in federal and state offices. There was little change at the regional, county, and municipal levels. **CARDISS COLLINS** (D-Ill.), who chairs the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Consumer Protection and Competitiveness, was able to welcome four more black women to Congress: **MAXINE WATERS** (D-Calif.), **BARBARA-ROSE COLLINS** (D-Mich.), **ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON** (D-D.C.), and "Shadow Senator" **FLORENCE PENDELTON** (D-D.C.). Female BEOs have also asserted themselves in state legislatures, where they now comprise 27 percent of all black representatives and hold 51 committee chairmanships and vice chairmanships. In California, for example, state Senator **DIANE WATSON** chairs the Committee on Health and Human Services, and Assemblywoman **GWEN MOORE** chairs the Committee on Utilities and Commerce. By the end of the 1990 roster year, 78 black women were in state houses and 18 in state senates. One year later, these numbers had grown to 98 in the state houses (a 25.6 percent increase) and 23 in state senates (a 27.8 percent increase). The states of Georgia and Arkansas had the most notable increases, adding five and three women legislators, respectively. Three other states elected black female state legislators for the first time: Alaska, Rhode Island, and West Virginia.

In 1990 another black woman was elected chief executive of a city with more than 100,000 residents: **SHARON PRATT DIXON** of Washington, D.C., joined **CARRIE PERRY** of Hartford (first elected in 1987) as mayor of a major U.S. city. **STEPHANIE TUBBS-JONES** became the first black to head the prosecutor's office in Cuyahoga County's history (the county encompasses Cleveland, Ohio). Running as an underdog, she ended the 34-year reign of the "Corrigan dynasty" by defeating **MICHAEL J. CORRIGAN**, son of former prosecutor **JOHN T. CORRIGAN**. While black women are still far from reaching numerical parity with their elected male counterparts, the outlook for growth in their ranks is bright.

Number of black elected officials in the United States, by state and office, January 1991

			Federal		State				Substate Regional		County			Municipal					Judicial and Law Enforcement						Education			
State	Total	Net Change since January 31, 1989	Senators	Representatives	Governors	Administrators	Senators	Representatives	Members, Regional Bodies	Other Regional Officials	Members, County Governing Bodies	Members, Other County Bodies	Other County Officials	Mayors	Members, Municipal Governing Bodies	Members, Municipal Boards	Members, Neighborhood Advisory Commissions	Other Municipal Officials	Judges, State Courts of Last Resort	Judges, Other Courts	Magistrates, Justices of the Peace, Constables	Other Judicial Officials	Police Chiefs, Sheriffs, and Marshalls	Other Law Enforcement Officials	Members, State Education Agencies	Members, University and College Boards	Members, Local School Boards	Other Education Officials
Alabama	707	2					5	19			72	2	14	32	411				1	14	41	6	6		2		81	1
Alaska	3	-1						1							2													
Arizona	18	7					1	3						2	3					3						1	5	
Arkansas	351	7					3	9						24	153			19		4	35					2	102	
California	261	-20		4			2	7	3		8		2	9	39	6		7	1	75		1	1			15	80	1
Colorado	17	3					1	3							2					8		1					2	
Connecticut	67	1		1		1	2	7						3	31	5		2			1						14	
Delaware	27	5					1	2			1		1	3	10					1	1	1					6	
District of Columbia*	208	-27		1										1	12		185										6	
Florida	184	7					2	12			12	2		15	95	1		2	1	23			2				15	2
Georgia	511	16		1		1	8	27			99		4	18	234	3		2	1	20	2	1	2			2	84	2
Hawaii	0	-1																										
Idaho	0	0																										
Illinois	476	15		3		1	7	14			36	2	1	19	166	53		21		22		1				2	128	
Indiana	74	6				1	2	6			13			1	30		7	2		4							8	
Iowa	12	-2						1			2				4							1					4	
Kansas	20	-3					1	3			3				4					2							7	
Kentucky	71	1					1	2			1			1	52					3	2	1					8	
Louisana	551	24		1			4	15			115	1		19	168			2		20	45	3	15		1		142	
Maine	1	-1												1														
Maryland	132	14		1			7	24			6			8	55	1	1			19		4					6	
Massachusetts	31	-5					1	5			1				11	5					1						7	
Michigan	305	-4		2		1	3	12			21			11	69			16	1	63	4				1	13	88	
Minnesota	13	1						1							2					6			1				3	
Mississippi	691	22		1		1	2	20			67	51	7	32	302			3		36	33	9	7				112	8
Missouri	175	6		2			3	13			2			15	98	1		4		11		2	2			2	20	
Montana	0																											
Nebraska	4	0					1								1												2	
Nevada	9	-1					1	2			1				2					1						1	1	
New Hampshire	2	0						2																				
New Jersey	213	12		1			2	6			5		1	11	102			1									84	
New Mexico	4	-2													1					2							1	
New York	277	14		4			5	17			14			4	29	3		1	1	62	2	1					134	
North Carolina	443	-10					5	14			45	2	1	19	257				1	18		2	3			2	74	
North Dakota	0	0																										
Ohio	214	5		1			2	11			1	1		10	101	3		10		28		1			1		44	
Oklahoma	122	6				1	2	3			2		1	14	49			27		1			1				21	
Oregon	14	3					2	1			1				3	2				4							1	
Pennsylvania	139	-3		1			3	15						4	42			1	1	33	13	1					25	
Rhode Island	12	1					1	7							3												1	
South Carolina	405	9					6	15			70	3	2	16	154	1				4	3		5			1	125	
South Dakota	2	-1												1	1													
Tennessee	166	17		1			3	10			46		2	3	52					12	10	2	1				24	
Texas	298	-7		1			2	13			16			14	121	1				13	23				2	5	87	
Utah	1	0																		1								
Vermont	2	0						2																				
Virginia	152	3			1		3	7			41		3	5	76			3	1	2		7	3					
Virgin Islands	35	0			1	1	12			12															9			
Washington	20	0						2			1			2	5					6							4	
West Virginia	25	0						2						1	18					2	1	1						
Wisconsin	23	1					1	5			3				7					3			1				3	
Wyoming	2	0					1																				1	
Total	7490	120		26	2	8	108	340	3	12	705	64	39	318	2977	85	193	123	9	526	217	46	50		16	46	1560	14

* Includes two shadow senators and one shadow representative
Source: Black Elected Officials: A National Roster, 1991

Human Rights Abuses in Africa

In 1981, **VERA CHIRWA** and her husband, **ORTON CHIRWA**, were jailed without charge or trial simply because they said that they thought Malawi should be governed differently. The couple was finally brought to trial in 1983, convicted of treason, and sentenced to death. After an international outcry, the Chirwas' sentences were commuted to life imprisonment. They remain in prison for the non-violent expression of political beliefs and yet they may be considered relatively fortunate, to judge by the many tragic accounts catalogued in Amnesty International's 1990 annual human rights report (the most recent edition) released this year. Last year, people in half the world's countries were jailed as prisoners of conscience, and more than 100 governments continued to torture or abuse prisoners. People were "disappeared" or extrajudicially executed without trial in 29 countries.

The 1990 report documents many such human rights violations in Africa. Citizens in several African nations continued to experience political repression, with jailings and torture on a massive scale. Many citizens were beaten, or subjected to electric shock, plunged in bitterly cold water, deprived of sleep, burned with cigarettes, or murdered outright by agents of their government. Many people died as a result of torture, with the greatest number of such deaths reported in Mauritania.

Not all the news in Africa is bad. In the past 18 months, landmark political reforms have resulted in the establishment of multiple parties in several nations that had long been single-party regimes. Open political debate has begun to occur on an unprecedented scale. The death penalty was abolished in three counties—Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe, and Mozambique—and greater human rights safeguards were introduced in others. Countries that have made progress include Benin, where political prisoners were released and political reforms were followed by important changes affecting human rights, and Zambia, where 10 political prisoners serving long prison terms were freed and opposition political parties were legalized. On November 2 of this year, President **KENNETH KAUNDA**, who ruled Zambia since 1964, was defeated by trade unionist **FREDERICK CHILUBA** in that country's first multiparty election in more than 20 years.

However, despite these hopeful changes, Amnesty International says abuses continue, and in some countries signs of reform have not ended political imprisonment, torture, unfair trials, "disappearances," or unlawful killings. Following are selected African countries where human rights abuses continue:

Sudan. Over the last year, hundreds of real and suspected political opponents of the government were arrested without charges. Some were detained in 1989 and are still being held without charges or trial. About 30 army officers, suspected of participating in an alleged coup attempt, were executed after unfair trials.

Mauritania. The persecution of citizens in the southern region of Mauritania reached disturbing new heights in 1990 when the country's National Guard, supported by the Haratine Militia, arrested thousands of civilians and randomly killed unarmed villagers in virtually all parts of the south along the banks of the Senegal river. Many of those arrested were held without charge or trial for several months and tortured while in detention.

South Africa. Moderate political changes did not end human rights violations. The ban on the African National Congress and other opposition groups was lifted and freedom fighter **NELSON MANDELA** was freed, but spiraling political violence in 1990 led to thousands of deaths, and 1,500 government critics and opponents were held without charge or trial. Some were tortured or ill-treated in police custody—at least 18 detainees died under suspicious circumstances. In 1991, while the authorities have continued to talk about political reform, the level of violence has continued to grow; the government has failed to repeal repressive security legislation and has failed to call the security forces to account for the abuses they have committed.

JACK HEALEY, executive director of Amnesty International USA, argues that the complexity of the human rights situation in Africa only highlights the need for the U.S. and other industrialized democracies "to make a commitment to uphold a single human rights standard at home or abroad." Healey believes that while current U.S. foreign policy in Africa is aimed at the promotion of multiparty democracy, democracy alone will not guarantee the protection of human rights. He has called on the U.S. government to give human rights a more prominent role in the formulation of its foreign policy, whether the nations concerned are friend or foe. Healey asserts that U.S. ratification of key human rights treaties would be an important initial step that would give substance to the President's theme of "the rule of law."

ACROSS THE NATION

ALABAMA: Birmingham mayor **RICHARD ARRINGTON** fought off five competitors to win a fourth term as mayor. Arrington won 63 percent of the vote in the October 8 nonpartisan election. He defeated three other black challengers: municipal judge **EMORY ANTHONY, JR.**, came in second with 32 percent of the vote, while Republican businessman **RICHARD H. FINLEY** and Socialist candidate **JOHN C. HAWKINS** finished a distant fifth and sixth respectively, each garnering less than one percent. Arrington was elected the city's first black mayor in 1978.

MARYLAND: In his bid for a second term as Baltimore's mayor, **KURT SCHMOKE** faced the same two opponents he faced in 1987 and beat them both again. In the September 12 primary, Schmoke defeated black former city council president **CLARENCE "DU" BURNS** with a comfortable 59 percent of the vote. In the November 5 general election he won 72 percent, easily eliminating Republican challenger **SAMUEL CULOTTA**. In 1987 Schmoke got by Burns with just over 5,000 votes in the primary, although he easily defeated Culotta in the general election that year (carrying 79 percent) to become "Charm City's" first elected black mayor (See May 1991 TL).

PENNSYLVANIA: If at first you don't succeed, try something else. This may become the new motto for veteran Philadelphia politician **LUCIEN BLACKWELL**, who failed in his May primary bid for mayor but triumphed in the November 5 election to fill the seat vacated by seven-term Congressman **WILLIAM H. GRAY III**. Gray resigned to head the United Negro College Fund (See Aug.-Sept. TL). Blackwell, who enjoys strong grassroots support in the black community, is a former state senator, city council member, and president of the International Longshoremen's Association, Local 332. He defeated four competitors, including two black officials: state senator **CHAKA FATTAH** and former secretary of state **JOHN WHITE, JR.**, who resigned that post to make the Congressional bid. Blackwell won 39 percent of the vote, followed by Fattah (28 percent) and White (27 percent).

White Democrat **EDWARD RENDELL**, a former two-term district attorney, will replace the city's first black mayor, **W. WILSON GOODE**, who is prevented by law from running for a third term. Rendell defeated Republican **JOSEPH EGAN**, who was chosen by the GOP as its candidate after the July death of **FRANK RIZZO**, the city's former police commissioner and controversial two-term mayor.

TENNESSEE: On October 3, former city schools superintendent **WILLIE HERENTON** was elected mayor of Memphis. In the near-miss victory, Herenton defeated white incumbent **RICHARD "DICK" HACKETT** by 142 votes. The victory emerged from a 10-month effort to unify the black community—which constitutes 55 percent of the city's population—around a "consensus" candidate chosen under the auspices of two groups: the People's Convention led by city councilmember **SHEP WILBUN** and the Leadership Summit led by black Democratic Congressman **HAROLD FORD**. On April 27, the People's Convention elected Herenton as its candidate, and in June organizers of the Leadership Summit endorsed him. Herenton, who becomes the city's first elected black mayor, received less than 10 percent of the white vote, but the black community, which now leads the white community in registered voters, turned out in record numbers. Over half of the black precincts reported more than 95 percent turnouts.

The 51-year old Memphis native grew up in the city's public housing projects and worked his way through high school and college. A former amateur boxer, Herenton has a distinguished career as an educator that spans more than 25 years as teacher and principal and 12 years as superintendent of the Memphis school system, which has more than 100,000 students. He campaigned on a platform calling for more affordable housing and increased funding for education.

TEXAS: It was almost a coup. Thirty-seven year-old black state representative **SYLVESTER TURNER**, considered the underdog in the Houston mayoral campaign, came in second with 34 percent of the vote, beating five-term incumbent **KATHY WHITMIRE** who finished third on the November 5 ballot with 20 percent. Turner will face millionaire businessman **ROBERT LANIER** in a December 3 run-off. Lanier, a former chairman of the state's Highway and Public Transportation Commission (now the Texas Transportation Commission) finished first with 44 percent.

Turner, a two-term member of the state house of representatives and a Harvard-educated attorney, represents, a predominantly white, affluent area of the city. He wooed away many of Whitmire's black supporters, receiving 70 percent of the black vote and 25 percent of the Hispanic vote. The lion's share of Lanier's support came from the Hispanic and affluent white communities. Whitmire's upset is attributed to voter discontent with cime, the city's souring economy, and an anti-incumbency mood (Houstonians also voted to adopt a two-term limit for city officials). Crime dominanted the campaign. Both candidates have promised to beef up the police force, which lost more than 600 officers under the Whitmire administration due to budget constraints.

Turner is expected to get Whitmire's endorsement, but he will have to make tremendous inroads in the Hispanic and white communities to pull off a victory, since blacks represent only 28 percent of the city's population.

Redistricting Victories

Black Voters Make Significant Gains in Representation in the Louisiana Legislature and Virginia Senate Through Redistricting

by Frank R. Parker

Three Southern states, all on the "fast track" for redrawing voting district lines to accommodate fall elections this year, may offer a sneak preview of what lies ahead elsewhere in the country. The redistricting process in these states is the first test of whether the white-majority legislatures will fully comply with the Voting Rights Act and significantly increase the number of majority-black districts or, as in the past, will seek to dilute black voting strength.

In all three—Louisiana, Virginia, and Mississippi—black voters are underrepresented in the state legislatures. According to the 1990 census, Louisiana is one-third black, yet blacks account for only 14 percent (20 of 144) of its state legislators. Blacks in Mississippi are even more seriously underrepresented: The disparity between their population percentage and percentage in the legislature is 36 percent vs. 13 percent (22 of 174 members). In Virginia, which is 19 percent black, only 7 percent (10 of 140) of the state legislators are black.

The three states adopted statewide legislative redistricting plans in March and April and submitted them to the U.S. Department of Justice for approval, as required by Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act. This law requires that nine states (and parts of seven others) must prove that their plans are not racially discriminatory either in purpose or effect. In the end, redistricting gave black voters in Louisiana and Virginia new opportunities to win increased representation of their choice in this fall's elections.

However, black enfranchisement was dealt a setback in Mississippi, where a three-judge federal district court ordered the fall elections held within the pre-1990 district boundaries. This postpones until next year any possible increase in the state's majority-black districts. In each state, civil rights groups and state legislative black caucuses objected to the initial plans and urged Justice Department officials to reject them.

Louisiana: Blacks Submerged and Divided. The new plans adopted by Louisiana, passed in response to population shifts since 1980, created only two additional majority-black Senate districts and just four more House districts. The state legislative black caucus opposed both plans, because they fragmented black population concentrations. The caucus demonstrated through alternative plans that five more majority-black senatorial districts and 10 more majority-black House districts could have been created.

Assistant U.S. Attorney General John R. Dunne, who reviewed the redistricting plans, rejected Louisiana's Senate and House proposals in June and July. Dunne, who heads the Justice Civil Rights Division, concluded that the Senate had drawn districts to protect white incumbents, while alternative plans showed that more majority-black districts were possible. Dunne rejected House districts in seven areas of the state where the legislature had failed to account for growth in the black proportion of the population.

In East Baton Rouge and several northwest parishes, Dunne concluded that the plans overconcentrated black voters to avoid creating additional black districts. In Orleans and Jefferson parishes in the New Orleans area, and also in three rural areas, Dunne found that black populations large enough for separate representation had been divided and submerged in predominantly white districts.

In response to the Justice Department's objections, Governor Buddy Roemer called a special legislative session to develop new plans. The revised plans that were approved by the Justice Department raised the number of majority-black districts from 15 to 25 in the House and from five to nine in the Senate. This fall, all black incumbents won reelection, and black candidates were elected in nine new House districts and three of the four new Senate districts.

Virginia: A Wilder Veto. In Virginia, the legislative black caucus won additional majority-black districts over opposition from an unwilling state legislature. The Virginia Senate's initial plan had only increased the number of majority-black Senate districts from two to three. After the Virginia American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the black caucus showed that five majority-black districts could be drawn, Governor L. Douglas Wilder vetoed the plan.

In response, the General Assembly adopted a revised plan, this time raising the number of such districts from two to five. This revised plan was approved by the Justice Department, becoming the only plan to be so approved in the first round of review.

At the same time, the state legislature adopted a plan that increased the number of majority-black House districts from nine to 11. The Virginia NAACP and ACLU opposed it, and it was rejected by Dunne in July. Dunne ruled that the House plan diluted black votes in the Richmond area,

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Mr. Parker is director of the Voting Rights Project of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law in Washington. In 1985-86 he was a MacArthur Foundation Distinguished Scholar at the Joint Center. He authored the award-winning book, *Black Votes Count: Political Empowerment in Mississippi After 1965* (UNC Press, 1990).

Redistricting

(Continued from page 5)

where a new majority-black district was possible. To satisfy this objection, the legislature adopted a plan raising the number of House districts to 12.

This November two black candidates, Richmond's former mayor Henry Marsh and Portsmouth city council member Louise Lucas, won election in two of the new majority-black Senate districts, raising the number of black Virginia senators from three to five. At the same time, in all three newly created black House districts, black challengers were defeated by white incumbents.

Mississippi: No Court Relief. In Mississippi, in response to pressure from the legislative black caucus and a coalition of civil rights groups and black attorneys, the legislature substantially increased the number of districts with 60 percent or more black voting-age populations in both the Senate (from 4 to 10) and the House (from 18 to 29).

But even with these gains, the black caucus's alternative redistricting plans showed that additional majority-black House districts could have been created in Jackson, in northeast Mississippi, and in Pike County. Further, black Senate districts could have been produced in east-central Mississippi along the Alabama border, in the southwest along the Mississippi River, and in the Delta area. The legislature also had minimized black votes by creating large, odd-shaped districts encompassing several counties that would make it difficult for black candidates to mount effective campaigns. In other cases, district lines were drawn to exclude politically active black precincts.

In response to criticisms from civil rights organizations and black legislators, on July 2 Dunne rejected 30 House districts and 12 Senate districts as racially discriminatory. Unlike his counterpart in Louisiana, Mississippi's governor Ray Mabus refused to call a special legislative session to resolve the Justice Department's objections. Anticipating this, black legislators and voters had filed a federal lawsuit in May, *Watkins* v. *Mabus*, seeking a court-ordered redistricting plan in time for the elections this fall.

Although numerous proposed plans that would have increased the number of majority-black districts were filed with the district court, a three-judge panel ordered this year's elections held under the pre-1991 plan despite its malapportioned districts. The court nevertheless held out the prospect of special legislative elections next year once a fair and nondiscriminatory plan has been adopted, which would require legislators who won this year to campaign again for the same offices.

In the November election for the state House of Representatives, blacks won only one additional seat: Linda Coleman, a former legal services attorney, defeated a white incumbent. Elsewhere, two black incumbents were defeated by black challengers.

Ingredients of Success

Thus far in the post-1990 Census redistricting, several pivotal factors have emerged. Coalitions among civil rights groups, minority community organizations, and black state legislators were successful in urging state legislatures to add black districts, and, when the legislatures came up short, in persuading the Justice Department to reject discriminatory districts.

The coalitions this past year mobilized legislative, technical, and legal resources better than ever before. They also were able to join forces with black legislators elected in the 1970s and 1980s who, by virtue of their seniority and numbers, now wield more legislative influence.

Advances in computer technology—along with better access to the states' own redistricting computer programs—simplified the task of drafting alternative plans. These alternative plans showed how the legislatures' plans discriminated against black voters and demonstrated that additional majority black districts could be created.

On the legal front, redistricting coalitions and their attorneys (both local civil rights attorneys and lawyers from national organizations like the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law) were assisted by the strong legal standards of the Voting Rights Act. Congress had amended the Act in 1982 to eliminate the requirement of proving that a challenged plan was adopted for a discriminatory intent, replacing that with an easier-to-prove "results" test that prohibits any redistricting which would result in discrimination. Finally, the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department, headed by Assistant Attorney General John Dunne, has been more vigilant in protecting minority voting rights than it was during the Reagan administration under William Bradford Reynolds.

GOP Not a Major Factor

Despite earlier widespread press reports, projected alliances between the Republican National Committee and minority groups seeking more minority districts have not emerged as a major factor. In Virginia, where the Republican Party perhaps had its greatest presence, the Republicans drafted alternative plans showing that additional majority-black districts could be created, and they filed comments with the Justice Department urging rejection of the state's House of Delegates plan. However, it is not clear that the GOP's opposition was decisive in Dunne's rejection of the plan, since it was also opposed by local chapters of the Virginia NAACP and ACLU.

The Virginia Republicans had been upset that the legislature's plan pitted 15 GOP delegates and one independent who voted with them against one another by placing them in the same districts. But this concern appears to have had little impact on the Justice Department. In rejecting the House plan, Dunne approved a revised plan that also pitted Republican legislators against each other.

In sum, the experiences of Louisiana, Virginia, and Mississippi this year show that the maximum potential for black representation has not yet been reached. To the extent that black representation continues to depend on the creation of majority-black districts, additional gains can yet be made at both the congressional and state legislative levels in states whose redistricting has yet to be finished. ■

Black Officials Open '92 Election Year

The Sixth National Policy Institute Will Focus Nation's Attention on Three Critical Issues: Health, Drugs, and Education

by Russell E. Owens

As the economy continues to sag and George Bush's approval ratings drop, his invincibility in next year's presidential election has come into question. Ultra-conservative columnist and former GOP White House aide Pat Buchanan might challenge Bush in the primaries, something unthinkable just weeks ago. Presidential politics is also warming up in the nation's other major party as six Democrats have announced their candidacy. And political waters have been churned by white supremacist David Duke's thinly veiled agenda to turn the clock back on civil rights and social progress. It is in this charged political atmosphere that the Sixth National Policy Institute (SNPI), the quadrennial conference of black elected officials, will convene on January 23-25, 1992.

The meeting will be held at the Washington Hilton in Washington, D.C., and is expected to attract over 500 conferees who will have an opportunity to hear from national leaders on the 1992 presidential selection process. The timing of the Institute is propitious since SNPI will provide a unique opportunity for black elected officials to deliberate over public policy issues in a national, nonpartisan forum before the presidential primaries and conventions.

The media has focused on the growing economic crisis, the dramatic political changes in Eastern Europe, and the racial politics of David Duke's campaign for governor of Louisiana. These and other subjects have held much of the nation's attention in recent months. Nevertheless, SNPI sponsors felt strongly that the Institute must focus on the issues that are most pressing among black Americans: health, drugs, and education.

Health. The deteriorating health status of black Americans has caused the average life expectancy among blacks to actually decline from 69.7 years in 1984 to 69.4 years in 1987 (the national average is 75 years). There is a litany of health inequities between black and white Americans. Black infants are two times more likely to die in their first year than white infants. Black men have a higher risk of dying from cancer than nonblacks. The most common cause of death for black men between the ages of 15 and 34 is homicide, most often as victims of firearms. Black women are four times more likely than white women to die as homicide victims. And the rate among blacks of contracting AIDS (most commonly among drug abusers and through heterosexual transmission), is triple the rate for whites. These health problems occurring among blacks, especially those with low incomes, are exacerbated by the fact that few of them receive routine and preventive health care—too many pregnant mothers do not get prenatal care and cancers often are not detected early enough to increase the chances of survival. Black children are less likely than white children to be inoculated against measles, whooping cough, and polio. And a disproportionantly high percentage of low-income minorities are among the 37 million Americans who have *no* health insurance.

Drugs. Black communities in large cities have been on the front lines of the growing drug epidemic. The problem has been fueled by the street trade of relatively inexpensive "crack" cocaine. With the government's emphasis on enforcement instead of education and treatment, the drug epidemic has cost the society billions of dollars in law enforcement, criminal prosecutions, and incarceration. "Crack babies" have been born physically deformed and mentally damaged and are overburdening urban hospitals. And minorities in low-income neighborhoods are constantly at risk of violence at the hands of drug abusers and dealers.

Education. According to the Children's Defense Fund, in 1988, just 25 percent of the three- and four-year-olds from families with incomes of under $10,000 were enrolled in preschool programs while over half of the children from families with incomes above $35,000 attended preschool. About 27 percent of the nation's 13-year-olds cannot add, subtract, multiply, or divide whole numbers. Furthermore, over 28 percent of the students entering ninth grade in 1984 failed to graduate from high school in 1988.

The nation is not responding to the crisis in education where local funding bases are the lowest, places where the crisis is most keenly felt: inner city neighborhoods, the barrios of the Southwest, Appalachia. Most minority students attend *de facto* segregated schools where shortages of instructional materials and buildings in disrepair are common-place. Libraries and science labs, where they exist at all, are often outdated and poorly equipped.

While the Sixth National Policy Institute will not offer up any panaceas or "quick fixes," it will provide a forum for a healthy exchange among black elected officials to explore the full spectrum of policy options to address these issues. The conveners of the Institute are the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies and the seven national caucuses of black officials: the Congressional Black Caucus, the National Conference of Black Mayors, the National Association of Black County Officials, the Judicial Council, the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, the National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials, and the National Caucus of Black School Board Members. ■

Mr. Owens is the director of the National Policy Institute at the Joint Center.

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The Urgent Need for Reform

Traditional state welfare programs were built on two assumptions: (1) the vast majority of the population would live in stable two-parent households, and (2) the male breadwinner in a family would be employed full-time in a secure job for most of his adult life. Neither of these assumptions now holds true. Divorce and single parenthood are common today in all advanced industrial countries, and work is much more likely to be short-term, temporary, and insecure. European policymakers have begun to adjust to these social and economic realities. American policy makers have not.

We are daily made aware of the costs of failing to adopt policies that help our citizens adjust to these changes: long-term joblessness, rising child poverty, and increasing urban violence. We could continue on the path we have been following in an attempt to ignore our failings. But as Hugh Heclo, a professor of government at George Mason University, wrote in one of the papers commissioned for the study:

> ". . . down this road lies a society of separatism, where the more privileged parts have in effect seceded from the other(s). . . . Racism, a general contempt for poor people and—most powerful of all—indifference, are sweet comforts in that they make it easier for us to go through life without caring about each other. . . . [We must remember that] there is no collective security without collective justice, that tolerance is a positive commitment, not simply the absence of prejudice or indifference."

The crisis of social policy the United States is experiencing today is born not from a lack of knowledge but from a lack of moral vision and commitment. In the social and economic transformations of the past two decades, the grounding assumptions on which traditional welfare programs were built have melted away. The contours of the new institutions that will emerge to replace them are still hidden in the dawn of a new century. We must begin to peer into that future and talk together about what we want to see. ■

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