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FOCUS

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JCPS/Gallup Poll Reflects Changing Views on Political Issues

Unemployment, High Cost of Living, and Drug Abuse Are Top Three Issues for Blacks and Whites

Blacks' Democratic Party Identification Softens, and Approval Ratings Rise for President Reagan

Jesse Jackson Should Run Again in 1988, Black Majority Say

JCPS Political TrendLetter

Poll Has Mixed Message for Jesse Jackson; Non-Racial Election Strategies; "Across the Nation"

Perspective

Black Voters Have Mainstream Views, May Be Less Loyal to Democrats

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Black Voters Have Mainstream Views, May Be Less Loyal to Democrats

For those who fret that blacks dilute their political clout by voting overwhelmingly Democratic and monolithically pursuing policy issues that are not in sync with the mainstream, the Joint Center's latest national poll will bring welcome relief. As I suggested last month, blacks are less monolithic and more flexible than many suspect. Our 1986 poll substantiates this conclusion.

Although we might still be two separate societies in many respects, the survey indicates that black and white America are in agreement about the principal problems before the country—unemployment, the cost of living, crime, and drug abuse. They also come very close in their ranking of several other issues, like education and health care. I believe this is a significant development because it could help set the stage for new dimensions of cooperation in pursuing important national objectives.

An especially noteworthy issue area is civil rights. It is further down the list of priority issues for blacks than it was in 1984 and is perhaps lower than it has been at any time in the recent past. Indications are that blacks are opting for greater emphasis on basic social and economic issues. What is a major concern is that while civil rights ranks 6th on a list of 21 items for blacks, it is a shocking 19th for whites. One wonders whether the unrelenting attack on civil rights issues and leaders by the present administration might not be a major contributor to white attitudes on this issue.

A second noteworthy set of findings concerns partisanship trends. Here, there is both good news and bad news for the two parties. Democrats will be relieved to see that despite the talk of party realignment and the recent efforts of Republicans to recruit black support, blacks show no sign of switching parties. They remain overwhelmingly Democratic, with less than 7 percent considering themselves Republicans.

The bad news for Democrats and the good news for Republicans emerge when we look more closely at the party support data. Fewer blacks now regard themselves as strong Democrats than did so in 1984—a 6 percentage point drop (55 percent to 49 percent) in just two years. While blacks are still voting Democratic, this is the clearest evidence we have that the Democratic party might indeed be losing its grip on the core of its black support. Also noteworthy in this regard is the fact that younger blacks—those under 30—are much less loyal to the Democratic party than older age cohorts.

A third point worthy of attention focuses on the 1988 elections. The survey shows that Jesse Jackson is far and away the most widely known of the people being mentioned as potential candidates. Most of the potential contenders in both parties have a long way to go in establishing a presence with the electorate.

Finally, the survey suggests that blacks continue to close the gap in registration and turnout. Whites and blacks report almost identical levels of registration, and there is a very narrow gap between the races in intention to vote. Moreover, more blacks than whites report having paid attention to the 1986 mid-term elections.

All of these findings suggest the continuing movement of blacks into the mainstream of American politics, where their influence continues to grow.

Eddie N. Williams

PRESIDENT

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JCPS/Gallup Poll Reflects Changing Views On Political Issues

by Fredrick Harris and Linda Williams

On October 14, 1986, the Joint Center released the results of a national poll on the views of blacks and whites about several key political issues. (The box on this page describes the poll methodology and explains why this poll is more representative of black views than most other public opinion data on blacks.) The 1986 survey is the second in what will from now on be annual JCPS/Gallup surveys. The first such poll was conducted in July 1984. By comparing the findings of the 1984 and 1986 surveys, we can identify changes that have occurred in the political views of black Americans in the past two years.

The changes that we describe below are noteworthy on several counts. First, they affect each of the major subject categories in the surveys: most important issues, partisanship, presidential approval, and support for Jesse Jackson. Second, some changes are on questions that political analysts believe to be of special significance. For instance, the fact that fewer blacks than in 1984 identified themselves as "strong" Democrats suggests a softening of party identification; Republicans may view this as a "window of opportunity" through which to attract black voters. Equally noteworthy is the fact that "civil rights" is not among the top three issues for blacks in 1986, though it was ranked third in 1984. Third, there has been much speculation and public debate—but not much reliable data—on such questions as blacks' loyalty to the Democrats and the level of their support for President Reagan, among other important issues. Thus, the results we present in this article will, we hope, inform and stimulate those who are thinking about these critical issues.

Though the changes we have identified are significant, they should not be overstated. No sweeping changes have occurred. Americans of every race generally exhibit extremely stable and unvarying views for long periods of time. This is particularly true for party identification. For example, southern whites started leaving the Democratic party in 1948 when the party included its first civil rights plank, but it took more than 30 years for a plurality of southern whites to shift their allegiance to the Republican party. Similarly, few blacks—long-time adherents of the "party of Lincoln"—voted for Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt in 1932, despite having suffered miserably under Herbert Hoover's Republican administration. Though an overwhelming majority of blacks did vote for Roosevelt in 1936 (about 70 percent—at least doubling Roosevelt's 1932 share), it wasn't until 1964 that blacks fully embraced the Democrats. And even as late as 1972, 30 percent of black voters supported a Republican presidential candidate—Richard Nixon.

(Continued on next page)

Dr. Linda Williams is a senior research associate and Fredrick Harris is a research assistant at the Joint Center.

How the Poll Was Conducted

The Joint Center for Political Studies/Gallup public opinion poll on black and white American attitudes toward a wide range of political, economic, and social issues was conducted by face-to-face interviews in the continental United States during the week of August 8, 1986. In all, 868 black persons and 916 whites persons, selected at random, were interviewed.

The survey included about seven times as many blacks as are usually interviewed in a national multiracial poll. Most blacks in the sample were interviewed by blacks. The poll is more reliable than most national polls, not only because it interviewed more blacks and used black interviewers, but also because the interviews were conducted in person rather than by telephone. Telephone surveys disproportionately underrepresent less affluent black Americans.

The sample was weighted (adjusted slightly) to conform to Census Bureau figures for the overall black and white populations in regard to demographic factors such as age, education, and sex.

Theoretically, in 19 of 20 cases, a poll of the size of the black sample and the white sample is subject to a margin of sampling error of about 4 percentage points for each group. Practical difficulties of conducting any survey of public opinion, however, may introduce other sources of error into the poll.

(JCPS/Gallup Poll continued)

A Common National Agenda

Perhaps the most striking change shown by the survey results is the convergence between blacks and whites on the major issues of the day. The results of the 1984 survey demonstrated that blacks and whites differed sharply on the three most important issues. Blacks named unemployment, government programs to help the poor, and civil rights. Whites shared blacks' concern over unemployment, but named the federal deficit and inflation as equally important issues.

In 1986, however, the issue agendas of blacks and whites had both changed and converged. (See bar graph on this page.) When asked to name the three most important issues, blacks cited unemployment (56 percent), the high cost of living (33 percent), and drug abuse (32 percent). For whites, the order of the top three issues differed somewhat, but whites, too, cited the same three issues as their most important concerns: drug abuse (35 percent), unemployment (29 percent), and the high cost of living (28 percent).

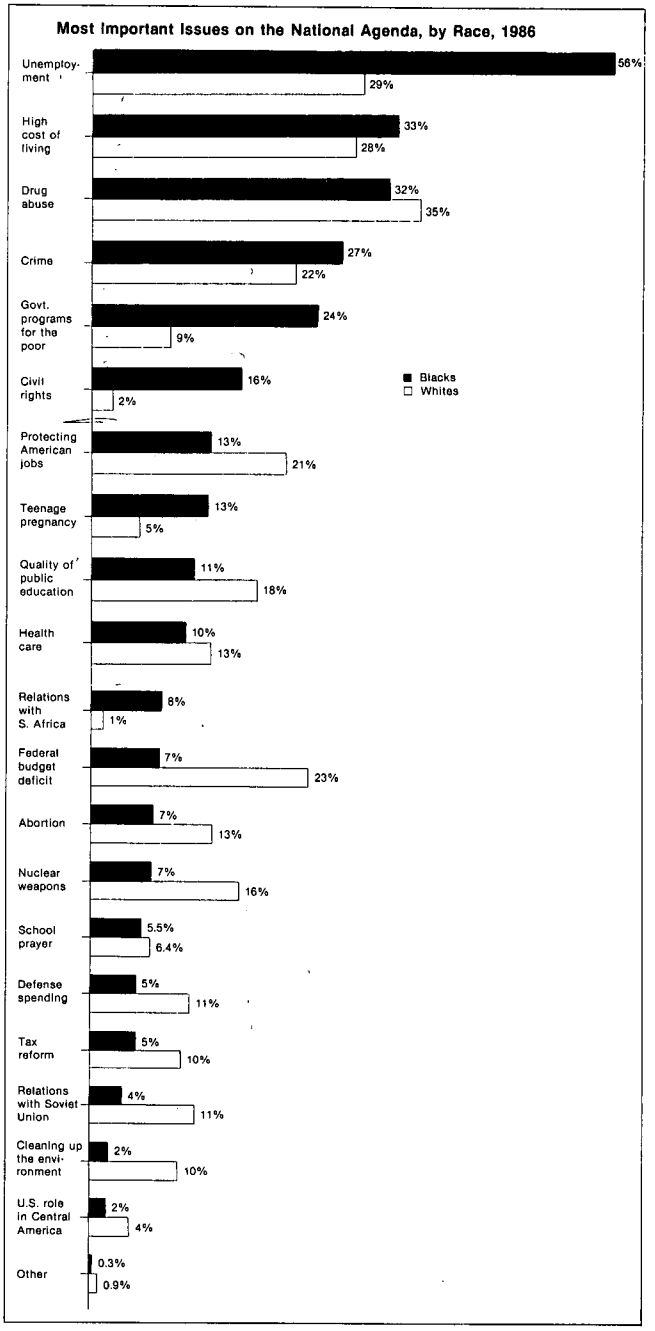
Economic and criminal justice issues have become the dominant concerns of black and white Americans.

Four other issues (crime, protecting American jobs, the quality of public education, and health care) also ranked among the top 10 issues on both blacks' and whites' lists of concerns. Indeed, it is interesting to note that a larger proportion of blacks than whites cited crime as a main concern.

Thus, on the most basic issue of all—the nation's major public policy priorities—blacks and whites now have substantially similar views.

To be sure, differences on the major issues of concern still exist. The issues that disproportionately afflict black Americans ranked far higher on their lists of concerns than on the lists of whites. Thus government programs to help the poor ranked 5th for blacks, but only 15th for whites; civil rights of minority groups ranked 6th for blacks, but near the bottom at 19th for whites; and teenage pregnancy ranked 8th for blacks, but only 17th for whites. Similarly, relations with South Africa were a relatively important issue for blacks (11th), but the least important issue for whites.

Overall, however, economic and criminal justice issues have become the dominant concerns of black and white Americans. These concerns even removed civil rights from among the top three issues for blacks. While 38 percent of blacks cited civil rights as a key concern in 1984, only 16 percent cited it in 1986. This suggests not so much that civil rights has diminished in importance as that the economic and criminal justice issues have become so overriding that they displace civil rights.



Disagreement on Solutions

Though blacks and whites agree on what should be the main items on the national agenda, they fundamentally disagree over the role of government in resolving many of these problems. For example, when asked whether the federal government should see to it that every person has a job and a good standard of living, 65 percent of blacks said it should, but only 24 percent of whites thought so. When asked whether the federal government should make every possible effort to improve the social and economic position of blacks, 80 percent of blacks, but only 27 percent of whites, thought it should. On the other hand, whites were likely to give more support to the idea of individuals "getting ahead on their own" versus government intervention.

(Continued on page 5)

October 1986

JCPS

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

Inside This Issue

- **A national poll shows that Jesse Jackson is the most recognized of the likely Democratic presidential contenders in 1988, but the poll also shows no gain in his support since 1984.**
- **Pioneering black politicians are running for office in majority-white jurisdictions, but they face an uphill battle to get white support.**
- **Students at the University of California at Berkeley have established a political action committee dedicated to electing a U.S. Congress that will fight for a free South Africa.**
- **The Supreme Court's recent *Gingles* decision, which outlawed multi-member districts for diluting black voting strength, has led to lawsuits by minority voters in Florida and Louisiana.**

National Poll Has Mixed Message for Jesse Jackson

A JCPS/Gallup national survey has some good news and some not-so-good news for JESSE JACKSON if he decides to run again for president in 1988. **The good news is that among black and white respondents in the survey he is the most recognized of all the likely Democratic presidential contenders.** Jackson's name was recognized by 97 percent of blacks and 90 percent of whites. By comparison, 62 percent of blacks and 80 percent of whites recognized Senator **GARY HART,** 46 percent of blacks and 79 percent of whites recognized Chrysler Chairman **LEE IACOCCA,** and 24 percent of blacks and 51 percent of whites recognized New York Governor **MARIO CUOMO.** Other potential presidential candidates, like Senator **BILL BRADLEY, San Francisco Mayor DIANNE FEINSTEIN, Arizona Governor BRUCE BABBITT, Senator JOSEPH BIDEN, Los Angeles Mayor TOM BRADLEY, and former Virginia Governor CHARLES ROBB, were recognized by even fewer respondents. ...The not-so-good news for Jackson is that his level of support for a 1988 presidential bid has remained virtually unchanged since 1984:** 69 percent of blacks and 22 percent of whites want Jackson to run again, and 63 percent of blacks and 6 percent of whites want him to win the Democratic nomination. **This combination** of a very high name-recognition and the same level of support as in 1984 **suggests that Jackson may not be able to win new converts to his camp; his support may have peaked.**

However, other data in the survey show that Jackson's support is not static, particularly in the composition of his black supporters. **In 1984, Jackson got his support more from affluent blacks** than from the "dispossessed" and poor Americans he targeted (a point made in Yale professor **ADOLPH REED's** book, *The Jesse Jackson Phenomenon).* **The 1986 data, however, reveal that the reverse is now true: Jackson's support declines as the level of education, occupational status, and income goes up.** In short, Jackson's 1986 base of support (for a 1988 presidential bid) is more likely to come from blacks who have less education, lower income, and are in lower-status occupational categories....As in 1984, **Jackson's 1986 black supporters are also more likely to be from the South** than from any other region, **to be suburban and rural** rather than urban, and somewhat more likely to be **younger** rather than older, **and female** rather than male. **Jackson's strong base of support in the southern states, most of which have at least a 20 percent black population, could give him a dramatic boost in the newly structured "southern primary."**

Should Jackson run as a Democrat or as an Independent? Of those who wanted him to run again in 1988, 69 percent of blacks and 40 percent of whites said Democrat, and 18 percent of blacks and 40 percent of whites said Independent. Some even wanted him to run as a Republican: 4 percent of blacks and 3 percent of whites....**Clearly, the majority of blacks want Jackson to run again—and as a Democrat. But his "Rainbow Coalition" still has only a basic ebony hue.**

Testing the Appeal of a Non-racial Election Strategy

If there is a noteworthy trend in the generally low-turnout, low-interest 1986 campaign season, it is that **several black candidates are seeking office in majority-white districts.** When the election results are finally tallied, **it is unlikely that many of them will win—and some have already lost** at the party primary stage, as reported in the September *TrendLetter*. **Yet, valuable lessons can be learned from the experiences of these pioneering politicians** as they scale one of the remaining barriers to the election of more blacks to public office.

In Virginia, for example, state Senator BOBBY SCOTT is waging a campaign with a broad-based appeal designed to remove race as an issue. "I don't even bring up race," he said in an interview with *TrendLetter*. Scott points out that several black candidates have been elected in majority-white jurisdictions in Virginia. **The winning strategy, he says, is to "look at what successful Democrats,** like [former Governor] **CHUCK ROBB,** [current Governor] **GERRY BALILES,** and [current Lieutenant Governor] **DOUG WILDER have done." The challenge to black candidates, he says, is "to get voters to think about you" by stressing issues—rather than raising questions about whether blacks can win....** Similarly, **in Maryland ISIAH (IKE) LEGGETT,** a Howard University Law School professor who won the Democratic party's nomination in September for an at-large seat on the Montgomery County Council, **and ALEX WILLIAMS,** another Howard law professor, who won the Democratic nomination for Prince George's County state's attorney, **say they ran the same kind of campaign—they deemphasized race whenever possible. Instead, both men worked at building coalitions, sought support from Democratic party officials and elected leaders, and talked about working within the system.** Both won their primaries with the help of endorsements from key political figures in the Democratic party and support from numerous white voters; and, at press time, both were expected to win the elections.

In Louisiana, however, congressional candidate **FAYE WILLIAMS appeared to be facing greater obstacles, even though she won the Democratic nomination** in this 38 percent black, 88 percent Democratic district. Based on party affiliation, **Williams would seem the odds-on favorite** to win the November 4 general election, **but as *TrendLetter* went to press she faced the possibility that white Democrats are more likely to vote Republican than vote for a black candidate.** The saying "skin color is deeper than party affiliation" may again prove to be true, since **local white Democratic leaders** (including three of Williams's defeated rivals and the retiring incumbent, Representative Cathy Long) **have been reluctant to endorse or actively support Williams in the general election. However, she was endorsed by the Democratic senate hopeful, Representative JOHN BREAUX, by one of her defeated rivals (Carson Killens), and by the AFL-CIO....The Republicans, meanwhile, were crowing over their unexpected chance of winning this seat** and promised the "maximum amount" of campaign funding for the Republican candidate, **CLYDE HOLLOWAY,** who is a two-time loser in this district who never won more than 20-25 percent of the vote.

In the **California** gubernatorial race, Los Angeles Mayor **TOM BRADLEY took the offensive in October with an unusual issue for a black candidate—toxic waste.** In his television ads, Bradley attacks Governor **GEORGE DEUKMEJIAN** for being soft on pollution and accepting campaign contributions from manufacturers who pollute. **Bradley has also addressed the issue of his race, which he didn't do in the 1982 campaign, by saying: "Because I have a black skin, and no black has ever been elected governor of California or any other state, the real issues...may not be what determine the outcome in this election."** (In 1982, when Bradley lost by only 1 percent of the vote, a Field

poll estimated a 3 percent racial backlash vote against him.)... **In Michigan,** gubernatorial candidate **WILLIAM LUCAS'S strategy was to appeal to whites on the basis of his conservatism and to blacks on the grounds that he would make history as the nation's first black governor.** At press time, **both components of this strategy appear to be failing:** an endorsement and campaign appearance by President **REAGAN** led to a drop in Lucas support among voters of all races, and **black Democratic leaders,** like Detroit's Mayor **COLEMAN YOUNG** and Congressman **JOHN CONYERS, have villified Lucas for embracing Reagan and the Religious Right....In sum, black candidates in majority-white jurisdictions face steep, uphill battles. White voters remain reluctant to support black candidates even when they win their party's nomination. Yet, those black candidates who make the best showing may be those who de-emphasize race in their campaigns and run as coalition-builders within the party.** The lingering concern among blacks is whether black officials who are dependent on white votes can effectively work on the issues of concern to most blacks.

Across the Nation

California

A group of law students and recent graduates from the University of California at Berkeley have established "Freedom Now," a political action committee (as opposed to a lobbying organization) **dedicated to electing a U.S. Congress that will fight for a free South Africa.** They are seeking to defeat pro-apartheid senators and representatives in 1986 and in future elections. **Thus they are targeting only those races where the election of one of the candidates will advance the cause of a free South Africa—i.e., contests where a supporter of U.S. government action against the Pretoria regime is in a close race against a candidate who does not support such action.** A candidate's party affiliation and position on most other issues do not affect support by the PAC... Freedom Now's chair **GEOFFREY TAYLOR GIBBS,** is the son of Dr. **JAMES GIBBS,** professor of anthropology at Stanford University, and Dr. **JEWELL GIBBS,** associate professor in the School of Social Welfare at Berkeley.

Florida

A bi-partisan coalition of prominent black and Hispanic **Dade County community leaders filed a federal class action lawsuit alleging that at-large, county-wide elections of Metro commissioners were discriminatory under the Supreme Court's recent decision in *Thornburg v. Gingles.*** The lawsuit alleges that **in the 29-year history of the Metro commission only one black (insurance agent EARL CARROLL) and no Hispanics have been elected to the eight-member commission** without first being appointed. **Nineteen percent of Dade County's registered voters are black and 25 percent are Hispanic.**

Georgia

A runoff election victory by MICHAEL HIGHTOWER (D-District 7) has produced a black majority on the Fulton County Commission for the first time in its history. Other blacks on the seven-member commission, which governs Georgia's largest county, are **Commission Chairman MICHAEL LOMAX and Commissioners A. REGINALD EAVES and CHUCK WILSON. (MARTIN LUTHER KING III, who faces a Republican opponent in the general election, is also likely to be elected.)** Hightower defeated the incumbent, **BRUCE BANISTOR,** 53 percent to 47 percent, in the runoff; he had no Republican opponent in the general election.

Louisiana

In Louisiana, as in Florida, the Supreme Court's ***Gingles* ruling has spawned a lawsuit asserting that at-large election districts—this time for electing state judges—dilute black voting power** and violate the Voting Rights Act. At present, **only 8 (1.9 percent) of 410 elected judges in Louisiana are black, though 27 percent of the state's voting-age population is black.**

In other news, **HOWARD MARSELLUS, SR.,** the chairman of the state prison Pardon Board, and state Representative and Speaker Pro Tem **JOSEPH A. DELPIT were indicted jointly on one count of criminal conspiracy to commit public bribery and separately on one count**

each of public bribery. Marsellus and Delpit are black. Both have been accused of receiving bribes from a state police undercover agent who posed as a family friend of a convicted murderer and sought to buy a pardon.

Massachusetts

Former state Representative and one-time Boston mayoral candidate MEL KING, who was defeated in the Democratic congressional primary in the 8th district (Cambridge), **championed an ill-fated November 4 referendum calling for the secession of minority neighborhoods from Boston.** The proposed new municipality would have been named **"Mandela" in honor of the jailed South African leader.**

In western Massachusetts, **state Representative RAYMOND JORDAN, JR., won the Democratic nomination for reelection by a 1,012 vote margin** and headed into the general election without Republican or Independent opposition on the ballot. **Jordan is the only black legislator in western Massachusetts, and this was his toughest election campaign in 12 years in office.**

Mississippi

Democratic congressional candidate MIKE ESPY copied a page from the campaign book of Glendora Mayor JOHNNY THOMAS, who recently won a special election to become the first black on the Tallachatie County Board of Supervisors. In his successful campaign, **Mayor Thomas copied lists of registered voters and compared them to lists of registered motor vehicle drivers (who are identified by race) to obtain the names of registered black voters.** Espy adopted this strategy in the closing weeks of his campaign to maximize his chances of getting a large black turnout—which he needs to win.... **Espy supporters do not expect to get the votes of many whites, but they have welcomed the active support and campaigning of three white statewide elected officials: Attorney General ED PITTMAN, State Auditor RAY MABUS, and Secretary of State DICK MOLPUS.**

Texas

The Board of Commissioners in Jefferson County (Beaumont) is scheduled to get its first black elected county commissioner. The two candidates are businessmen **ED MOORE,** who defeated the white incumbent, 64 percent to 36 percent, in the Democratic primary, and **PRESTON FRANK,** who was unopposed as a Republican. **The winner will represent Precinct 4 which was redrawn last year after the settlement of a federal voting rights lawsuit to make it majority (57 percent) black.** Moore conceded that he would have had a difficult time winning the primary without the redistricting. Moore was favored to win since no Republican has been elected to the Board since Reconstruction.

Utah

State Senator TERRY WILLIAMS, who lost the Democratic primary in the U.S. Senate race by 261 votes, demanded a recount—and gave his opponent a slightly larger margin of victory...275 votes. Senator Williams was entitled to a recount at no personal expense because the vote margin was less than the number of voting districts in the state—1,804. **At last report, Williams, who is the only black elected official in the state, said he may mount a write-in candidacy.**

Virginia

JAMES R. SPENCER, a former federal prosecutor and Legal Aid attorney, **has been confirmed by the U.S Senate as Virginia's first black federal judge.** Spencer, a Harvard Law School graduate, was nominated by Senator **JOHN WARNER** (R-Va.) and received a bi-partisan chorus of support. **His former boss, U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia JOSEPH DIGENOVA, said, "He is extremely serious about his work...and that's of course why he was successful [as a prosecutor]."** In the U.S. attorney's office, Spencer spent the bulk of his time prosecuting narcotics cases.

Compiled by: Linda Williams, Senior Research Associate, and Alfred Baltimore, Roster Clerk.

(JCPS/Gallup Poll continued)

Declining Loyalty to the Democratic Party

A second change is a weakening of party loyalty. The allegiance of blacks to the Democratic party has been described often enough. Since the 1964 presidential election that pitted Lyndon Johnson, a Democratic president who signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, against Senator Barry Goldwater, the Republican nominee who campaigned on his adamant opposition to that act, blacks have been perhaps the most loyal part of the Democratic party's base. In 1984 when Republican Ronald Reagan won a landslide election against Democrat Walter Mondale, blacks, who made up only 10 percent of the total national electorate, contributed 25 percent of the national Democratic vote.

The 1986 JCPS/Gallup survey, however, reveals a softening in the loyalty of blacks to the Democratic party. While the overwhelming majority of blacks (78 percent) are Democrats and only 7 percent are Republicans (see pie chart on this page), a smaller proportion of blacks identified themselves in 1986 as strong Democrats than had done so in 1984—49 percent in 1986 compared to 55 percent in 1984.

This 6-point drop in the past two years should be an early warning sign that blacks may be prepared to leave the Democrats. Other results in the survey show, however, that blacks still strongly identify with the Democrats: 85 percent of blacks reported they would vote for the Democratic candidate in their congressional districts in 1986, and thinking ahead to the 1988 presidential election 80 percent reported they are likely to support the Democratic nominee. In both instances fewer than 8 percent of blacks said they were likely to vote for Republican candidates.

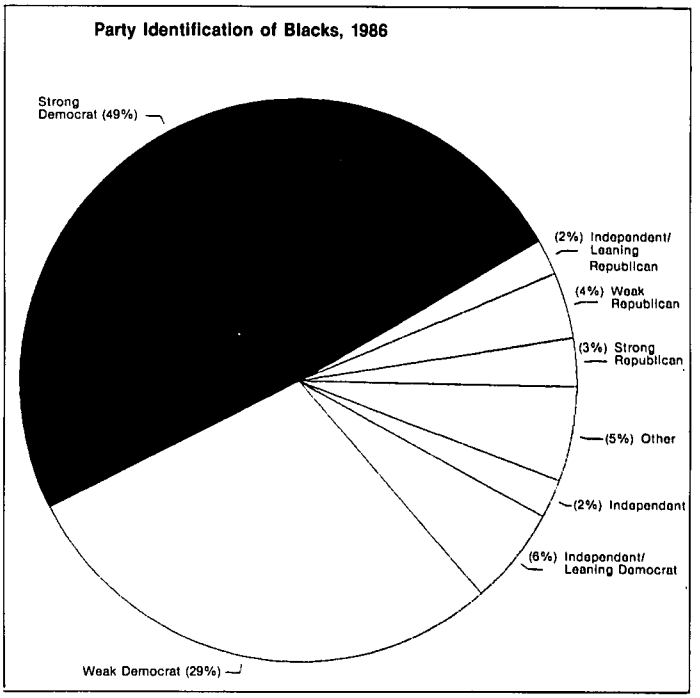
Higher Approval Ratings For President Reagan

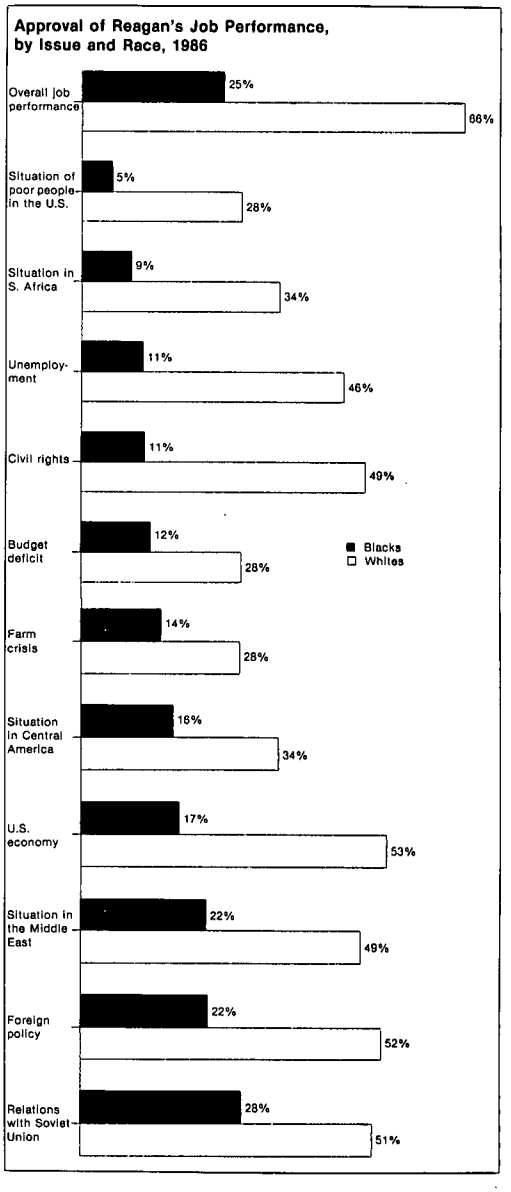
A third change in black views since 1984 is in approval of the president's overall job performance. Since 1984, President Reagan's overall job performance rating among blacks has tripled, from 8 percent in July 1984 to 29 percent in August 1986.

Nevertheless, blacks and whites remain mirror images of each other in their views of the president's performance: two of every three whites approve of the way the president is handling his job while two of every three blacks disapprove.

While Reagan's ratings on most domestic issues (e.g., unemployment, the situation of poor people, civil rights) are abysmally low and remain unchanged from 1984 to 1986, his ratings among blacks on foreign policy issues improved by between 10 and 15 percentage points. (See bar graph on this page for 1986 results.)

One important exception to this pattern is the president's handling of the situation in South Africa. In the 1986 poll, taken even before the president vetoed





legislation mandating sanctions against South Africa's apartheid regime, 78 percent of blacks disapproved of the president's policy toward South Africa, and only 9 percent approved. This was the second lowest approval rating blacks gave the president. Indeed, a majority of blacks sampled in this poll want even tougher sanctions than those recently passed by Congress. Fifty-three percent think the U.S. government should require all U.S. businesses now in South Africa to close their operations, and only 25 percent oppose such action.

Younger blacks (those under 30) and black men were disproportionately likely to approve of the president's overall performance and his performance on foreign policy.

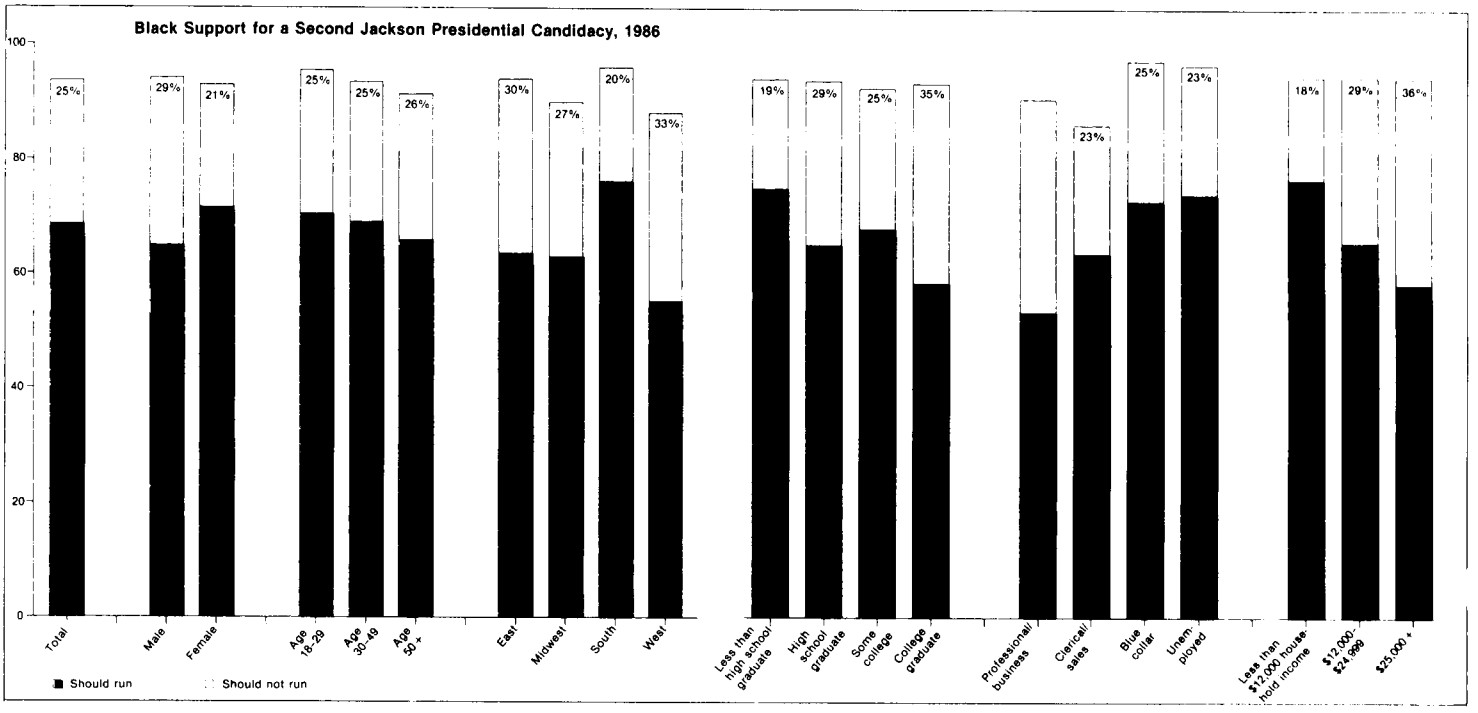
Growing Class Differences in Support for Jesse Jackson

A fourth change pertained to support for a second presidential bid for Jesse Jackson in 1988. While majorities of practically every demographic category (and 68 percent of blacks in general) support such a bid, the size of the majority declines as the level of education, occupational status, and income goes up. In short, a second presidential bid for Jackson in 1988 receives disproportionate support not only from younger blacks and southern blacks, but also from less educated, lower-income, and lower-status occupational categories of blacks. (See bar graph on this page.) This is a reversal from 1984, when Jackson's support came mostly from affluent and better educated blacks. (For more on Jackson's support for a second presidential bid, see *TrendLetter*.)

Black Men Now Better Off, Change Views

One possible explanation for why black men are twice as likely as black women (34 percent to 17 percent) to approve of the Reagan administration is that the economic status of black men is slightly better than that of black women. For example, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median income of black men in 1985 was $10,768, while the median income of black women was $6,277. Moreover, between 1984 and 1985, the median income of black men in current dollars grew by 14 percent (from $9,448 in 1984), compared to an increase of only 2 percent for black women (from $6,164 in 1984). And black men in the 1986 JCPS/Gallup survey are more likely than black women to report that their financial condition improved as a result of Reagan's economic policies (28 percent of black men said their financial situation was "somewhat better" or "much better," compared to 17 percent of black women). Black men (22 percent) were also more likely to approve of the way President Reagan was handling "economic conditions in this country" than black women were (12 percent).

The emergence of a gender gap among blacks may also be attributable to a more hawkish stance on foreign policy among black men. While the views of black men were indistinguishable from the views of black women on most domestic policy issues, men were more likely to approve of the president on foreign policy (by approximately 10 percentage points).



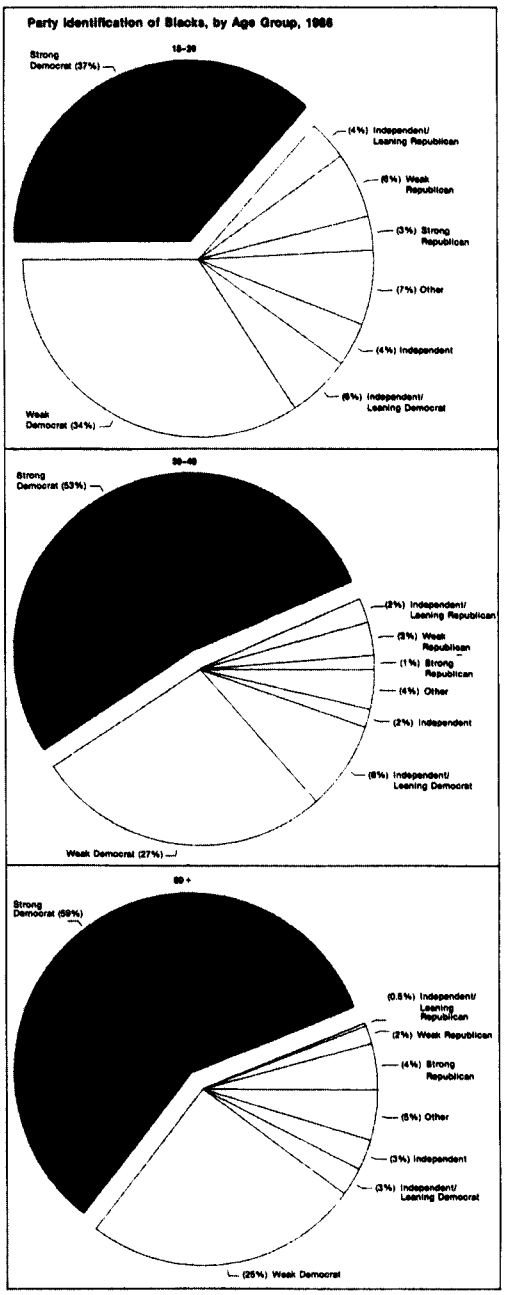
The Post-Civil-Rights Generation

Younger blacks are especially less likely to identify themselves as strong Democrats: only 37 percent of blacks under 30 do so, compared to more than 50 percent of blacks over 30. (See pie charts on this page.) Moreover, although the differences are very small, it appears that blacks under 30 are more likely than blacks over 30 to identify themselves as Republicans. While 10 years ago, half of all black Republicans were over 50 years old, in the 1986 survey half of all black Republicans are under 30 years old—a complete reversal.

The "generational theory" of Paul Abramson and other political scientists may help explain the differences of political opinion among blacks of different age groups. That theory posits that key events during the formative years of a generation help shape political attitudes of that age cohort in later years. As described earlier in this article, blacks aged 18-29 are more likely than older blacks to have weak ties to the Democratic party and to approve of President Reagan's job performance. What events in their lives help explain these views?

The post-civil rights generation of blacks (those 18-29) reached political maturity after the mid-1970s. Their formative years were a period of comparatively few (if any) advances in civil rights, less protest, more integration of public schools and public accommodations, and relatively more affluence among blacks than in the formative years of their parents and grandparents. Most had little or no direct experience with Jim Crow and, to a large extent, they are the immediate beneficiaries of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. They have vague, if any, recollections of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, urban riots, or the strong efforts of black Americans to secure passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, or of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society programs—all events and personalities that shaped the political attitudes of older black Americans, who experienced and vividly remember that period in American history.

Unlike the post-civil rights generation, the civil rights generation (blacks 30-49) reached political maturity during the the 1950s and 1960s, a period of rapid social change and high salience for civil rights issues among blacks and other Americans. The shared experiences of the civil rights generation may explain this cohort's stronger attachment to the Democratic party and greater disapproval of a president who has been viewed as an enemy of civil rights for minority groups.



Finally, the New Deal generation (blacks 50 or older) came into political maturity before the civil rights movement and witnessed the social advances made by blacks during the 1950s and the 1960s. This cohort is likely to have lived through the Great Depression or to have been born during it. Although the New Deal offered little along the lines of a formal legislative or judicial attack on the institutions of white supremacy, some advances in the position of blacks were achieved as spin-offs from legislation designed to benefit the lower income strata generally. This generation of blacks was largely converted to the Democratic party—and has remained staunchly loyal to it. Of all age groups, they least approve of the way Reagan is handling his job as president. ■

JCPS PARLEY CLARIFIES ISSUES IN CONTROVERSIAL SET-ASIDE DEBATE

A one-day JCPS conference on minority set-asides brought together well over 100 people, including public officials, entrepreneurs, scholars, government administrators, and journalists. The purpose of the conference was to spur a critical examination of set-asides within the community of affirmative action supporters.

Among the speakers were Drew S. Days III, a Yale law professor and former assistant attorney general who successfully argued the Supreme Court case which established the constitutionality of set-asides, and retiring Congressman Parren Mitchell, who has played a leading role in the enactment of federal set-aside legislation. Days favored taking a second look at set-aside laws to ensure that they were narrowly tailored to withstand constitutional scrutiny.

During his luncheon address Congressman Parren Mitchell cast the debate in terms of economic empowerment. He said that opponents of set-asides who charge reverse discrimination were opposed to set-asides precisely because they were succeeding.

Also speaking at the conference was Robert Suggs, a senior research associate at JCPS, who noted that set-asides would have to be maintained for several decades if they were to be effective.

A full conference report will appear in a future issue of *Focus*.

JCPS DISTINGUISHED SCHOLARS PROGRAM: APPLICATIONS INVITED

The Joint Center is now accepting applications for its third annual Distinguished Scholars competition. The program is funded by a grant from the MacArthur Foundation and enables outstanding scholars and public policy analysts to spend up to one year in residence at the Joint Center in Washington, D.C., to conduct research on issues of fundmental importance to black Americans. A maximum stipend of $60,000 will be given to the scholar selected for the year.

The Joint Center is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan, public policy research institution. Its research covers three broad areas—economic policy, social policy, and political participation. The Joint Center conducts demographic studies and maintains an extensive data bank on the social, economic, and political characteristics of black Americans.

The scholar selected will have great flexibility in planning a program of activities for the fellowship year. She/he will be expected to complete at least one major piece of publishable research on a topic of mutual interest to the scholar and the Joint Center.

Applicants for 1987-88 should submit a curriculum vitae and a statement of no more than 2,500 words describing the project to be completed during their stay at the Joint Center and the ways in which their interests relate to the Joint Center's work. Applicants should arrange to have two letters of support for the project sent to the Joint Center, indicating the candidate's ability to bring the work to successful completion.

Applications must be postmarked no later than December 5, 1986. The award will be announced early 1987.

For more information write Distinguished Scholars Program, Joint Center for Political Studies, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20004; or call (202) 626-3562. ■

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