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Special Election Issue: A Final Look at Campaign '88

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Perspective

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Voting Is an Exercise of Power

In last month's Perspective column, "Not Voting: An Option Blacks Cannot Afford," I urged readers to publicly reject the ill-conceived notion of not voting in the November elections. Staying away from the polls would be an insult to our common sense and our heritage and an affront to the memory of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and to blacks' efforts over the years to become power players in the political arena. We continue with that theme in this month's issue, as this is the last opportunity to emphasize the importance of voting on November 8.

Much of the Joint Center's analysis of this election year has focused on the presidential campaign. But the names of the candidates vying for the Oval Office will not be the only ones to appear on the ballots. And we would be remiss if we failed to underscore the importance of congressional, statewide, and local elections.

Many of these contests will be close and hard fought. Many of the candidates in these races are black men and women seeking to continue their leadership as incumbents in Congress, in state legislatures, and on city councils and school boards. Others are taking their first steps into elective office.

Both partisan and nonpartisan elections will require thoughtful choices between candidates. Many ballots will address specific issues like referenda on tax levies to raise revenues for education, housing, and health facilities, on the banning of handguns, and on school desegregation.

When some voters say, "My one vote doesn't count," or contend that "it really doesn't matter who gets elected anyway," they are forsaking their chance to influence not only the nation's direction but the direction policies will take in their local communities as well.

Your vote does make a difference. The election of Alex Williams, the first black state's attorney in Prince George's County, Maryland, has made a difference. Williams was the first state's attorney to establish a means by which those complaining of the excessive use of force by police could seek a fair hearing. Mayor Jessie Rattley of Newport News, Virginia, the first black to serve as chief executive in that city, which is 31 percent black, is another who has made a difference. She played a major role in the economic development of her city's black community. Mayor Unita Blackwell, of Mayersville, Mississippi, the first black female mayor in that state, has also made a difference in this predominantly black town by providing city assistance to low-income residents and senior citizens. And the 1986 election of Mississippi Congressman Mike Espy has made a difference to the thousands of blacks in his heavily rural district. The first black Mississippian to serve in Congress since the days of Reconstruction, Espy has helped his constituents in many ways, including securing federal housing loans and grants for low-income and elderly residents.

Your vote also makes a difference in the selection of white public servants whose performance in office has an impact on our communities.

Voting is an exercise of power. In a democratic society power is a trust. Those who have it are accountable for exercising it as well as for their failure to exercise it. ■

Eddie N. Williams

PRESIDENT

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The Supreme Court: Which Way on Civil Rights?

A Shifting High Court Majority Casts Uncertainty on the Future of Constitutional Protections

by Frank R. Parker

As the Supreme Court reconvened in October, the civil rights community was still reeling from the Court's announcement last April that it was reconsidering its 1976 *Runyon v. McCrary* decision. The *Runyon* ruling had expanded the protections against private racial discrimination established by the 1866 Civil Rights Act. The Court's surprise order in the *Patterson v. McLean Credit Union* case jeopardizes the 12-year-old precedent established by the *Runyon* decision, which civil rights litigants had come to rely on.

The decision to reconsider *Runyon*—something that no one had requested, not even the Reagan administration Justice Department—raises serious concerns about the future of the Supreme Court's enforcement of civil rights protections. Coming when it did, that decision was a shock to the civil rights community, which has enjoyed a string of judicial triumphs over the past seven years.

Indeed, as a result of vigorous resistance by civil rights forces, the Reagan administration has been largely unsuccessful in implementing its anti-civil-rights agenda through Supreme Court decisions. The Court has rejected the administration's attacks on affirmative action in employment, has struck down the administration's attempt to restore tax-exempt status to segregated private schools, has refused to condemn busing to achieve public school desegregation, and has rejected Justice Department interpretations that would weaken enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. The Supreme Court's reconsideration of *Runyon* has aroused some civil rights advocates from the false sense of euphoria that the recent series of victories had produced.

Steady Erosion of Protections

That series of victories may have masked a distinctly conservative trend in the Court—a steady erosion of some of the legal protections against discrimination which have been established over the past 24 years through legislation, executive orders, and court decisions. Some civil rights lawyers argue that this back-sliding in discrimination decisions has done little damage. In fact, the damage has been limited only because many of these cases have involved Supreme Court interpretations of federal civil rights statutes, which Congress has then amended with the effect of overturning the adverse Court decisions. Here are the most prominent examples:

- In 1976 in *General Electric Company v. Gilbert,* the Supreme Court undermined efforts to eliminate sex discrimination in the work place. The Court held that an employer's medical benefits and disability plan that excluded compensation for medical problems arising out of pregnancy and childbirth were not a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The decision was strongly condemned by women's and civil rights organizations, and two years later Congress passed the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, in effect overturning the *Gilbert* decision.
- In 1980 the Supreme Court ruled in *City of Mobile v. Bolden* that at-large elections in Mobile, Alabama, which excluded blacks from election to city council seats, were unlawful only if the plaintiffs could prove they were adopted or maintained with a racially discriminatory intent. Proof of discriminatory intent, the Court held, was required by both the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The *Mobile* decision evoked a firestorm of protest among legal scholars and civil rights advocates. Critics pointed out that discriminatory intent is difficult to prove and that the justices themselves could not agree on a proper legal standard for determining it. Again, however, Congress took action, nullifying the impact of the *Mobile* decision in 1982 by amending the Voting Rights Act to eliminate the *intent* requirement, thereby allowing plaintiffs to show that challenged election laws have discriminatory *results*.

- The Reagan administration's most clear-cut anti-civil-rights victory in the Supreme Court came with the *Grove City College v. Bell* case. In that 1984 decision, the Court

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accepted the administration's position that civil rights statutes barring discrimination in the use of federal funds apply only to the particular program within the institution receiving the money and not to the institution as a whole. It took Congress four years to correct the Court's misinterpretation of congressional intent by passing the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1988, which in effect overturned the *Grove City* ruling.

With these decisions, among others, the Court clearly shifted toward restricting civil rights protections. And one of the most damaging trends in that direction has been its expansion of the requirement that civil rights plaintiffs prove discriminatory intent to establish a constitutional violation. This trend began even before *Mobile,* with the Supreme Court's 1976 ruling in *Washington v. Davis.* In that decision, the Court held that black job applicants challenging discrimination in hiring by the Washington, D.C., police department were required to prove discriminatory intent. This decision was not necessarily dictated by prior precedents—the Court had gone both ways on this issue in earlier decisions. In adopting the intent requirement in its *Washington* decision, the Supreme Court majority knew it was making it more difficult for victims of racial discrimination to prove a violation of federal law.

As the Reagan administration leaves office, its anti-civil-rights agenda might yet be implemented through its legacy of lifetime judicial appointments. That concern was heightened by the appointment this year of Justice Anthony Kennedy.

Few Clear-Cut Victories

Even in the cases over the last decade in which civil rights litigants have been most successful, their victories have not been as clear-cut as they had hoped. In several affirmative action cases the Supreme Court has consistently rejected the Reagan administration's argument that racial preferences are justified only to grant relief to specific identifiable victims of proven past discrimination. However, the Court has limited the use of affirmative action remedies, such as granting preferences to minorities and women in hiring and promotions, by holding that these remedies are not proper in all cases. The Court has required that these remedies must be "necessary" and "narrowly tailored" to address past discrimination. Furthermore, it has ruled that such remedies must not impose an "unacceptable burden" on white employees.

As Harvard Law School Professor Kathleen Sullivan argues in an article in the November 1986 issue of the *Harvard Law Review,* the Court's decisions have invited continued protest and litigation by whites who claim to be innocent victims of "reverse discrimination" caused by affirmative action remedies. The Court's decisions, Sullivan contends, also appear to have cast doubt on the use of affirmative action to remedy societal discrimination, to promote economic justice, and to allow employers to voluntarily pursue the goal of a more integrated work force.

An Uncertain Future

In the coming months, the Court is scheduled to confront a number of important civil rights issues, including:

- whether *Runyon v. McCrary* should be overruled *(Patterson v. McLean Credit Union)*; NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc., director-counsel Julius Chambers has argued before the Court against overturning the *Runyon* decision.
- whether a Richmond, Virginia, minority set-aside program that reserves 30 percent of all public-works contracts for minority-owned firms is constitutional *(City of Richmond v. J.A. Croson Co.)*;
- whether white fire fighters in Birmingham, Alabama, should be allowed to file separate "reverse discrimination" lawsuits challenging an existing court order aimed at gaining more promotions for blacks and women in the city's fire department *(Martin v. Wilks)*;
- whether statistical evidence of employment discrimination showing that minorities are concentrated in low-paying jobs shifts the burden of proof to the company, requiring it to justify its hiring practices for white-dominated higher-paying jobs *(Wards Cove Packing Co. v. Atonio).*

Even if the present Court does not vote to overrule important civil rights precedents, the future remains uncertain. As the Reagan administration leaves office, its anti-civil-rights agenda might yet be implemented through its legacy of lifetime judicial appointments. That concern was heightened by the appointment this year of Justice Anthony Kennedy, who sailed through the Senate confirmation process without revealing his position on most civil rights issues. Justice Kennedy had no demonstrated commitment to civil rights and, in fact, while a judge on the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals, had ruled against minorities and women in a number of civil rights cases. Kennedy's vote was critical in the 5-to-4 decision to reconsider the *Runyon* precedent, as he joined Chief Justice William Rehnquist, Justice Byron White, and the two other Reagan appointees, Justices Sandra Day O'Connor and Antonin Scalia, to form the majority. Kennedy's appointment is especially worrisome in that several important civil rights victories (including two of the last five major affirmative action cases) have been decided by narrow 5-to-4 votes, with Justice Lewis Powell (whom Kennedy replaced) as the critical swing vote.

Furthermore, it is likely that the three oldest justices, William Brennan, Thurgood Marshall, and Harry Blackmun (ages 82, 80, and 79), the pro-civil-rights core of the Court, will soon retire. The prospect of their being replaced during the next four years is unsettling. Indeed, the outcome of this election could determine the future of civil rights protections well into the next century. ■

October 1988

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POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Inside This Issue

- **Despite ongoing voter mobilization campaigns, the 1988 JCPS survey of black political attitudes and opinions reveals that black turnout may be low in this year's presidential election.**
- **Freshman Mississippi congressman Mike Espy battles to hold seat; Donald Payne set to become New Jersey's first black representative on Capitol Hill; other blacks fight for House and Senate posts.**
- **Across the Nation: Alabama court decision yields 238 new black elected officials; Prichard, Alabama, Mayor John Smith loses reelection bid; Charles Z. Smith is the first black named to the Washington State Supreme Court.**

One Last Look: Blacks and the '88 Presidential Race

As the presidential election between Massachusetts Governor **MICHAEL DUKAKIS** and Vice President GEORGE BUSH swings into its final phase, it appears that the overwhelming majority of blacks are likely to support Dukakis. The 1988 Joint Center/Gallup survey of the electorate reveals that 83 percent of the blacks who definitely plan to vote on November 8 will cast their ballots for the Massachusetts governor. Still, a number of developments may erode black support for Dukakis:

• Although our survey shows that blacks are registered at a rate that parallels that of whites, voter registration efforts have been minimal and slow to get off the ground this year. As a result, black voter turnout could be lower this year than it was in 1984. Census Bureau statistics show that since 1976, the turnout rate among blacks has tended to fall 10 percentage points below their registration rate. (For example, in 1984, blacks registered at a rate of 66.3 percent but 55.8 percent voted.)

• **Some blacks have become disaffected by what they perceive as the Democrats' "take the black vote for granted" attitude, and question whether they should vote at all. Our survey shows that only 51 percent of blacks definitely plan to vote in November. And at a voter participation workshop held during the recent Congressional Black Caucus 18th Annual Legislative Weekend, DAVID RICHARDSON, president of the National Caucus of Black State Legislators, and HERBERT REID, counsel and advisor to Washington, D.C., Mayor MARION BARRY, both suggested that blacks might do well to teach the Democrats a lesson and vote with their bottoms.**

• Then there is independent candidate **LENORA FULANI's** quest to "Dump the Duke" by winning a sizable minority of the black vote. Fulani, of the National Alliance Party, claims there is not a dime's worth of difference between Dukakis and Bush or the Democrats and the Republicans, so *both* parties need to be taught a lesson. Although Fulani is not expected to garner many votes (her own goal is one percent), even a small slippage in black support for Dukakis could deny the Democrats victory in an exceptionally close race.

To mitigate any harm these developments might bring to the Democrats, presidential contender JESSE JACKSON and a host of black groups have been more active over the past month in their support of Dukakis and in mobilizing black voters. At the Congressional Black Caucus annual awards dinner on September 17, Jackson spoke passionately on behalf of the Dukakis/Bentsen ticket. He pointed to the critical differences between the stances Dukakis and Bush have taken on the issues, including universal same-day voter registration,

the appointment of Supreme Court and other federal judicial nominees, granting statehood to the District of Columbia, financial aid for low-income college students, and sanctions against South Africa. Dukakis, he said, stood with blacks on these issues; Bush did not. Jackson also argued that blacks in America and elsewhere around the world (especially now, South Africa) had fought too long and lost too many lives in pursuit of the right to vote for them to ignore the franchise. "Vote heavy and vote Dukakis" was clearly the mandate Jackson sought to give black America.

Other efforts to increase black voter participation include the National Black Leadership Roundtable's (NBLR) "Participate in '88" tours of 14 key states where blacks can provide the margin of victory. The tours began in September with emphasis on registration and will end with a push for massive black turnout. Participating in the tours are nationally known black leaders such as entertainer Dick Gregory, human rights activist Coretta Scott King, labor leader Bill Lucy, Atlanta Mayor Andrew Young, former congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, and members of the Congressional Black Caucus. The 14 targeted states are California, Georgia, Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia.

Unlike NBLR's effort, which combines partisan and nonpartisan activities, the National Coalition on Black Voter Participation's registration and turnout drives are all nonpartisan. The Coalition is working in 29 states, which include the 14 states the NBLR is focusing on as well as Alabama, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Kansas, Massachusetts, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Washington, and West Virginia. In each state the Coalition's effort, which is known as Operation Big Vote, works through affiliations with local voter registration organizations.

Blacks in the Often Forgotten Legislative Races

Although the presidential contest has overshadowed everything else in electoral politics this year, it is not the only important race. Besides state legislative and local contests, there are important races for the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate in which blacks are candidates.

Most of the 23 incumbent black Congressmen have "safe seats." Even **HAROLD FORD** (D-Tenn.), once thought to be vulnerable because of federal indictments against him for bank, mail, and tax fraud, has no Republican opponent in the general election. He faces only a weak challenge from **ISAAC ROBINSON,** a little-known candidate who is running as an independent.

The only black congressional incumbent at risk is young (age 34) freshman Democratic Mississippian MIKE ESPY, the first black congressman from the state since Reconstruction. Espy, who represents the 2nd District of Mississippi's rural delta region, is faced with the threat of a large and unsympathetic white voter turnout in the 53 percent black district. White voters may be drawn to the polls by the state's heated U.S. Senate race in which two incumbent congressmen, eight-term House Republican whip **TRENT LOTT** and four-term Democrat **WAYNE DOWDY,** are vying for the seat of Democrat **JOHN STENNIS** who is retiring after 41 years in Congress. A referendum, sponsored by Democratic Gov. Ray Mabus, to decide whether county boards of supervisors should have more centralized authority, is also expected to generate a large white turnout.

This potentially large white turnout may make it necessary for Espy to expand not only black voter participation but his base of white support as well. In 1986, black turnout was only 42 percent, and Espy beat white Republican incumbent **WEBB FRANKLIN** in a close contest (52 percent to 48 percent) by securing about 12 percent of the white vote. **Espy's reelection bid this year is made even more difficult by the fact that his Republican opponent, JACK COLEMAN, an attorney and corporate lobbyist, is engaging in negative campaign tactics similar to those being used in the Bush presidential campaign. Coleman has called Espy unpatriotic and weak on defense, and has tried to label him as a left-wing radical. And Mississippi's more racist past recently resurfaced when vandals carved the word "nigger" on the door of Espy's home; the guilty party or parties have not been apprehended. Ironically, this incident may actually be helping Espy. He has received a rising number of calls from whites voicing their support for him and condemning the racist act. Recent polls taken for the Espy campaign show him with support from 40 percent of white voters and 66 percent of the overall electorate. Most political observers expect Espy to win despite all the obstacles he is facing, although they expect the race to be close.**

Among likely newcomers to Congress is Newark's Democratic City Councilman **DONALD PAYNE,** in New Jersey's 10th District. Payne cleared the biggest hurdle in his campaign to become the state's first black congressman by defeating fellow Newark City Councilman **RALPH T. GRANT, JR.** (who is also black) in the June

Democratic primary. With that victory, Payne is practically assured the seat of retiring 20-term Democratic Rep. **PETER RODINO, JR.,** in the heavily Democratic and 58 percent black district. Payne enjoyed a big fund-raising edge over Grant and obtained key endorsements, including those from **RAYMOND DURKIN,** chairman of the New Jersey and Essex County Democratic parties, and Newark Mayor **SHARPE JAMES.** Payne's primary victory and solid name recognition resulted, in part, from his 1980 and 1986 campaigns against Rodino. In November, he will face black Republican **MICHAEL WEBB** of East Orange. But since there is almost no GOP presence among the district's voters, independent candidate **ANTHONY IMPERIALE,** a former state senator from Newark's Italian North Ward, is likely to draw more attention and votes than Webb. Payne is widely expected to win.

The fate of three other black candidates for Congress, **FAYE WILLIAMS** of Louisiana, **RON CRUTCHER** of Ohio, and **HELEN BARNHILL** of Wisconsin, remains less certain. Williams, a Democratic candidate for Louisiana's 8th Congressional District (Alexandria), is considered to have the best chance of the three. She won 49 percent of the district's vote in 1986 when she was narrowly defeated by Republican **CLYDE HOLLOWAY** in her bid for the open seat. This year, Williams built on her 1986 campaign base to qualify for the November runoff, and a second electoral showdown against Holloway in the majority Democratic district which is 38 percent black. She came out of the October 1 open primary ahead of three white Democrats: former Lt. Gov. **BOBBY FREEMAN,** State Sen. **J.E. JUMONVILLE,** and former Alexandria Mayor **JOHN SNYDER.** Although Williams garnered 34 percent of the vote in that primary, first-term congressman Holloway was the top vote-getter in the five-candidate field, with 43 percent. **Williams is seeking to increase black turnout and go well beyond the 27,000 white votes she won in 1986. Her campaign is better organized this year: she is working with professional media consultants and has raised more money than in 1986. Still, Holloway's incumbency will make Williams' battle an uphill one.**

Ron Crutcher was unopposed in his quest for the Republican nomination to earn a second chance to be elected to Ohio's 3rd district, which includes the declining industrial community of Dayton. He faces five-term incumbent Democrat **TONY HALL,** who defeated Crutcher in 1986. The biggest challenge for Crutcher, who won 35 percent of the vote in 1986, is to gain a larger share of votes (the district is 82 percent Democratic) and a larger Democratic share of white votes (the district is 81 percent white and only 18 percent black). But with campaign support from the likes of **OLIVER NORTH** (who is under indictment for his part in the Iran-Contra scandal), it is questionable how many votes Crutcher can attract, even among blacks.

Republican management consultant and civic leader Helen Barnhill faces slightly better prospects than Crutcher. Running against three-term incumbent Democrat **JIM MOODY** in Wisconsin's 5th District (Milwaukee), Barnhill, who won the Republican primary by 2-to-1, is mounting a serious challenge. She believes her campaign was aided by Moody's last-minute decision to drop out of the race for the U.S. Senate and instead seek to retain his seat in the House. Barnhill, a former case worker for the Milwaukee Urban League, is on the board of three colleges and a local hospital. She is well known among the district's blacks, who comprise 22 percent of it's voting-age population. Running on a platform that addresses the issues of drug abuse, education, jobs, and economic development in her region, Barnhill emphasizes that she is not a "Reaganite Republican." Barnhill's staff believes that if she can win the white Republican vote and the lion's share of the black vote, she can score an upset victory over Moody. Nevertheless, given the popularity of the incumbent, who ran unopposed in his last two campaigns, Barnhill's chances for victory are not good.

In Senate elections, two black Republicans face near-impossible odds against well known and well financed opponents. In Virginia, Rev. **MAURICE DAWKINS** is running against popular former Democratic Governor **CHARLES ROBB.** When Dawkins was nominated, the state's GOP leaders admitted it would take nothing short of a political miracle for him to defeat Robb. Since then, the Dawkins campaign has been hit by major snafus: organizational problems, ineffective fund-raising, and the lack of support from key Republicans in the state. For example, prominent black Republican Dr. **FRANK ROYALL,** noted for his work in developing the Richmond Community Hospital and Meharry Medical College, accepted a position on the finance committee of Robb's campaign. This is particularly telling, because Royall has been strongly allied with state Republican leaders, including former Governor **JOHN D. DALTON.**

Maryland's black Senate nominee, Republican **ALAN KEYES,** is seeking to garner a large share of the black vote as a part of his campaign strategy. But Keyes' methods of winning black votes are almost sure to fail. Often sounding like a professor of Reaganite ideology in his speeches, Keyes has attacked Jesse Jackson as representing "the politics of hopelessness," and he has criticized federal programs for public housing and job creation and those that serve the poor in general. Meanwhile, Keyes favors military aid to "foreign revolutionaries" such as the Nicaraguan Contras and the UNITA rebels in Angola who are armed, trained, and financed by South Africa. In this heavily Democratic state, Keyes is certainly a long shot against popular incumbent Democratic Sen. **PAUL SARBANES.**

Across the Nation

ALABAMA: The ruling that at-large elections in Alabama dilute black voter strength, issued last June by U.S. District Judge **MYRON THOMPSON**, has already borne fruit. Since Thompson's decision in Dillard v. Crenshaw County et. al., over 180 governmental jurisdictions in Alabama have been required to abandon at-large election systems. According to **JEROME GRAY**, field director of the Alabama Democratic Conference, the black political organization which filed the suit, the ruling has directly resulted in the election of blacks to many government posts for the first time, including 200 new city council members, 23 school board members, and 15 county commissioners.

In other state news, three-term Republican Mayor JOHN SMITH, of Prichard, who is also president of the National Conference of Black Mayors, lost his post in August when he finished last in a three-way election. In a September 13 runoff, MARGIE WILSON, a white real estate broker who has never held public office, narrowly defeated black health planning consultant and political newcomer JESSE NORWOOD by 121 votes. Wilson, who lost a close race to Smith in the 1984 mayoral race, garnered 38 percent of the black vote in the runoff election. Prichard is 60 percent black.

Smith's defeat appears to be tied to the hard times this town (population 38,000) has recently faced. Prichard is one of the poorest municipalities in Alabama, with nearly 40 percent of its residents living below the poverty level. Beset by financial problems over the past year, the municipal government has had difficulty paying its workmen's compensation bills. Development projects in the city have been put on hold, including the extension of its sewer system which has been held up due to violations of the state's environmental standards. Wilson, however, will be better armed to deal with the city's problems than was her predecessor. The Alabama state legislature recently passed a "strong mayor-weak council" measure, giving the mayor of Prichard new powers over the administration of city affairs, including finances and personnel appointments. Local observers suggest that Smith, operating under the old "weak mayor" system, had little power to address the city's woes.

MICHIGAN: Detroit Mayor **COLEMAN YOUNG** is expected to seek reelection next year for a fifth term in office. Young, who was first elected in 1973, begins his campaign with a massive war chest and should be a shoo-in at the polls. Nevertheless, he faces opposition from two likely challengers: **TOM BARROW**, a part owner of the CPA firm Barrow and Aldridge, and businessman **CHARLES COSTA**. Barrow, who got 39 percent of the vote in his unsuccessful race against Young in 1985, has increased his name recognition and visibility by successfully leading the fight to prevent the legalization of casino gambling, which Young had supported. Young has had other setbacks, including criticism for million-dollar cost overruns for municipal land acquisitions designed to attract new General Motors and Chrysler plants to the city. For all that the city is spending on the projects, the automobile companies are not producing enough jobs, in the opinion of some observers, to make it worthwhile. Despite these problems, Young will probably have little trouble keeping his job as mayor.

TENNESSEE: The fragility of black political gains comes to mind whenever comparisons are made between today's society and the days of Reconstruction. In many instances, political offices blacks held before the turn of the century have only recently been regained. This is the case in Shelby County (Memphis). In the 1880s, two blacks held countywide executive offices: **FRED HUNT** was the Recorder of Deeds and **F. F. CASSELS** the Collector of Port. Now, for the first time in 100 years, Shelby County, which is 42 percent black, again has a black countywide executive. On September 1, 1988, Memphis real estate appraiser and City Councilman **MICHAEL HOOKS**, who is also the nephew of NAACP executive director **Benjamin Hooks**, was elected county tax assessor.

His victory has prompted a wide field of candidates to run for the 4th District council seat he is vacating. One candidate is his wife, **JANET HOOKS**, who while never having held office before, has played a prominent role in many local campaigns. A second candidate is **TALIB-KARIM MUHAMMAD**, a member of the Nation of Islam. Muhammad, who said his campaign "will be upbeat" and "above the Rent-A-Negro, Business-As-Usual mentality that prevails in the political arena today." Also running is **MINNERVA JOHNICAN**, the first black woman to serve on the Shelby County Commission and the first black to be elected to an at-large city council seat. She had to give up her council seat to run for mayor of Memphis last year. Among the other candidates are: Rev. **KENNETH WHALUM, SR.**, pastor of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church and a trustee of LeMoyne-Owen College, and **JOHN DEBERRY**, a film technician with a local television station, who was defeated twice before by Michael Hooks in separate attempts to win the 4th District seat.

VERMONT: University of Vermont professor DOLORES SANDOVAL's bid for Vermont's single at-large House seat was a long shot from the beginning, and it is no surprise that she was among the losers of the September Democratic primary. Local political observers note that she did not address issues of primary concern to the state's electorate and was unable to raise enough money to mount an effective campaign. While the other three candidates in Vermont's open-seat race stressed state-level issues and experience, Sandoval spent most of her campaign discussing national and international issues. All told, Sandoval raised only $15,000 and won just seven percent of the vote (blacks are less than one percent of the state's total population). The victor of the four-candidate Democratic primary was **PAUL POIRER**, the State House Majority Leader, who was endorsed by three-quarters of the Democratic legislators.

WASHINGTON: University of Washington Law School Professor Emeritus **CHARLES Z. SMITH** was appointed by Gov. **BOOTHE GARDNER** to the State Supreme Court on July 13. Smith had become the first black judge in the state when he was named to the municipal court in Seattle 23 years ago. He made his mark nationally when, as a special assistant to Attorney General **ROBERT KENNEDY**, he supervised the grand jury investigation of mail and wire fraud by former Teamsters Union President **JAMES (JIMMY) HOFFA** in the early 1960s. Hoffa was eventually convicted. Gov. Gardner's press secretary, **DICK MILNE**, said Smith's racial background "was a factor" in his appointment, but added that "it was not an overriding factor. Our preference was to find a minority if we could, but the number one criterion always was the best person for the job." Judge Smith downplayed the importance of being the first black justice of the highest court in the state. **"I am not one who particularly cares about being the first anything," he said. However, the 61-year-old Smith added that if his appointment made him a role model "then I think it is worthwhile."**

No Income Gains for Blacks

Census Data Show That the Income Gap Between Black and White Families Grew From 1986 to 1987

by Drs. Joyce E. Allen and Margaret C. Simms

One of the themes of the fall presidential campaign is economic opportunity: both Vice President George Bush and Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis are promising more and better jobs if they are elected president. This issue, while important to all Americans, is especially vital to blacks. Although they may have accrued some benefits from the economic expansion of the last six years, blacks are nevertheless underrepresented in the higher-paying jobs currently available (see *Focus*, April 1988, "Black Youth Face an Uncertain Jobs Future"). This has been confirmed by data recently released by the U.S. Bureau of the Census, which show that there was practically no growth in the incomes of black families from 1986 to 1987, and that black families were worse off relative to whites in 1987. Over that one-year period, white families had real income gains while black families did not. This remained true regardless of family structure, the number of earners in their households, or whether the head of the household worked a full-time job year-round.

Gap Between Blacks and Whites Grows

The median income for black families in 1987 as measured in real income (income adjusted for inflation) was $18,098, virtually unchanged from 1986 (all money figures expressed in constant 1987 dollars). The comparable figures for whites were $32,274 in 1987 and $31,935 in 1986. Thus, the ratio of black to white incomes fell from 57.1 percent in 1986 to 56.1 percent in 1987. And black families of every structural type lost ground when compared to their white counterparts. The black-white ratio declined for families headed by married couples, including those where the wife was in the labor force, and for families headed by a single female householder (see table 1).

The stagnation in black family income during this period occurred at all income levels, with families at both the upper and the lower ends of the income spectrum failing to gain. In fact, the proportion of black families with

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Table 1. Median Family Income[a] and Black-White Income Ratio, by Family Type, 1987 and 1986

	1987			1986		
	White	Black	Ratio	White	Black	Ratio
All Families	$32,274*	$18,098	56.1%	$31,935	$18,247	57.1%
Married Couple	35,295*	27,182	77.0	34,647	27,554	79.5
Wife in Labor Force	41,023*	33,333	81.3	40,396	33,116	82.0
Wife not in Labor Force	27,394	16,822	61.4	27,386	17,379	63.5
Male Head[b]	26,230	17,455	66.5	27,206	19,415	71.4
Female Head[b]	17,018*	9,710	57.1	16,290	9,640	59.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Money Income and Poverty Status in the United States: 1987* (Advance data from the March 1988 *Current Population Survey*), P-60, No. 161 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1988)

[a]Expressed in 1987 dollars.
[b] No spouse present.
* Significantly different from 1986 income level.

Dr. Allen is a senior research associate and Dr. Simms is a deputy director of research at the Joint Center.

Table 2. Poverty Rates for Families and Individuals, by Race, 1987 and 1986

	1987		1986	
	White	Black	White	Black
All Families	8.2%	29.9%	8.6%	28.0%
Married Couple	5.2	12.3	5.6	10.8
Male head[a]	10.3	24.3	8.8	24.9
Female head[a]	26.7	51.8	28.2	50.1
Individuals	10.5	33.1	11.0	31.1
Under age 18[b]	15.4	45.6	15.8	43.0
Age 65 and over	10.1	33.9	10.7	31.0
In female headed families	26.4	53.8	27.9	52.9
Under age 18	45.8	68.3	46.3	67.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Money Income and Poverty Status in the United States: 1987.* P-60, No. 161.

[a] No spouse present.
[b] All figures for population under age 18 refer to related children only.

annual incomes of less than $2,500 rose from 4.4 percent to 5 percent. This marks the second consecutive year in which the proportion of black families at the very bottom of the income range increased. However, there was a slight decline in the percentage of white families in this income range, from 1.4 percent in 1986 to 1.3 percent in 1987.

At the upper ends of the income range, the proportion (and absolute numbers) of black families with incomes from $25,000 to $49,999 declined. In 1987, 26.4 percent of families were in this category, compared to 27.5 percent a year earlier. Meanwhile, the proportion of black families with real income of $50,000 and above remained constant at 9.5 percent last year, the first year since 1982 that the proportion of black families in this income range did not grow. During this period, the proportion of white families with incomes from $25,000 to $49,999 rose from 39 percent to 39.3 percent while the proportion with incomes of $50,000 and above climbed from 23.7 percent to 24.4 percent.

One reason for the large income gap between black and white families is that white householders are more likely to work full-time, year-round; naturally, these families have the highest incomes of all. In 1987, only 46 percent of black families had a household head who was employed full-time, year-round, compared to 60 percent of white families. Census data further indicate that of all black families with at least one householder working full-time, year-round, only those with four or more earners (just 2 percent of all black families) enjoyed significant income gains. Families with fewer than four earners gained very little.

Rising Poverty Levels

The 1987 census data also show that blacks are slipping further into poverty. The already high and still growing rate of poverty (the proportion of the population with incomes below the poverty line) among blacks indicates that the U.S. economy, even during the current recovery, is failing to bring a large proportion of black adults into expanding job markets.

Blacks, whose poverty rate rose two percentage points, from 31 percent in 1986 to 33 percent in 1987,* account for approximately 12 percent of the U.S. population but comprise nearly one-third of those in poverty. During that time, the poverty rate for whites declined slightly, from 11 percent to 10.5 percent (see table 2). An additional 9 percent of the black population lived at a level near poverty in 1987, their incomes being within 125 percent of the poverty line; this is approximately twice the percentage for the white population.

The poverty rate for black children remained high: 46 percent for those under 18 years and 68 percent for those in families headed by women. These rates were up slightly from the previous year. The poverty rate for white children, however, decreased slightly, from 15.8 percent to 15.4 percent, widening the gap between the races. Black children are now three times as likely as whites to live in poverty.

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Table 3. Poverty Rates by Work Experience of Householder, by Race and Family Type, 1987

	All Families		Female-Headed Families	
	White	Black	White	Black
Total	8.2%	30.4%	26.7%	51.8%
Worked	5.4	17.5	16.6	33.4
50-52 weeks	2.9	8.2	7.0	16.0
Full time	2.4	6.4	5.0	12.3
1-49 weeks	16.2	41.3	40.8	65.3
Did not work	18.4	58.2	46.3	77.3
Percent of Householders				
Who worked	78.3	68.4	66.0	58.0
Full time[a]	60.2	46.2	41.4	34.2
1-49 weeks	14.9	19.1	18.7	20.5
Who did not work	21.7	31.6	34.0	42.0

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Money Income and Poverty Status in the United States: 1987.* P-60, No. 161.

[a] Full time, year-round.

The amount of income required for a family to be designated above the poverty line is calculated according to family size. In 1987, a family of four was considered to be in poverty if its annual income was below $11,611.

After the Zero Option

Recently Released Joint Center Study Examines Three Defense Policy Options Available to the Next President

The treaty to eliminate U.S. and Soviet intermediate nuclear force (INF) weapons, activated last June in Moscow by President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev, opens a new set of questions about the future of U.S. defense policy in Europe and the future of international arms control. Known as a "zero option" agreement because it eliminates a whole class of nuclear missiles, the INF treaty calls for the Soviets to destroy twice as many weapons as the United States. But the treaty also brings into sharper relief the numerical advantages that the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies retain in conventional non-nuclear air and ground forces.

In *After the Zero Option,* a new publication of the Joint Center for Political Studies, Dr. Edwin Dorn explores three alternatives (discussed below) from which the next administration might choose in this redefined strategic environment. Dr. Dorn is a deputy director of research at the Joint Center; his study was supported by the Kettering Foundation and the Ford Foundation.

- **"Zero-Plus": Shoring Up Conventional Strength.** One possible approach to defense policy, which Dorn calls the "zero-plus" option, would compensate for the loss of nuclear capability by upgrading the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) conventional forces. However, the United States can increase its own NATO contingent only by increasing the total size and cost of its armed forces, or by transferring units to Europe from other parts of the world. This creates a dilemma, since doing the former would exacerbate the guns-versus-butter trade-off in U.S. federal budget policy, while transferring troops would reduce the nation's ability to meet other strategic commitments.

- **No-First-Use: A Remedy for the Hair-Trigger Problem.** A second option, widely known as "no-first-use," would alter NATO's military forces and tactics so that Western Europe could be defended without early reliance on nuclear weapons. This approach was first proposed by a bipartisan group of defense experts in 1982 and recently resurfaced as one of Jesse Jackson's 1988 presidential campaign issues. Proponents argue that it would reduce Soviet fears—and consequently the danger of hair-trigger nuclear exchanges—stemming from NATO's current strategic plan. NATO envisions the possibility of initiating a limited nuclear exchange if it is overwhelmed in an attack by conventional Warsaw Pact forces.

Both of the 1988 presidential candidates, Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis and Vice President George Bush, have rejected the no-first-use approach. One argument raised against it is that no-first-use would remove a proven deterrent to Soviet conventional aggression in Western Europe. But Dorn suggests that the no-first-use option is worth reconsideration, especially since there is a great deal of "uncertainty over whether there can be such a thing as a limited nuclear exchange."

- **"Zero-Minus": Drawing Back From Europe.** A third alternative examined in the study is the "zero-minus" option, the use of the INF treaty as "the first step toward a reduced U.S. military commitment to Western Europe." The United States' massive budget deficit is one factor that may cause increasing numbers of Americans to press for the removal of some of the 300,000 U.S. military personnel now stationed in Europe. Two major questions for U.S. policy makers, according to Dorn, will be whether to resist those domestic pressures or accept their inevitability, and how to work out with America's European allies a reduction in the U.S. burden in Europe.

- **Other Options.** Absent from Dorn's list of likely new directions are two of the most commonly discussed approaches—the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) and the Reagan administration's Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START). "Whatever may be the merits of SDI in the long run," Dorn writes, "the technology needed to make it work will not be developed for at least a decade, if ever."

As for START, Dorn points out that even its proposed 50 percent bilateral reduction in bombers, submarine-launched ballistic missiles, and intercontinental ballistic missiles would still leave the two superpowers with enough nuclear weapons to annihilate each other: "Thus, deterrence based on mutual assured destruction, the strategy which has dominated U.S.-Soviet relations since the 1960s, would not be greatly affected by START."

According to Eddie N. Williams, president of the Joint Center, *"After the Zero Option* is a valuable primer that gives Americans sufficient background to ensure that the next occupant of the Oval Office has thought about the nation's defense choices and is willing to make the tough decisions." ■

This review was prepared by Marc DeFrancis, senior editor at the Joint Center.

Copies of *After the Zero Option: Now That Reagan and Gorbachev Have Agreed, What Happens Next?* can be purchased for $3.95 each through the Publications Clerk, Joint Center for Political Studies, 1301 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Suite 400, Washington, D.C. 20004; telephone 202-626-3500.

No Income Gains for Blacks

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The difference in family structure partly explains this racial disparity. A much higher proportion of black children are living in households headed by single women. When one adjusts the figures to account for that fact, the gap does become smaller, but it remains significant, probably due to differences between the job opportunities available to black and white women. Generally, white women have access to more and higher-paying jobs because of differences in education and work experience and because of employer discrimination against minorities. In 1987, only 34 percent of all black women heading households actually worked full-time, year-round, compared to 41 percent of their white counterparts (see table 3, p. 6).

A comparison of 1986 and 1987 data on work experience shows that the growing poverty rate among black families is related to the growing gap between part-time wages and the cost of living. While the poverty rate held steady for other categories, it rose from 37 to 41 percent for black families in which the head worked only part of the year. For female-headed families, the rate increased from 60 percent to 65 percent. If these workers were to move from part-time to full-time employment and gain better job opportunities and better access to child care, the gap between the welfare of white children and that of black children would narrow significantly.

Closing the Gap

Blacks still have far to go before they achieve income parity with whites. Moreover, the data show that economic expansion alone is not sufficient to close the gap. Full-time, year-round employment in higher paying occupations will be a prerequisite for black advancement. Special attention should be paid to single black women who head households, since their children have the highest poverty rates of any group in the nation. The long-term effects on children raised in poverty are likely to lead to deeper poverty and greater social problems in the future. Black voters should weigh these issues carefully as they look toward a new presidential administration. ■

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