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FOCUS

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Fighting for the Party of Lincoln

Lugenia Gordon and the Freedom Republicans Struggle for Fair Representation of African Americans in the Republican Party

Will New Training Initiatives Help Blacks?

Congress Considers One-Stop Service Centers in Consolidating Employment Training Programs

The Grim Economics of Violence

Violence in Urban Communities Has Increased as Job Opportunities Have Declined, and Illicit Commerce in Drugs and Guns Has Expanded

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER®

Perspective

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The Cost of Voter Apathy Is Too High

While campaigning door-to-door for Congress in a midwestern city, a Christian Coalition candidate advocated the banning of books in school libraries. One resident who happened to be a teacher and a lifelong Republican inquired specifically which books he would ban. Although the candidate wasn't certain which volumes should be removed from library stacks, he held firm to his position that some books should be outlawed. But other contestants for elected office from the radical right do have lists of books they would ban, including the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* and *The Grapes of Wrath*, for example.

Book banning, however, is only part of the agenda of radical right-wing groups that have become increasingly politically active in the last decade. The most well organized and best funded is the 1.4 million-member Christian Coalition, led by televangelist Pat Robertson who was a 1988 Republican presidential candidate. These groups are using the electoral process in an attempt to turn the clock back 40 years on affirmative action and the right of women to make reproductive choices. The agenda of many of these right-wing organizations is to attack health care reform as "socialized medicine," to attack the crime prevention provisions of the recently passed crime bill as "pork barrel" legislation, and to attack public education for not permitting prayer in schools. Much of what these groups are after is antithetical to some of our most cherished American values and anathema to the interests of African Americans.

The radical right is seeking to achieve its ends through the conventional democratic process. Like other groups across the political spectrum, they are recruiting allies and registering voters in political campaigns that employ direct mail, videos, television, and radio broadcasts in numerous precincts nationwide. The Christian Coalition is backing hundreds of candidates for offices at every level of government. Their tactics don't all reflect "good ole" American politics, however. Some of their methods are laced with stealth and misdirection as strategists have instructed candidates to conceal their real agendas during the campaign but to act on them once they get elected. Pat Robertson articulated his vision for action this way: "With the apathy that exists in our nation, a small, well-organized minority can influence the selection of candidates of both parties to an astonishing degree....Now it is our turn to monopolize the system...."

This surge of political activism from ultraconservatives has raised the stakes for everybody in this election, and especially for minorities whose interests are generally not served by right-wing public policy proposals. In this environment, voter apathy can be suicidal.

There are other good reasons to vote in the 1994 off-year elections. There will be a battle over the control of the U.S. House of Representatives and over its heart and soul. The Republicans, including some right-wing candidates, are expected to gain House seats this year. The unanswered question is, how many? A similar battle will decide whether or not the Democrats will hang on to their fragile lead in the U.S. Senate. At the state and local levels, there are good candidates who deserve support and other candidates who deserve to be defeated.

Frankly, my personal opinion is that any African American who fails to vote is betraying the thousands of black and white Americans who, for two centuries, stood up, marched, fought, and in some cases made the ultimate sacrifice to secure the right to vote for *all* Americans. This is a failure we cannot afford. The cost of voter apathy is too high. ■



PRESIDENT

FOCUS

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Fighting for the Party of Lincoln

Lugenia Gordon and the Freedom Republicans Struggle for Fair Representation of African Americans in the Republican Party

by Britta W. Nelson

Fighting against the odds is nothing new in Lugenia Gordon's family. The granddaughter of a slave and a Creek Indian likes to recall how her grandmother's tribe freed her grandfather by raiding the plantation of his white owner in the 1840s. At age 73 Gordon continues her family history of fighting racial injustice. For the past 15 years she has been involved in a struggle with the Republican Party over the issue of black representation within the party structure. This month, a lawsuit, which Gordon hopes will result in improved opportunities for African Americans in the GOP, goes to the United States Supreme Court.

This fight began in the late 1970s when Gordon, a Republican for over 40 years, became concerned about the underrepresentation of African Americans in the Republican National Committee (RNC) and the national party conventions. In 1979 she founded the Freedom Republicans, Inc. and became its first president. The goal of this New York-based, interracial organization was to open up the GOP's power structure to blacks and other minorities. For over a decade the Freedom Republicans pleaded with the all-white party leadership to be more inclusive, arguing that the party's rules governing delegate apportionment to its national conventions as well as its process of selecting members to the Republican National Committee discriminate against African Americans and other minorities.

Suit and Appeal

The origins of the GOP's practices that have resulted in racial exclusion began in 1916 when the Republican Party altered its convention delegate apportionment formula which granted each state party the number of delegates that were proportional to the state's population (a system that is still being used by the Democratic Party). The substitute system no longer relied solely on population figures, but instead rewarded states that showed a strong popular voter turnout for a Republican candidate in the previous election with "bonus" delegates which made up 25 percent of Republican national convention votes. Since then, the Freedom Republicans claim that the selection mechanism has discriminated against racial and ethnic minorities who have been disproportionately concentrated in the urban areas of the more populous states throughout this century.

African Americans have also been essentially excluded from the ranks of the Republican National Committee which has only four blacks among its 165 voting members (one from the District of Columbia and three from the Virgin Islands). Each state and the five territories are entitled to three members on the Committee. By contrast, the Democratic National Committee's black membership is about 20 percent. Throughout the 1980s the Freedom Republicans appealed repeatedly to the party leadership to redress these issues.

The group has also made several recommendations to improve the system of selecting convention delegates and members of the Republican National Committee. For example, they would expand the RNC from 165 members to 538, under a proportional system that parallels the Electoral College, which would raise New York's representation from three to 33 and California's from three to 54. After holding a series of closed hearings, the Republican Party leadership officially rejected this proposition concluding that there was nothing wrong with their delegate allocation process as it related to minority participation. Gordon exclaimed that the leaders of the GOP "are not going to tell me that I can't have a seat in the party that was founded by former slaves and abolitionists."

Frustrated, in December of 1991, Gordon and the Freedom Republicans filed an official complaint to the Federal Election Commission (FEC), urging the commission to terminate funding of the Republican National Convention. They charged that the party's discriminatory practices in selecting convention delegates and members to the RNC violated Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which prohibits discrimination in any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. The two major political parties received substantial tax dollars from the FEC, about $11 million each, to run their 1992 national conventions.

When the complaint was rejected by the FEC, the Freedom Republicans sued the commission, and on April 7, 1992, Judge Charles Richey of the U.S. District Court of the District of Columbia ruled in their favor. He ordered the FEC to issue and enforce clear regulations forbidding any form of racial bias by either party. However, the Freedom Republicans' victory was short-lived.

On January 18, 1994, the Federal Appeals Court reversed the lower court's ruling and dismissed the Freedom Republicans' complaint holding that the Freedom Republicans "lacked standing to advance its claim" under Article 3 of the Constitution. The court reasoned that the Freedom Republicans must prove that federal funding caused the discrimination and that withdrawing the funds would redress the problem.

(Continued on page 4)

Ms. Nelson, a visiting scholar at the Joint Center, is an instructor of American History at the University of Munich in Germany.

Freedom Republicans

(Continued from page 3)

Her disappointment with the decision did not deter Gordon. On June 18, 1994 the Freedom Republicans filed an appeal before the Supreme Court of the United States. After the Court convenes this month, it will decide whether it will hear the case.

I Could Never Be a Democrat

Born in Alabama on May 12, 1921, Gordon witnessed how white southern Democratic politicians disenfranchised over 90 percent of all African Americans by using poll taxes, literacy and "character" tests, grandfather clauses, and other mechanisms designed to keep black Americans from exercising their constitutional right to vote. Eventually the Democratic Party gained almost complete control of southern politics, and imposed racial segregation laws which oppressed blacks in every area of public life.

When her father died in 1939, Gordon left the South and moved to New York and registered to vote as a Republican. As she remembers: "I couldn't wait to get out of Alabama... and knowing what the Democrats had done to us I could never be a Democrat." Later, she worked as an insurance broker, married and had a daughter. At the same time, she remained active in Republican politics. The political participation of African Americans was particularly important to her, and through the 1960s she was involved with voter registration and education.

Gordon became one of the founders of the Black Women's Political Caucus (BWPC) in New York, which included Democrat Shirley Chisholm as a cofounder. (Chisholm went on to become the first black woman to be elected to the U.S. Congress.) The BWPC worked to strengthen the political power base of black women in New York by conducting regular political education classes. But in the 1970s, Gordon, who witnessed how many African Americans left the Republican Party as a result of its steady shift to more conservative politics in the 1960s, worked to restore trust in the GOP among African Americans, which had been the party of choice for the majority of black Americans until the 1930s.

In the 1960s, large numbers of southern white Democratic segregationists switched to the Republican Party because they believed that the Democratic party was getting too "liberal." These "born-again Democrats" or "Dixocrats," as she describes them, subsequently encouraged Republican leaders to further exclude blacks from the party's councils. Gordon charges that this element of the party was key to the election of Ronald Reagan, whose racially divisive policies and programs only added to the further alienation of African Americans from the party.

Gordon never stopped pushing the white party leadership to do more outreach in the black community. She believes that it is essential for black Americans to be a part of both major parties, because if they pledge their allegiance only to one, their vote will be taken for granted and that party may cease to really work in support of black interests. In her struggle to open the GOP to more African Americans, Gordon came to look upon Fannie Lou Hamer as a role model and inspiration. Hamer, a black former sharecropper from Mississippi and cofounder of the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, succeeded after a long hard battle in the 1960s not only in integrating the previously all-white Democratic Party of Mississippi, but also in making the national Democratic Party adopt regulations that would guarantee proportional representation of all minorities in the party at all levels throughout the country. "She did for the Democrats what I am trying to do for the Republicans," says Gordon, who, following in Fannie Lou Hamer's footsteps, founded the Freedom Republicans in 1979.

After 15 years of struggle, there has not been much progress toward increasing black representation in the GOP. Even if the U.S. Supreme Court rules in her favor, Gordon knows that chances for a major change in attitude among the GOP's party leadership are slim. She charges that they have invested much more energy over the past years in trying to get her out of the party than in attracting other African Americans to join.

The Party of My Ancestors

Questions frequently posed to Gordon are: Why does she keep on struggling for the inclusion of African Americans into a party that has constantly rebuffed and disappointed her? Why doesn't she simply leave the GOP, especially since her views on major issues diverge from conservative Republican dogma? For example, she is Catholic, and while she does not personally approve of abortion, she thinks the government has no right to make reproductive decisions for women. Gordon favors affirmative action but opposes capital punishment and was against the North American Free Trade Agreement enacted by Congress last year. She supported the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Brady Bill, and the Motor Voter Bill.

But Gordon, who is a firm believer in the two-party system, has an allegiance to the Republican Party that goes far beyond disagreements over current political issues. She considers the GOP "the party of my ancestors, the party of Abraham Lincoln, William Lloyd Garrison, and Frederick Douglass," and points out that the three abolitionists are featured in the Freedom Republicans logo. "I will not let those people push me out—I will stay in there giving them hell," declares the inexhaustible president of the Freedom Republicans. "As long as I live and breath, I will remain, Lugenia Gordon, a Republican—and I will die one!"

Whatever the outcome of the Freedom Republicans lawsuit, Lugenia Gordon will not relent in her challenge of the Republican Party, and will never give up her hope of seeing African Americans come back to "the party of Lincoln." Her struggle probably won't stop with her. Gordon has a 16-year-old granddaughter who is named after her and seems to have inherited the old family spirit of fighting against the odds. Her granddaughter is one of the youngest members of the Freedom Republicans and has assured her: "Grandma, don't worry. When you go, I will carry on the fight, and they'll still have a Lugenia Gordon to deal with."

October 1994

POLITICAL TRENDLETTER

Inside This Issue:

- Right-wing groups step up efforts to censor textbooks and teaching materials in public schools.
- The Center for Defense Information says deeper cuts in military spending can create millions of new jobs.
- The growing number of senior citizens is an underutilized reserve of potential volunteers for community service.
- Across the Nation looks at Audrey Rowe's candidacy for lieutenant governor in Connecticut, Marion Barry's mayoral primary victory in the District of Columbia, and Charles Rangel's victory over Adam Clayton Powell IV in a New York congressional primary.

Censorship of Textbooks Reaches an All-Time High

Efforts by a variety of groups to remove books from classrooms and library shelves and censor teaching materials in public schools reached an all-time high during the 1993-1994 school year, according to the recently released report, *Attack on the Freedom to Learn*. The report, an annual survey of censorship in public education, was compiled and published by People for the American Way (PFAW), a 300,000-member nonpartisan constitutional liberties organization based in Washington, D.C. Attacks on materials of all kinds are reported in the survey, including textbooks, novels, literature anthologies, popular and literary magazines, school newspapers, health and sex education materials, films, and even student-performed plays. The report cited 462 challenges, the highest number in the 12-year history of the survey, though PFAW is quick to point out that these reported cases merely scratch the surface.

Three hundred and seventy-five of the 462 incidents were cases of attempted censorship—demands made to remove or restrict the use of curriculum or library materials for all students—an 8 percent increase over last year. The survey notes that 46 percent of those 375 cases were attempts to censor books or magazines in public libraries, material that is therefore not required reading. Perhaps the most disturbing finding of the report was that four out of 10 of the censorship efforts were successful. "These challenges most clearly betray the censors' intent, or at least their failure to grasp the nature of the educational process" which should encourage critical thinking and a respect for the opinions of others, the PFAW report asserts. Would-be sensors "see libraries not as places where students can reach beyond the curriculum and explore...but as places where mischief can occur."

Reported incidents of censorship included complaints from individual parents, church and community groups, and school boards. Complaints were made primarily on the basis of sexual content, offensive language, or religious objections. The survey found that 22 percent of all reported incidents were based on complaints about "anti-Christian" or "satanic" materials from the Christian right or other groups affiliated with conservative religious organizations. For example, the Christian Coalition, based in Clinton, Missouri, objected to **ALDOUS HUXLEY**'s *Brave New World* on the grounds that the novel "did not teach family values." The Citizens for Excellence in Education, in Ocala, Florida, called for the banning of a self-esteem program from a public school on the grounds that the program's curriculum was "New Age" and used "mind control" techniques.

Printed materials dealing with homosexuality or human sexuality in general were also attacked. Sex education materials were frequent targets. In two cases, censors entered school libraries, searched the computer catalogs for books entered under the heading "homosexuality," and made complaints about whatever titles appeared without reviewing the material. **MAYA ANGELOU**'s *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* was attacked as pornographic. Some of the works challenged for their objectionable language are classics like *Of Mice and Men* by

JOHN STEINBECK and *The Catcher in the Rye* by **J. D. SALINGER**. At least one group found the *Merriam-Webster Collegiate Dictionary* repugnant for the language it contained.

Not all challenges came from right-wing groups. A small number of complaints (about six percent) came from black, Native American, and other minority groups upset about the portrayal of their people. These groups attempted to ban the musical Peter Pan, the *Little House on the Prairie* series by **LAURA INGALLS WILDER**, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by **MARK TWAIN**, and even *The Complete Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm*.

According to the survey, attempts to censor materials were successful in 158 cases, or 42 percent, resulting in the books being either removed or restricted from libraries or classrooms. The survey also found that educators were harassed, and in some cases fired, as a result of censorship challenges. One high school literature teacher, in Santee, California, was sent home for the remainder of the school year for planning to show the film "Zoot Suit" in class. The film is about a Hispanic community in East Los Angeles that is attacked by rioting white sailors during World War II. The teacher was suspended despite the fact that she followed the school district's approval policy for showing the film. In Boling, Texas, a high school teacher was warned by a school board member that her job would be in danger if she continued to include in one of her courses a book titled *The Drowning of Stephan James*, a fictionalized account of the murder of a gay man. The teacher eventually removed the book from her syllabus.

To combat attempts at censorship, People for the American Way suggests that educators and citizens' groups develop and follow a clearly written policy to address challenges to library and school materials. The organization suggests that the policy forbid the removal of materials pending review, and that materials should be treated as "innocent until proven guilty."

An effective review policy for evaluating curricular and library materials should require: (1) a formal, written complaint; (2) a clearly outlined procedure for review by a committee of parents, teachers, and school administrators; and (3) an appeal process. School administrators, school board members, teachers, and librarians should be informed of the policy and adhere to it.

People for the American Way sponsors programs and produces publications to help communities prevent and fight attempts at censorship. The organization maintains a toll-free censorship hotline number (1-800-326-7329) and distributes a technical and legal assistance guide called the Freedom to Learn Action Kit for educators and parents.

Deeper Cuts in Military Spending Can Create New Jobs

A recent issue of *The Defense Monitor* asserts that more civilian jobs can be created if Congress makes deeper cuts in military spending over the next five years. *The Defense Monitor* is published periodically by the Center for Defense Information (CDI), a nonprofit organization based in Washington, D.C., that "opposes the excessive use of federal funds for investments in weapons and policies that encourage the likelihood of war."

The CDI calls for further reductions in U.S. military spending in order to finance the creation of more public- and private-sector jobs that can better utilize the skills and knowledge of highly trained military employees and qualified Americans in other fields. As many as 6 million new jobs can be created, according to the CDI, if the federal government "adopts appropriate policies and invests part of the post-Cold War peace dividend to initiate them."

Critics of reduced military spending—including many military officials and defense contractors—argue that substantial cuts would severely damage the nation's economy and also cause a loss of much-needed technical jobs and expertise that would be difficult to replace. The CDI, however, charges that Cold War precepts still held by high-ranking Pentagon officials are no longer valid, including assumptions that the United States must be prepared to fight two major regional conflicts simultaneously, that U.S. armed forces will have little warning time to get ready for either conflict, and that in a conflict, the U.S. would have little or no help from its allies.

U.S. military spending peaked in 1987 at $304 million under President **RONALD REAGAN**. The number of military-related jobs (provided by the U.S. Defense Department and military industries) also peaked that year at 7 million. Spending has gradually declined over the last five years and the Clinton administration reduced the defense budget to $291 billion for FY94. Defense-related jobs also dropped to 5.4 million, a decrease of 23 percent. According to CDI, despite this reduction in military spending, nonmilitary civilian employment increased by more than 10 million jobs between 1987 and 1993, and the U.S. gross domestic product increased by 12 percent.

If the Pentagon continues to prepare to meet Cold War scenarios (fighting two wars simultaneously, etc.), defense appropriations could gradually decline and hover around $250 billion by 1997. However, the CDI argues that the defense budget could be reduced much further, to the $150 to $200 billion range, if the defense planner abandoned what the organization views as outmoded concepts of national security.

It asserts that if Congress further curtails military spending, the work force could be expanded to provide jobs that address the nation's more pressing domestic needs. For example, hundreds of thousands of additional teachers and health care workers could be employed. Investments in public health and environmental systems (city water, sewerage, and solid waste disposal) alone could create 2 million new jobs. The clean-up of deactivated military bases and their conversion to peaceful uses could provide another 230,000 new jobs, CDI says.

Senior Citizens Are the Future of National Service Programs

According to a report released in April by Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), "Seniors in National and Community Service," the nation's growing senior citizen population is an underutilized reserve of potential volunteers for national and community service programs. P/PV is a national nonprofit corporation that designs, manages, and evaluates social policy initiatives. The report says that currently only 100,000 older Americans, or one-quarter of one percent of the nation's total senior population, participate in a national service program. However, more than 35 percent of all seniors would be willing to contribute to a national or community service program, if they were asked to do so.

The report, which was prepared for the Commonwealth Fund's Americans Over 55 At Work Program, gives an overview of the current status of senior service volunteers and briefly evaluates the nation's three leading national service programs for seniors—the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

The nation's three national service programs for seniors are funded by the federal government. The Foster Grandparent Program pairs older adults with children and youth who are either disadvantaged or disabled. The Senior Companion Program pairs healthy seniors with frail seniors who need support and assistance. These two programs provide a tax-exempt stipend of $2.45 per hour. The Senior Community Service Employment Program provides community service jobs for older adults. This program is not tax exempt and pays the minimum wage, or up to $4.25 an hour. While these service programs are beneficial, the report argues that more can and should be done to ensure their expansion. For example, the Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs are currently operating in only a few cities. Where the programs do exist, there is a long waiting list of older adults who want to participate but cannot.

The report says that older adults are important to service programs because they are one of the nation's few resources that is increasing. According to the report, the nation's senior population is currently twice what it was in 1960, and it is expected to double again over the next 30 years. The number of baby boomers approaching retirement age will increase during the next 10 to 20 years, as well as their life expectancy rates. By the middle of the next century, senior citizens may outnumber children and youth for the first time.

Senior citizens are a largely untapped pool of experienced and skilled workers who could staff educational, health care, day care, juvenile justice, and substance abuse programs. Many seniors can donate up to 25 hours a week providing much-needed services in schools, community centers, and churches. Older adults are also often the most reliable, dependable, and responsible volunteers. But seniors also gain from the experience. The report says older adults who take part in service programs experience "increased self-esteem, feelings of health and vigor, as well as new and satisfying relationships with peers" and the young.

The report recommends that the federal government invest sufficient funds to increase the current number of senior participants from 100,000 to 150,000 over the next five years. The report says a "reasonable goal" would be to create enough service opportunities to push the number of participants in these programs to a full one percent of the total senior population, or 500,000 adults over age 65, by the year 2020. The government would have to invest $3 billion, but communities would receive an estimated 500 million hours' worth of service in return. The report also calls for alternative means of compensation for older adults who wish to receive a stipend for their work. Compensation can include service credits for higher education, health benefits, or even property tax relief for eligible seniors.

by Lisa R. Rhodes

Across the Nation

CONNECTICUT: Running on the A Connecticut Party (ACP) ticket, Joint Center Board Member **AUDREY ROWE** has entered the race for lieutenant governor, joining ACP gubernatorial candidate **EUNICE S. GROARK**, who is lieutenant governor under current Gov. **LOWELL P. WEICKER JR.** A Connecticut Party is an independent party started by Weicker four years ago. Groark chose Rowe, 47, as her running mate during the July 22 ACP convention. Groark and Rowe will be in a four-way race in November, facing former Republican Congressman **JOHN G. ROWLAND**, Democratic State Comptroller **WILLIAM CURRY**, and former state senator **TOM SCOTT** who is running as an independent conservative candidate.

Rowe most recently served as commissioner of Connecticut's Department of Social Services, overseeing a $3.2 billion budget and managing roughly 2,700 employees. From 1980 to 1988, Rowe had served as commissioner of social services for the District of Columbia's Department of Human Services. For two years following her work in the District government, she was a consultant to the Equal Opportunity Division of the Rockefeller Foundation in New York City. She also served as the human resources administrator for the city of New Haven. Groark and Rowe are the second two-woman team in the country running for governor and lieutenant governor this election season (Illinois Democrats **DAWN CLARK NETSCH** and **PENNY STEVENS** are the first).

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA: On September 13, city councilman and former mayor **MARION BARRY** emerged victorious in the Democratic mayoral primary. Barry defeated incumbent Mayor **SHARON PRATT KELLY**, Councilman **JOHN RAY**, and four other opponents in his bid to regain the job he lost after federal agents videotaped him smoking crack cocaine in a Washington, D.C., hotel room in 1990. Barry won 47 percent of the vote, outdistancing his closest competitor, Ray, who received 37 percent. Kelly garnered only 13 percent. Ray received the endorsement of *The Washington Post* in his fourth try for the office. In 1990, he won 25 percent of the vote. (He also ran for the office of mayor in 1978 and 1982.)

Four years ago, during her successful mayoral campaign, Kelly ran on the slogan, "It's time to clean house." But District voters became disenchanted with her performance. In her first year in office, Kelly was criticized for spending more than 100 days out of town making public appearances, and her unpopularity was compounded when she fired hundreds of District employees to reduce the city's budget deficit. This year, a D.C. Superior Court judge ordered the city's public housing agency be placed in receivership. And District schools were late in opening this September until court-ordered repairs of fire code violations could be addressed. Stories of extravagant expenditures on her office renovation and her use of a professional makeup artist for appearances only added to public dissatisfaction. In addition, Congress reasserted its authority to meddle in the city's affairs by rejecting the District's budget.

Despite these problems, Kelly is credited for implementing such successful new programs as a faster, more efficient ambulance system and the automation of the police department. In an attempt to stop the growing number of shootings at local high schools, she pushed for the installation of random locker searches and metal detectors at area schools.

But Barry ran on a theme of redemption, claiming that he had been rehabilitated since his six-month jail conviction. In 1992, Barry won a city council seat representing Ward 8, which encompasses Anacostia, one of the poorest areas of the city. To his credit, in the mayoral election Barry carried all but two of the District's eight wards, including the support of middle-income blacks, young voters, and the elderly. His voter registration drive was more aggressive than his competitors' and he deployed vans and cabs to transport his supporters to voting stations. Barry will meet white Republican challenger **CAROL SCHWARTZ** in the November election.

NEW YORK: Congressional powerhouse **CHARLES RANGEL** beat back a challenge from city councilman **ADAM CLAYTON POWELL IV** in the September 13 Democratic primary for the 15th congressional district seat, which includes Harlem. Powell, who was born in Puerto Rico, ran a tough race that relied on support from Harlem's Hispanic voters, but Rangel handily pushed back his challenger, winning 58 percent of the vote to Powell's 33 percent. (A third candidate, **ALBERT DAVIS**, earned nine percent of the vote.)

Rangel, 64, had won the seat 24 years ago from Powell's legendary father **ADAM CLAYTON POWELL**, JR., but the 32-year-old Powell IV, who represents East Harlem on the New York City Council, claimed throughout the campaign that he did not enter the race to regain the seat in the name of his father. "I'm not out to avenge my dad," he said. "It's just an irony of life." Rangel didn't take any chances. To manage his primary campaign, he hired veteran political consultant **BILL LYNCH**, who had run both of the mayoral campaigns of former New York mayor **DAVID N. DINKINS**, who also stumped for Rangel this year. The fourth-ranking Democrat on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee, Rangel was the principal author of the Low Income Housing Tax Credit and chaired the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control.

Will New Training Initiatives Help Blacks?

Congress Considers One-Stop Service Centers in Consolidating Employment Training Programs

by Margaret C. Simms

In recent months, media attention has focused on Clinton administration initiatives in health care and welfare reform. Little notice, however, has been taken of the President's agenda for revamping the nation's education and training systems to facilitate massive reemployment and the development of a "world-class" work force. This agenda could be of great value to African American communities which have been negatively affected by worker displacement and job loss associated with structural changes in the economy over the past 15 years.

During the past year, the administration has succeeded in getting several pieces of legislation passed, notably Goals 2000 and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act, that are designed to strengthen basic education and enhance the skill level of young people entering the labor force for the first time. The School-to-Work Opportunities Act was signed into law by President Clinton on May 4, 1994, and provides grants to states and local communities that establish secondary or postsecondary programs combining classroom academic education with worksite vocational training. The first eight states to receive implementation grants were announced in July: Kentucky, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Wisconsin. City grants and awards to high poverty areas will be announced separately.

Early in 1994, the administration turned its attention to training for the adult and out-of-school populations with the introduction of the Reemployment Act of 1994.

Under the Act, the Department of Labor (DOL) would establish a coherent employment and training system by: creating a comprehensive program for reemployment services, training, and income support for permanently laid-off workers; facilitating the formation of one-stop career centers that will serve as a common point of access to employment, education, and training information and services; developing an effective national labor market information system; and providing additional flexibility for states in payment of unemployment insurance benefits.

One-Stop Job Shopping

The administration's version of the Reemployment Act involves the consolidation of several programs for displaced workers into one comprehensive training initiative that workers could access through a "one-stop shopping" system. (Several different versions of the reemployment act have been introduced in Congress, and a total of 10 different employment and training bills had been introduced as of June 1, 1994.) One-stop shopping would offer individuals who are displaced from their jobs, and the long-term unemployed, a variety of services in one office. After an initial assessment, participants would be referred to the most appropriate program—with options ranging from job search assistance to basic education and vocational skills training.

Important questions have arisen as to the effectiveness of consolidating employment services. How many people can be served by a revamped employment service system? Would a combined program provide more effective support to those with the greatest need for employment assistance, such as blacks and other minority workers?

Labor Secretary Robert Reich argues that the combination of additional funding and cost savings derived from streamlining the delivery system will ensure that everyone

(Continued on page 6)

Table 1. Overlapping Federal Training Programs

Target group	Programs	FY 1994 proposed funding (in millions)
Veterans	18	$1,584.4
Youth	16	4,047.8
Native Americans	10	114.0
Economically disadvantaged	9	2,661.6
Dislocated workers	9	855.5
Homeless	6	244.8
Women/minorities	6	89.8
Migrants	5	92.6
Older workers	4	568.2
Refugees	4	946.8
Programs not classified *	67	13,632.2
Total	154	$24,837.7

SOURCE: U.S. Government Accounting Office, *Multiple Employment Training Programs: Overlapping Programs Can Add Unnecessary Administrative Costs* (January 1994).

* Programs not classified include those that target a geographical area but not a specific population group.

Dr. Simms is director of research programs at the Joint Center.

Training Initiatives

(Continued from page 5)

who wants service will have access to individual assistance under a reformed case management system. Evidence that consolidation would provide significant cost savings has been provided by a General Accounting Office (GAO) report. The GAO identified 154 job training programs administered by 14 federal agencies and projected to spend between $17 and $25 billion during FY 1994. Many of the programs target the same population subgroups, ranging from four programs serving refugee populations to 18 programs for veterans (see Table 1.) While the GAO did not measure either total costs spent by the federal agencies and other levels of government or the dollar amount that could be cut or redirected if programs were consolidated, it asserted that administrative savings would be substantial.

In addition to consolidation, the proposed reemployment act would provide income support for those participating in long-term training. The Job Training Partnership Act currently restricts the provision of stipends and support services such as child care and transportation during the training period, with a larger portion of funds going toward actual training costs. Without income support, training is less viable as an option for a large segment of the unemployed. Only one-quarter of the black families headed by an unemployed single parent with children contained other members of the household who had jobs. This situation precludes many of them from enrolling in long-term training programs.

What is seen as a shortcoming of the Reemployment Act is that it would only consolidate those DOL programs targeted to displaced workers. Earlier this year, a task force of the National Governors' Association (NGA) took issue with the extent of cost savings and streamlining that would come from a program that is confined to Department of Labor programs alone. The NGA argued that the consolidation and coordination would have to go beyond the Department of Labor in order to yield significant savings and better service for clients. Other programs that assist targeted populations are administered by the Departments of Agriculture, Education, and Health and Human Services. Moreover, the programs have conflicting eligibility requirements and regulations, thereby limiting the benefits of a one-stop shopping approach in terms of the cost savings and streamlined delivery at the state and local levels.

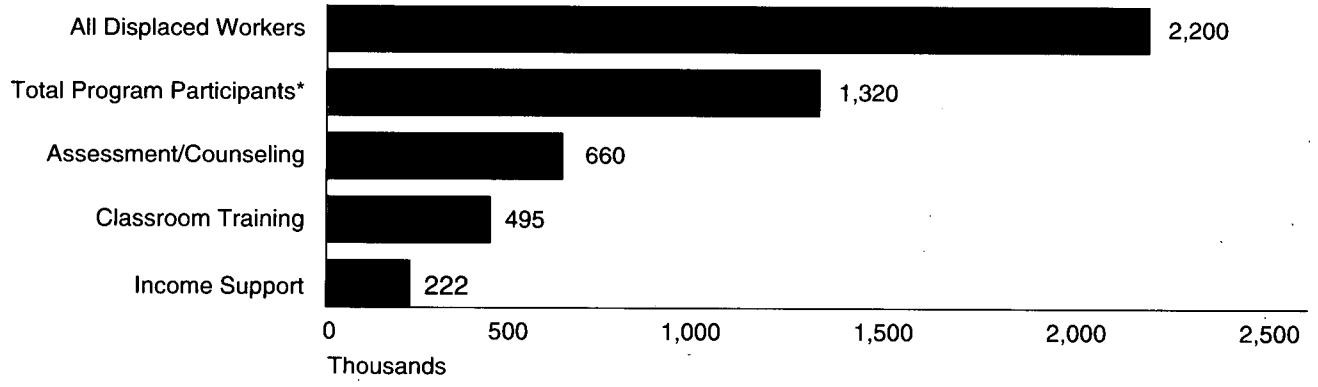
The governors' view is shared by Senator Nancy Kassebaum (R-Kan.), who has introduced the Job Training Consolidation Act as an alternative measure. Her proposed legislation calls for a major overhaul of federal training programs by providing waivers that would allow states and local communities to combine programs immediately. It also calls for the expiration of all training programs within two years unless they are consolidated or affirmatively renewed through new legislation. In June, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) joined Kassebaum in laying out basic principles of reform, but no further action on possible joint legislation was taken over the summer.

Serving the Long-Term Unemployed

Black Americans as a group are disproportionately in need of improved employment services. In 1993, black unemployment was 12.9 percent compared to 6.0 percent for whites. Approximately one-fifth of unemployed African Americans were unemployed due to job loss (layoffs or other forms of separation by employers), even though they were slightly less than 11 percent of the labor force. An additional 283,000 unemployed black adults would have preferred to have jobs, but over 21 percent of the black males and 10 percent of the black females of this group cited lack of education or training as a barrier in obtaining work. The proportion of black males identifying the need for training was up from 6 percent in 1980, reflecting a growing recognition that they need better job skills in order to compete in today's economy. By comparison, only 10 percent of unemployed white males desiring work thought they needed more education or training, up only slightly from 1980.

(Continued on last page)

Figure 1. Projected Reemployment Act Beneficiaries (Full implementation in fiscal year 2000)



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor
* Defined as those who would voluntarily participate in program services.

The Grim Economics of Violence

Violence in Urban Communities Has Increased as Job Opportunities Have Declined, and Illicit Commerce in Drugs and Guns Has Expanded

by Katherine McFate

The following article is an edited version of an address delivered to the National Campaign to Reduce Youth Violence in July by Katherine McFate, associate director of research at the Joint Center.

As we look in horror at the skyrocketing rates at which young people are assaulting and murdering one another, the question that haunts those of us over 30 is: How did we get to this place? In a decade and a half, children killing children has become commonplace in many American cities. How did this happen? How did we let it happen?

Besides horrendous homicide rates, the United States has distinguished itself from other countries by (a) its failure to invest in urban centers; (b) its failure to control the manufacture and sale of firearms; and (c) its failure to invest in children. All three contribute to escalating violence among young people.

Most urban areas suffered a severe recession in the early 1980s, losing many low-skilled and manufacturing jobs that never returned. Between 1980 and 1990, federal grants to state and local government to support the poor were cut by $26 billion, almost halved. At the same time, the federal government initiated a series of drastic budget cutbacks that took effect as private employment opportunities were drying up. Drug cartels began to aggressively market their wares in big cities, smuggling so much cocaine into the United States that prices dropped substantially. The crack trade spread quickly in poor neighborhoods where profits have been great, the competition for buyers was intense, and conflict over turf was violent.

The public policy reaction to the cocaine epidemic was to institute harsh mandatory sentences for drug offenders—especially for the sale and possession of crack. To get around these mandatory minimum sentences, adult drug dealers have recruited juveniles and incorporated them into the business of drug selling. These juveniles have been armed by the same individuals and networks that distributed drugs. Six or seven years ago, one could assume that most of the juveniles who were armed in central cities were connected with the drug trade.

Today, that is no longer the case. Drug use and drug selling have not increased much since the late 1980s, but the ownership and use of firearms has become much more common in poor neighborhoods and has spread from large central cities to small cities and even rural communities. When adolescents arm themselves, they gain status and power among their peers, and others follow suit. As the number of guns in a neighborhood increases and the age of those with access to guns falls, the risk of violence heightens. When teenage boys are armed, there will be violence.

However, the policy response to this escalating violence has not been to get serious about gun control. Between 1981 and 1991, over 43 million guns were produced for civilian sale in the U.S. Over a quarter of a million Americans own firearm licenses that allow them to ship and receive weapons across state lines—the number has increased by about 100,000 since 1980. About four out of every 10 households in America has a gun in it.

Instead of trying to curb gun sales, governments at every level have reduced the age at which youths can be tried as adults and legislated harsher mandatory sentences. In 1993, the United States incarcerated almost 950,000 offenders at an average cost of $25,000 a year per inmate with a total cost of maintaining prisons at about $25 billion a year. It costs $40,000 to $50,000 to house juveniles (because they are supposed to receive counselling and educational services). The price tag for new prison construction is up to $100,000 per cell. These are all back-end responses to crime.

Violence also generates tremendous healthcare costs. In Washington, D.C., a homicide victim who is pronounced dead costs about $7,000 (with emergency personnel, police, and autopsy costs). A gunshot victim who lives through surgery with no complications will cost about $21,000 (and most victims do not have private insurance). It is estimated that violence boosted the nation's healthcare costs by $13.5 billion in 1992.

Unfortunately, these "back-end" costs take precious funds away from the kind of early intervention programs that might seriously reduce violence: job creation, gun control, and constructive activities for young people. Our "anti-violence" policies have to focus on building communities where it's easier for a poor child to do right than wrong. A number of recent studies have documented the meager recreational and extracurricular activities available to young people in poor neighborhoods.

There are no magic bullets to reduce youth violence. We need a series of inoculations that begin with early childhood education and continue through grade school and adolescence. We have to take the guns out of these neighborhoods, so that children can be children again. Finally, we have to ensure that there are legitimate economic opportunities available to people living in poor communities that allow them to believe in the American dream again. ■

Ms. McFate is Associate Director of Research at the Joint Center.

Training Initiatives

(Continued from page 6)

A major concern is whether the new system would address the needs of blacks who are displaced or long-term unemployed? While the new one-stop career centers would be available to all individuals who are among the long-term unemployed, the consolidated programs are designed primarily to assist displaced workers—individuals who are no longer working in jobs they held for at least three years and are unlikely to return to the same or a similar occupation. Between 1987 and 1992, blacks were only 11 percent of all displaced workers. Therefore, even if they are treated equitably by the system, a substantial portion of the unemployed and those seeking training are not likely to be at the head of the training line if the proposed reemployment legislation is implemented.

The key to the improved service is the proposed case management system. A proficient case manager can minimize the time clients are out of work by correctly diagnosing their situations and matching services to the clients' needs. However, if program operators select participants on the basis of prior experience and skill level, blacks could wind up at the end of the queue and less likely to receive needed services.

The likelihood that there will be delays depends on the number of program slots in comparison to the number needing service. In 1993, over 4.5 million people lost their jobs (a little over one half of the total number of Americans unemployed that year) and another 128,000 were not actively looking for work because they needed education or training to get jobs. The Labor Department estimates that just under three million of those who lost their jobs in 1993 are "displaced" and, therefore, targeted for the new initiative. At present, 350,000 people are served by the programs that would be consolidated under the administration's proposal. The Labor Department estimates that under the new program they could build up to a service level of 1,320,000 by the year 2000.

The department calculates that this will be equivalent to the number of people requesting service if the number of displaced workers is close to DOL projections of 2.2 million (see Figure 1). Of these 1.3 million participants, approximately one-half would receive assessment and counseling beyond job search assistance. Three-quarters of the group counseled would be referred to classroom training and only a portion of the latter group would be in training long enough to need income support.

But between 1994 and 1998, a substantial portion of the eligibles may not be served because actual service delivery will depend on the willingness of states to adopt the new system (several states already have versions of the one-stop career centers in place). If some states are slow in adopting the new system, benefits from consolidation may be unevenly distributed.

Conclusion

It is clear that a large portion of black workers need significant employment assistance if their position within the American economy is to improve. Many unemployed black adults would benefit from an improved employment and training system. Proposals currently under consideration by Congress, including the administration's Reemployment Act, could be important steps toward establishing an effective integrated system that could result in expanded black employment. However, an approach that is limited to the Labor Department's displaced worker programs may not be sufficient to address the needs of many unemployed African Americans. The causes of black joblessness are not confined to displacement but include many variables related to work force preparation as well as discrimination. Thus, the Reemployment Act should be considered only one of the building blocks in an enhanced comprehensive worker training system. ■

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