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Democratizing Information

As the year 2000 approaches, many are bracing for Y2K problems ranging from computer glitches to major infrastructural breakdowns. Since computers and other cybertechnology are so intertwined with our daily lives, it is natural to be concerned. Some worry about whether their bank balances will be accurate after midnight on January 1st. Will they be able to access computer files at work? Should they stockpile groceries and supplies?

It has been suggested that the best place to be next New Year's Day is in a country that is less reliant on computers. But such an attempt to hide from technology would be futile. Y2K problems, however disruptive they may be, won't last. The truth is, computers are here to stay and we are firmly ensconced in the "digital era." For millions of Americans, computers, the Internet, and, cutting edge information technologies are integral parts of their professional and personal lives.

Laptop computers and telecommuting have freed legions of workers from the office. Today, a single teacher can conduct an interactive class on Renaissance painting with students in Baltimore, Omaha, Toledo, Birmingham, and Hartford—at the same time. Physicians are guided through complicated surgical procedures in real time by specialists thousands of miles away. Trans-Atlantic business deals are conducted by teleconference, and "e-commerce" is revolutionizing capitalism.

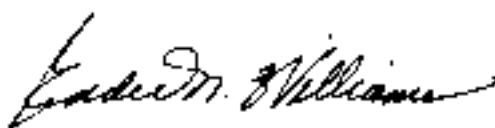
But not everyone has access to these new products of applied science. Too many American families, disproportionately poor and minority, remain ill-equipped to march forward into the new millennium and fully benefit from evolving technologies. A digital divide is partitioning our society into new classes of haves and have-nots—based not on their income, but on their access to information.

The August issue of *FOCUS* cited the findings of the recent National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) report on the digital divide, which found that minorities, particularly African Americans, continue to lag behind whites in having access to the Internet. This places black children in low-income communities at an additional disadvantage in acquiring the skills to be socially and economically competitive in the next century. NTIA director Larry Irving, who is an African American, believes that the digital divide is now one of America's leading economic and civil rights issues, with profound implications for minorities, the poor, the undereducated, and families living in inner cities and rural communities. What this means is that large segments of our citizenry will be poorly prepared to participate in the economic and cultural advancement of the nation.

On October 19, the Joint Center will address this concern in a Public Policy Forum, "Resolving the Digital Divide: Information, Access, and Opportunity," in association with The President's Information Technology Advisory

Committee and The Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. The Forum will focus on the growing chasm between those who have access to information technology and those who do not. At this forum, the second in a series of quarterly Joint Center Public Policy Forums, experts will also discuss the need for equal opportunity in information technology and examine programs that are succeeding in narrowing the digital divide.

Information technology can be a great equalizer, transcending racial, ethnic, and economic differences. But it must be available to all. The Joint Center has a long-term commitment to achieving that reality. ■



PRESIDENT



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Reinventing Black Colleges

White House Panel Says the Nation Should Look to Historically Black Universities to Provide Some of the Solutions to Urban Challenges

by Wiley Hall, 3rd

The land grant college system, created by Congress in the 19th century, had two missions: to make higher education accessible to the common man, particularly to the children of farmers and laborers who had helped tame the American frontier; and to direct the discipline of academia to solving everyday problems. The first such institutions focused on agricultural science, engineering, and industrial technology—among them, Cornell, Purdue, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the universities of Minnesota, Wisconsin at Madison, Ohio State, and Texas A&M. These institutions helped break the educational caste system that had reserved the benefits of a college education to the Eastern elite. Now, at the dawn of a new century, a blue ribbon presidential panel has proposed that the nation return to the land grant model, this time to revitalize the nation's cities.

In March, President Clinton's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges (HBCUs) presented to Congress eight recommendations for strengthening these institutions. Chief among them was a proposal to create urban grant university centers and place them at selected black institutions that serve urban communities. Just as the original land grant colleges found solutions to challenges confronting rural America, urban grant university centers would address urban challenges in fields such as unemployment, poverty, poor health, out-of-wedlock births, violent crime, and substance abuse.

And just as land grant colleges helped train an educated, skilled workforce to meet the challenges of the 20th century, urban grant university centers would be geared to meeting the 21st century's need for a well-educated, technologically proficient labor force. The panel noted that at a time when the role of education is more and more essential to success in the labor force, those most in need of strong public education are at a major disadvantage. This is particularly true in cities where there is an underutilized pool of potential labor for the U.S. economy.

"Many of our historically black colleges and universities would be ideally situated for such urban grant university centers," says Dr. Earl S. Richardson, president of Morgan State University and chairman of the Presidential Advisory Committee on HBCUs. "Black institutions have the experience and the expertise to address the challenges facing urban America."

Producing the Nation's Black Professionals

President Clinton formed the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities in November 1993 through Executive Order 12876. The 22-member board is charged with making recommendations on the federal government's role in enhancing the nation's 114 black private and public institutions of higher education.

The proposed urban grant university centers represent one of eight policy recommendations for bolstering HBCUs. These are some of the panel's other recommendations:

*** HBCUs should be given the funding support to address public health issues of urban and underprivileged populations, especially with regard to prevention strategies.** The panel noted that problems such as hypertension, diabetes, certain types of cancer, substance abuse, and many communicable diseases strike with particular force in African American communities.

*** Federal agencies should increase spending on HBCU campuses in the form of contracts and grants.** In 1997, HBCUs received \$1.2 billion from federal agencies, although more than half of this came from the Department of Education through mandated programs. The President's advisory panel recommends that more research and development contracts from agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Institutes of Health be placed on black campuses.

*** The mission of selected HBCUs should be expanded to include doctoral degree programs.** According to the advisory committee, a disproportionately high percentage of African Americans graduate from black colleges—they enroll only 18 percent of all black college students in the United States, but produce 40 percent of those with bachelor's degrees. Three-quarters of all African Americans holding doctoral degrees obtained their undergraduate degree from an HBCU. Given the resources, the panel argues, HBCUs could significantly expand the number of African Americans with Ph.D.'s. Right now, only about two dozen HBCUs offer doctoral programs.

Black colleges have been the nation's main source of African American professionals and have produced a disproportionate share of graduates in key disciplines such as engineering, the sciences, business, social work, and education. Seventy-five percent of black military officers,

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50 percent of black elected officials, and 50 percent of black business executives, as well as most black physicians, attorneys, and federal judges, are graduates of HBCUs.

Yet black institutions achieved these accomplishments while drawing their students from diverse social and economic backgrounds, including those who might not be accepted at other institutions either because of their financial status or their poor academic preparation.

A National Study of Student Learning report quantified HBCUs' success in this arena. The authors concluded: "Even if they are at a relative disadvantage in terms of educational resources, an impressive body of evidence suggests that historically black colleges have nevertheless been able to create a social-psychological campus climate that not only fosters students' satisfaction, sense of community, and adjustment to college, but which also increases the likelihood of persistence and degree completion." The findings of this study suggest further that "the supportive environments of historically black colleges do not come at the cost of intellectual or academic rigor."

Long-Term Federal Support

Despite this success, few black institutions could be described as financially strong. Most, in fact, are struggling to survive, heavily dependent on government and philanthropic support. Ten black colleges have closed since 1976 for lack of funding, leadership, adequate programs, or a combination of these factors. At the same time, enrollment at most HBCUs is growing as traditionally white institutions become less committed to campus diversity.

Some presidents of black colleges see the presidential advisory board on HBCUs' recommendations as a way to buttress these institutions financially while they perform a public good. The advisory board has not attached a dollar figure to its recommendations, but its report makes clear that the panel is talking about a major commitment of resources. Its recommendations call for "long-term federal support that would expand the capabilities of HBCUs and help ensure that these campuses are indeed mainstream institutions that are able to contribute to the achievement of important national goals," the panel said. "While funding from a variety of sources is important, a base of support from the federal government is an essential foundation on which to build such support."

And of course, HBCUs have the example of the land grant college system as proof that the nation is willing to make such a commitment when it wants to. The first Morrill Act in 1862 provided grants in the form of federal lands to each state for the establishment of a public institution. Over the years, Congress has enlarged upon that initial commitment considerably, including the second Morrill Act in 1890, which led to the establishment of many HBCUs including Tuskegee University, North Carolina A&T, Delaware State University, and Florida A&M University.

The National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges estimates that today the federal government invests more than \$550 million in land grant institutions each year. The real question is whether there is a national consensus that cities are worth saving. Rhetorically, at least, most politicians claim cities are important.

The proposed urban grant university centers would allow HBCUs to apply their accumulated expertise to educating the underprivileged in a concentrated way. This could be particularly important in addressing issues confronting inner-city public school systems, the panel felt. HBCUs also could serve as research hubs, addressing urban concerns such as public health, urban planning, and retraining workers for positions in technology-related industries.

Richardson has been quietly molding Morgan State into a national model of just such an institution. During the past decade, this university has invested over \$150 million in capital improvements to the campus, including substantial expenditures on multimedia and high-tech classroom and research laboratories. Morgan State's five-year capital plan includes \$16 million for a new science research center, \$30 million for a hospitality management complex, and \$50 million for a new library and teleconferencing complex. Work crews are about to break ground on a new \$30 million fine arts center which will provide an invaluable cultural anchor for Greater Baltimore upon completion.

The university has greatly expanded or revised its inventory of academic programs, particularly in its graduate school. Morgan State recently added doctoral degree programs in math education, science education, engineering, history and public health. It is considering adding doctorates in business, bio-environmental science, and higher education administration. Says Richardson, "the goal is to establish perhaps ten doctoral degree programs that will mesh in a synergistic way with our undergraduate program and that will meet the needs of the urban community we serve."

Morgan State has launched several research initiatives that address key aspects of urban life, including small business development, transportation, teacher training and staff development, public health and prevention, and the preparedness of minority children for careers in science, engineering, and math.

"These measures place Morgan State in a better position to reinvent itself and to fulfill its mission as Maryland's designated urban university in the areas of teaching, research, and public service," says Richardson. Such changes have not gone unnoticed. Enrollment has surged and research grants and contracts have increased eight-fold. And state officials have supported the university at historic levels.

Richardson believes that Morgan State's model can be replicated at other HBCUs. "Black institutions must learn to refocus and recast themselves in order to generate appropriate support from state legislatures, the corporate community, and Congress," he says. "We also are competing with other institutions for students. The good news is that HBCUs have a history of rising to the occasion." ■

Fairness Agenda in a Conservative Congress

The Congressional Progressive Caucus Is Campaigning Among Grassroots Organizations for Support for Its Liberal Legislative Program

by David C. Ruffin

As the 2000 election approaches, political pundits project that the Democratic Party, which is just five seats away from a majority, has a strong chance of gaining control of the U.S. House of Representatives. There is general agreement that if the Democrats accomplished this, the legislative priorities of that body of Congress would depart from those of the last three Congresses. The question is, how much of a departure? Over the last two decades, a shift has occurred in the Democratic Party away from the progressive civil rights and Great Society policies of the 1960s and toward the New Democrat moderation of the 1990s. Today, however, a liberal group of Democrats calling themselves the Congressional Progressive Caucus is positioning itself to check the party's slide toward the center. This group has pledged to fight for the millions of Americans who aren't fully benefitting from the booming economy.

The Progressive Caucus is a diverse group. Half of its members are African American, Latino, or Asian American, and a quarter are women. Many of them have activist backgrounds. Because of this diversity, the Caucus's members have differed on some issues, such as sending troops to the Balkans. But its 53 members have embraced an eight-point "Fairness Agenda for America." An outgrowth of a Capitol Hill conference held in January 1997, the Fairness Agenda encompasses the principles of dignified work, democratic participation, environmental justice, economic redistribution, community empowerment, global nonviolence, and social justice. The Agenda has been endorsed by national progressive organizations like the Institute for Policy Studies and the Institute for Food and Development (Food First), as well as 200 grassroots groups across the country.

In many ways, the Progressive Caucus was established to act as a counterweight to the growing influence of Democratic moderates and conservatives. Led by Rep. Charles Stenholm (D-Tex.), conservative congressional Democrats from the South and West, dubbed "boll weevils," allied themselves with President Ronald Reagan in the early 1980s. They supported many of Reagan's programs, including his federal budgets with their meat-cleaver approach to cutting funds for social programs. The shift to the right within party ranks continued when the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC) was formed in 1984 as a

reaction to the election landslide that swept Reagan into his second term.

The DLC was started by moderate and conservative Democratic officeholders, mostly white southerners who believed the party had drifted too far to the left and who partially blamed northern liberal Democrats for Reagan's victory. As a result of this conservative influence, the Democratic Party began to lean away from its traditional commitment to programs that ensured that the poor would not be left behind and that minorities and women had an equitable share in the American enterprise.

A new alignment recently occurred in Congress. Stenholm is still a leader of the Democratic conservatives, now called "Blue Dogs," about 29 in total. Moderate Democrats, formally represented by the New Democratic Coalition and tagged as "New Dogs," are a growing group currently numbering 63. In order to forward its agenda, the Progressive Caucus not only will have to deal with hostile House Republicans but will have to compete with both the New and the Blue Dogs in their own party.

Jobs Without Corporate Welfare

Despite the conservative environment in which it must operate, the Progressive Caucus does not shy from the idea that the government should take on a greater role in supporting the poor. Its Fairness Agenda calls for government job creation programs in communities of high unemployment and for expanded government investment in public education, health care, and low-cost housing. Fairness budgets would also cut back on military spending and reduce tax breaks and subsidies for corporations. The solvency of the Social Security system is another priority, but the group opposes achieving this through privatization. Medicare coverage would be expanded dramatically.

Government protections for working Americans are advocated in the Agenda, including a safety net for workers displaced during economic bad times. The Caucus also recognizes that discrimination and wage disparities based on race and gender are still serious problems. The Fairness Agenda not only calls for the vigorous enforcement of civil rights laws, but views affirmative action as an important remedy for past and present discrimination.

In international affairs, the Caucus opposes many of the current trade agreements which, members argue, have had the effect of creating economic inequities whose greatest

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harm has befallen the workers and the poor both here and abroad. The Caucus urges the creation of new trade arrangements, the promotion of human rights in other countries, and the curbing of arms exports.

Finally, the Agenda's far-reaching campaign finance reform component would exceed proposals currently under consideration. Private contributions to candidates would be banned, spending limits would be imposed, and loopholes would be plugged up to prevent moneyed interests from buying political influence.

Deep South Hearings

The Caucus seeks to avoid a top-down approach to policy development by soliciting the support and input of grassroots groups. Organizing campaigns to build support for the Agenda have taken place in Chicago and San Francisco, and others will take place in Birmingham, Detroit, and Philadelphia.

Going President Clinton's New Markets Tour this summer one better, the members of the Progressive Caucus will launch an "Economic Human Rights" bus tour of the Deep South from Atlanta to Birmingham, between November 11 and 13. During the tour, participating Caucus members will visit local health clinics, schools, and work sites, including abandoned textile mills that have been relocated overseas. At each stop, the Caucus members will hold field hearings in economically depressed areas where they will listen to testimony from local organizations. The primary focus of the hearings will be on the issues of health care, education, and income equity. The members expected to join the tour are: John Lewis and Cynthia McKinney of Georgia, Earl Hilliard of Alabama, Luis Gutierrez of Illinois, Dennis Kucinich of Ohio, Sheila Jackson Lee of Texas, John Conyers of Michigan, and Caucus Chair Peter DeFazio of Oregon. They will be accompanied by Harry Belafonte and Danny Glover.

Members of the Caucus plan to use the information gleaned from the hearings to craft legislation to implement various elements of the Agenda. Some bills have already been drafted, including the Corporate Welfare Reduction Act, Income Equity Act, and the American Jobs Act. ■

The Fairness Agenda for America

1. Enact a Fairness Budget for America. America's abundant resources must be used to build a decent society. A fairness budget would cut military spending and corporate giveaways and reinstate progressive taxation, while redirecting revenues to invest in human resources, such as schools, health clinics, and infrastructure projects such as mass transit.

2. Ensure Jobs, Living Wages, Benefits, and Worker Rights for All. The nation depends on a vigorous, creative, and innovative workforce that is assured basic rights.

The Progressive Caucus proposes government job creation in areas of high unemployment, laws requiring profitable companies to compensate workers and communities affected by job cuts, elimination of tax breaks for companies that provide excessive executive compensation, and stronger protections against labor rights violations.

3. Fight for Equality for All. Despite recent progress, widespread discrimination, wage gaps by gender and race, and de facto segregation still exist. Two means of addressing these problems include sufficient funding for agencies that administer anti-discrimination laws and reinforcing affirmative action.

4. Promote a Just and Sustainable Global Economy. Free trade agreements and World Bank/IMF structural adjustment programs have increased inequalities at home and abroad. The Progressive Caucus proposes the establishment of an international dialogue to develop an alternative trade and development initiative that encompasses the protection of worker and women's rights, environmental standards, and food security, and tackles problems of immigration.

5. Support Demilitarization, Human Rights, and a New Internationalism. The Caucus proposes: cutting the defense budget; negotiating with Russia to eliminate nuclear weapons; shifting research and development priorities toward pressing domestic needs; stopping NATO expansion; ending subsidies for arms exporters; banning covert operations; shifting from unilateral military aid and peacekeeping missions abroad to multilateral responses; and promoting real human rights abroad, which include economic, social, and cultural rights.

6. Guarantee Sustainable Communities and Environmental Justice. The federal government has given states and localities more responsibilities without more power or money. The Caucus proposes: distribution of more no-strings federal funds, especially to poor communities; revisions in trade agreements to allow communities to enact strong environmental and labor laws; and retargeting federal insurance, subsidies, and loans for community development. On environmental justice, the Caucus proposes: promoting the right to a clean environment and replacing subsidies for polluters with subsidies for ecologically sound products and services.

7. Provide Adequate Social Investment. This means preserving social security and protecting it from privatization; remaking economic security structures to address the needs of the poor; expanding Medicare eligibility to people of all ages and incomes; creating a bill of rights to protect health care consumers; increasing funds for low-income housing assistance; and providing adequate funds for quality public education.

8. Get Private Money Out of Politics. Public outrage is increasing over the abuse of loopholes, systematic influence peddling, and political favors granted to special interests. The Caucus supports initiatives to limit campaign spending, prohibit private campaign contributions to candidates, eliminate the need for fundraising, provide a financially level playing field, and tighten loopholes.

Assault Continues on Set-Asides

The Lawsuit Against Atlanta's Minority Business Set-Aside Program Is Only the Most Recent in Ongoing Nationwide Anti-Civil Rights Campaign

by David C. Ruffin

Atlanta's minority business set-aside program is being challenged in a lawsuit by the conservative Southeastern Legal Foundation (SLF). The lawsuit, *Lee General Contractors, Inc. v City of Atlanta*, filed on August 28, charges that the program is "illegal and unconstitutional" because it considers race and gender as factors in awarding city contracts. This suit is another in a series of well orchestrated attacks against affirmative action programs—programs that are designed to ensure that minorities and women have an opportunity to fully participate in the social and economic life of the nation. Bill Campbell, the mayor of Atlanta, a majority-black city, has vowed to marshal all his resources to defend one of the oldest and most successful programs of its kind in the country. Atlanta has a goal of awarding one-third of the city's contracts for goods and services to companies owned by minorities and women. The program was established in 1975 under Maynard Jackson, Atlanta's first black mayor.

A self-described "conservative public interest law firm," the Southeastern Legal Foundation was established in 1976, and many of the cases it has taken on have been aimed at reversing the legal precedents that provide the foundation for affirmative action and other civil rights policies. The SLF's motives for initiating the *Lee General Contractors* suit go beyond simply eliminating a set-aside program for just one city. SLF's broader goal is to knock out the legal underpinnings for race- and gender-based remedies for past and present discrimination.

This recent suit against Atlanta is not SLF's first attack on civil rights. It participated in the landmark *City of Richmond v J.A. Croson Co.* case in 1989, in which the U.S. Supreme Court struck down the minority business set-aside program of Richmond, Virginia. Richmond's program had been formed in 1983 to address discrimination in municipal contracting. While the High Court's ruling affirmed the right of state and local governments to established set-aside programs, it also decided that such programs could not be based on societal discrimination, but had to be narrowly tailored to deal with proven bias within the local area—in this case Richmond. This contrasted with the longstanding policy of the federal government, which has discretion, under the 14th Amendment, to establish nationwide remedies for historical discrimination against a number of ethnic groups in federal procurement programs. *Croson* resulted in the shut-down of numerous set-aside programs across the nation.

In 1993, the SLF represented the Associated General Contractors before the Supreme Court in a suit against the

City of Jacksonville, Florida, in another anti-set-aside case. More recently, it opposed the use of scientific sampling in the 2000 Census, which the Clinton administration proposed as a way to diminish the undercount of minorities, children, and the poor. Sampling has been endorsed by the National Academy of Sciences and advocated by civil rights groups.

The Southeastern Legal Foundation is not the only conservative law firm working to overturn civil right gains. Several legal foundations operate in other regions of the country with similar agendas. The Mountain States Legal Foundation (MSLF) has participated in a long list of lawsuits against set-aside programs. Founded in 1977, the MSLF is attempting to achieve what it claims to be the goal of the Founding Fathers—"a color blind Constitution." The MSLF's most significant action has been to help argue against federal set-asides in the 1995 *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v Peña* case. In *Adarand*, the Supreme Court essentially extended the restrictions it imposed on state and local set-aside programs to similar federal programs.

The first federal set-aside program was established in the 1970s and required that 10 percent of public works contracts be reserved for minority contractors. As in *Croson*, the High Court did not rule federal set-asides to be unconstitutional. But it imposed a strict-scrutiny test to these programs, which means that they may no longer be maintained to remedy discrimination in society at large or to correct racial imbalances in granting contract awards. The strict-scrutiny test requires that programs be narrowly tailored to "further compelling government interests."

The Pacific Legal Foundation (PLF) has committed vast resources to the enforcement of California's Proposition 209, a 1996 ballot referendum that eliminated affirmative action in state employment, education, and contracting. Filing an amicus brief in the case of *Schindler Elevator Company v San Francisco*, PLF has opposed that city's effort to ensure that minorities share in municipal contracts. The PLF has taken similar action in the cases of *Monterey Mechanical v Wilson* and *Taber v City and County of San Francisco*.

Efforts by right-wing groups to undermine policies and programs that provide minorities and women opportunities in contracting, education, and employment have been underway for a long time. Organizations behind these efforts, like the regional legal foundations mentioned above, are focused and well financed. Advocates for a just and equitable society will have to contend with these groups for years to come. ■

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TRENDLETTER

POLITICAL REPORT

O'Malley Wins Baltimore Mayoral Primary

by David C. Ruffin

On September 14, white city councilman Martin O'Malley, 36, pulled off a surprise victory in the Democratic mayoral primary in Baltimore, a city that is more than 60 percent black. O'Malley, who received strong support from black voters, won a 53 percent vote majority in a crowded field of 17 Democratic contenders. He easily outdistanced two high-profile black candidates, former city council member Carl Stokes and council president Lawrence A. Bell III, who garnered 28 and 17 percent of the vote, respectively.

O'Malley ran on an anti-crime campaign, vowing to close the city's open-air drug markets and implement a "zero tolerance" approach to law enforcement based on the model established by New York City's Republican mayor Rudolph Giuliani. The main thrust of zero tolerance is the strict enforcement of all city laws, including nuisance offenses such as loitering and drinking in public, with the aim of catching repeat criminal offenders before they commit more serious crimes. The criticism of this approach to crime fighting is that it primarily targets people of color and

gives police licence to substitute racial profiling for procedures based on constitutional principles. Baltimore's outgoing mayor Kurt Schmoke and police commissioner Thomas Frazier have expressed concerns that this approach will infringe on civil liberties and overwhelm the city's court system with a dramatic increase in arrests.

O'Malley has a private law practice and plays guitar in his own Celtic rock band, named O'Malley's March. With the Democratic nomination secured, he goes on to face real estate developer David F. Tafari in the November 2 general election. Tafari, 52, won the Republican nomination by defeating five other GOP candidates.

Second String Candidates

O'Malley's victory dealt a crushing blow to the political careers of his two main opponents. Lawrence Bell, a 12-year veteran of the city council, began the campaign for mayor in the summer as the clear front runner with a 16-point lead in opinion polls over Stokes (O'Malley was then a distant third place). But the campaigns of Bell and Stokes were brought down by revelations of missteps and personal flaws. Bell was hurt when reports of financial problems were made public, including lawsuits filed against him for unpaid debts. Stokes was damaged by reports of driving with a suspended license, being served with a federal tax lien while sitting on the city council, and falsely

claiming to have earned a degree from Loyola College.

As a group, the candidates for mayor have been generally criticized as second stringers. The personal peccadilloes of several lesser known candidates also surfaced during the campaign. One candidate, in fact, was wanted on a year-old warrant for misdemeanor burglary.

Early on, prominent black and white political leaders had urged NAACP president Kweisi Mfume to run for the office (see the July 1999 Political Report). There is a broad consensus among local observers that, had the former city councilman and five-term member of Congress run, he would have won with ease. But Mfume declined. William Donald Schaefer, who had been mayor for a record four terms and governor for two, was also approached. He said no and backed O'Malley.

In addition to Schaefer, O'Malley obtained the endorsements of some of the city's most influential black leaders—State House of Representatives Appropriations Chairman Howard P. Rawlings, State Senator Joan Carter Conway, and Rev. Frank M. Reid III, pastor of Bethel AME, the city's biggest black church. This is not the first time a white mayoral candidate facing a black opponent received the strong backing of black Baltimoreans. In his last run for mayor, Schaefer received a majority of black votes on the way to a whopping 72 percent victory in the 1983 Democratic primary. He

defeated popular and flamboyant black circuit court judge William H. "Billy" Murphy, Jr., a member of one of Baltimore's most influential black families. Schaefer had a track record of cooperation and accommodation with black leaders on major issues. And black voters demonstrated that they placed greater value on continuing Schaefer's successful urban development program than on electing a black mayor with a limited record of accomplishments.

Poor Schools and Declining Tax Base

With Baltimore's Democrats outnumbering Republicans 9 to 1, it is virtually certain that O'Malley will be Baltimore's next mayor. But despite the fact that his pledge to target drug dealers resonated well with African American voters, he will have to expand his program for governance beyond zero tolerance in law enforcement. Crime has indeed been a major problem in Baltimore, where homicides have topped 300 for each of the past 10 years. But O'Malley must also do something about the poor education the city's youngsters receive in the public schools, as well as improve housing in low-income black neighborhoods. These problems are exacerbated by a declining tax base due to the flight of thousands of city residents to the suburbs.

UNCF to Administer \$1 Billion Gates Scholarship Grant

On September 16, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation pledged a gift of \$1 billion over 20 years to establish the Gates Millennium Scholars Program. The program, to be administered by the United Negro College Fund, will provide financial support to African American, Latino, Asian American, and Native American students pursuing a college educa-

tion. With tuition costs steadily rising, the Gates scholarships were created to help reduce the economic barriers to college many minority students face.

The first scholarships will be awarded in the fall of 2000 and will be available to high school seniors, college undergraduates, and graduate students. The awards will be renewed annually for students who maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0. Scholarships will also be offered to students applying for graduate degrees in mathematics, science, engineering, education, or library sciences. The \$1 billion grant represents the largest private gift to higher education in the nation's history.

"It is critical to America's future that we draw from the full range of talent and ability to develop the next generation of leaders," said Bill Gates, cofounder of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. "The Millennium Scholars Program is intended to ensure that we build a stronger America through improved educational opportunities." The Gates Foundation, with assets of \$17 billion, is the richest foundation in the United States.

The program will be administered by the United Negro College Fund in collaboration with the Hispanic Scholarship Fund and the American

Indian College Fund. The United Negro College Fund is a higher education assistance organization founded in 1944 that serves 39 black member colleges and universities.

The scholarships will be directed toward minorities who show academic promise, have financial need, and have demonstrated leadership. To be eligible, students must have at least a 3.3 grade-point average, must write an essay about their life goals, must commit to performing community service. Students also must be nominated for the award by a principal, teacher, or community leader. Scores on college entrance exams will not be used in the selection process.

The inspiration for the Gates Millennium Scholars Program stems from a visit Bill Gates and his wife made to rural Alabama to present new computer technology to libraries in small towns there. William H. Gray III, president and CEO of the United Negro College Fund, accompanied them during the visit. The Foundation has been working out the details of the program with Gray over the last two years. "Bill and Melinda Gates recognize the challenges many minorities face," says Gray, "and understand that our nation's future is critically dependent upon producing diverse and well-trained individuals." ■



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ECONOMIC REPORT

Women's Work in America

by Margaret C. Simms

During her Labor Day message, Labor Secretary Alexis M. Herman predicted that the workforce of the future will bear little resemblance to that of the 20th century. Nevertheless, Herman said, "as changes come and years pass, three things remain constant: American workers must have a balance between work and family, rising economic security, and workplaces that are safe and fair."

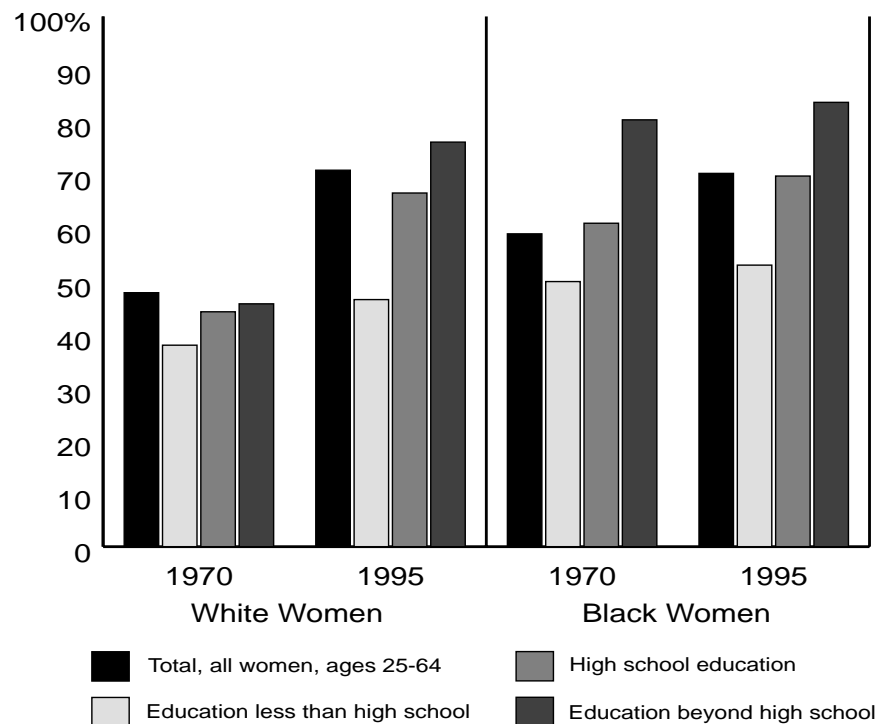
Finding a balance between work and family has become more difficult over the last half century, in part because women have been entering the workforce in increasing numbers. A Labor Department report, *Futurework: Trends and Challenges for Work in the 21st Century*, was released in conjunction with Secretary Herman's message. It showed that 60 percent of women in the United States over the age of 16 were in the labor force in 1998, up from 34 percent in 1950. Among women with children, the increases have been even more dramatic: in 1998, almost three-quarters of them were working or looking for work. This has come about because more married women are staying in the workforce after having children and more single mothers are working as well. Not only are more women working, but they are working more hours than ever before. In fact, the percentage of dual-income married-couple families in which both spouses work more than 40 hours a week has increased since 1969.

The increased participation in the paid workforce has differed by race. Historically, black women (and in particular black wives) were more likely than white women to be in the labor force. According to data from the Census Bureau's Current Population Survey, reported by Cornell University professor Francine Blau, black women were 23 percent more likely than white women to be in the labor force in 1970. But over the past three decades, that disparity has disappeared as white women increased their labor force participation (48% to 72%) at twice the rate of black women (59% to 70%). The differences were most striking for women with some higher education. Among white married women with more than a high school education, labor force participation increased from 45.8 percent to 76.3 percent,

while the corresponding rate for similarly educated black married women moved up from 80.5 to 83.8 percent.

In *Families and the Labor Market, 1969-1999: Analyzing the "Time Crunch,"* the President's Council of Economic Advisors (CEA) reports that the combination of greater labor force participation and increases in the number of hours worked meant that for the average working wife the annual hours of paid work grew by 576 hours between 1969 and 1996. Over the same period, husbands' average year's work declined by a few hours. As a result of women's increased work effort, hours of paid work went up 18 percent among two-parent families and 28 percent in single-parent families. The greater work effort also paid off in higher average income. For both white and

Labor Force Participation Rates for Married Women (Spouse Present), by Education Level and Race, 1970 and 1995



Source: Francine Blau, "Trends in the Well-Being of American Women, 1970-95," *Journal of Economic Literature*, March 1998.

black married-couple families, average income increased by 18 percent between 1979 and 1996. There were much smaller increases for single-parent families: 2 percent for whites and 6 percent for blacks.

What About the Children?

There is very little information about how individuals in families use their time, so it is difficult to determine what does not get done inside the household when more hours are spent in paid employment. The evidence that is available suggests that women in paid work spend less time with their children than those who are not in the labor force, but according to the CEA, the amount of time employed mothers spend in child care activities appears to be much the same as the time working mothers spent a generation ago. The CEA concludes that the increased hours of work have come at the expense of household chores: cooking, cleaning, etc.

Although employed mothers do not seem to spend less time with their children than in previous years, they still have to make arrangements for daycare or after-school care while they are at work. Getting children to and from these care arrangements adds to the list of things to be completed before day's end and probably contributes to the 13 percent increase in the time required for a woman's commute to work between 1983 and 1995. Sometimes parents are able to rely on relatives for childcare. This was true for about 35 percent of African American preschool children compared to 21 percent of white children. Reliance on family members is more likely when families are poor or parents work nonstandard hours. While these arrangements are less expensive and more flexible, they also tend

to break down more frequently, leading to absences from work.

Working More and Enjoying It Less

A number of recent surveys of American workers have found that the longer hours spent in the workplace have left them more stressed and less able to achieve the desired balance between work and family. Workers' recent experiences are described in a report, *Americans' Attitudes about Work, Employers, and the Government: Work and Family*, based on a survey by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University and the Center for Survey Research and Analysis at the University of Connecticut. In the survey, conducted in the winter of 1999, all but 5 percent of workers expressed concern about spending time with their family. Two in five workers were extremely concerned about this. This survey also identified another victim (aside from household chores) of the increased juggling of work and family responsibilities: sleep. A vast majority of respondents (87%) expressed some concern over lack of sleep, with 60 percent expressing a great deal of concern. Those with less than a high school diploma were more likely to express this concern than those with a college education.

General job-related stress and anxiety were also reported to be high, with anxiety over job security and stress related to job demands being higher among nonwhites and women. Over 50 percent of nonwhites indicated that they were very or extremely concerned with on-the-job stress.

More than 90 percent of workers wanted flexibility in their work schedules to take care of family needs—both emergencies and school activities—but fewer than two-thirds of

their firms offered flexible hours and about one-half offered flexible work days. Interestingly, nonwhites were more likely to report working in a company that offered flexible work hours.

Policy Implications

The Labor Department report suggests several options for improving the balance between work and family. One is an increase in the amount of affordable childcare—the report specifically mentions on-site (at work) childcare. The Heldrich survey reports that on-site care is viewed as important by one-half of all workers (49%), but notes that it is only offered by 12 percent of employers.

Flexible or nonstandard schedules are another option mentioned, though the Labor Department notes that these schedules are most readily available to temporary workers who lack access to other benefits. The Department of Labor's view is that these alternative childcare and flexible schedule arrangements are best worked out by employers and their workers, either voluntarily or through unions. The federal government's role with respect to these issues will probably continue to be relatively small.

For the full reports: Futurework is available at www.dol.gov/dol/asp/public/futurework/report. The Council of Economic Advisors' report can be found at www.whitehouse.gov/WH/EOP/CEA. The Heldrich study is available (PDF format) at www.heldrich.rutgers.edu. ■



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