

FOCUS[®]

The monthly magazine of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies

IRAQ: WAR OR NOT TO WAR?

CBC Opposes First Strike

By Jessica Lee

WASHINGTON - Whenever President Bush travels abroad, half the top-ranking advisers supporting him are African American. Secretary of State Colin Powell and Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, sit in the cabin immediately adjacent to the presidential quarters, along with the White House chief of staff and presidential counselor, as Air Force One heads overseas.

The seating arrangements reflect the proximity and influence Powell and Rice exercise on the policies of the president as he carves out the new contours of a broader, more aggressive international policy.

It is perhaps an irony of American politics that when African Americans finally reach the highest appointed level of foreign policy in the U.S. government, those appointed do not reflect the views of most Black

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Perspective

Vote As If Your Life Depended On It

This is an especially eventful period in American politics.

As the United States fights a war against the clear provocation of terrorism, the Bush administration is proposing a war against Iraq, for reasons that seem less clear to many Americans.

How the war against terrorism is fought truly is a life or death question for voters. Certainly, as our cover story indicates, a new war against Iraq, expensive in both lives and money, would be a crucial issue for Black America. These times demand a vigorous electorate that will turn out in record numbers next month.

Yet, although Republicans and Democrats are struggling to capture control of Congress in the general election, voter turnout during the primaries was so poor that it raises questions about the extent to which Americans fully appreciate the democracy which we are honor-bound to defend with our lives.

With the Democrats grasping a one-seat margin in the Senate and the GOP clutching their six-seat majority in the House, this election could easily bring about major changes in Congressional leadership. That makes the election critically important to the policies, programs and direction this nation will adopt. Not only will the next Congress deal with issues of war and peace abroad, it also will confront questions directly affecting the health, education and welfare of all of us at home. And if another war is fought, the politicians we elect at all level would have to cope with the major ripple effects it would have on the economy, homeland security and domestic budgets.

The next Congress could make history by having in its ranks the first African American senator from the South since Reconstruction, in former Dallas Mayor Ron Kirk. Georgia might well send five African Americans to Congress, which would be the largest Black delegation ever. New York, and less likely Nevada, could elect their first Black governors.

One noticeable item this election year is the evolving centrist positions of Black candidates and the Black electorate. Kirk and H. Carl McCall, the New York gubernatorial candidate, have positioned themselves firmly in moderate territory. Reps. Earl Hilliard, of Alabama, and Cynthia McKinney, of Georgia, lost their primaries and were replaced by candidates with more moderate images.

While voters in Texas, Georgia and New York have a good chance to make history by sending African American Democratic candidates to Washington and Albany, the Republican Party is on the verge of making history of a different sort. The GOP appears to be moving backwards when it comes to Black congressional representation. As this month's Political Report notes, for the first time in more than a decade there probably will be no African American on the GOP side of the House next year. This year's GOP field of congressional candidates has only one-third as many African Americans as the Republicans slated just two years ago.

Given what appears to be a moderate shift among the Black electorate and candidates, it is ironic that the Republican Party can find so few African American contenders. But no matter the party or the color of the candidates, African Americans should feel a special sense of urgency this November.

The times demand that we vote as if our lives depended on it. This threat alone should spur us to go to the polls and vote our conscience. ■

Eddie N. Williams
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PRISONS CELLS VS. SCHOOLROOMS

Corrections Spending Rate Much Higher

BY VINCENT SHIRALDI

During the 1980s and 1990s, state spending on corrections grew at six times the rate of state spending on higher education, and by the close of the millennium, there were nearly a third more African American men in prison and jail than in universities or colleges. So says a state-by-state analysis of corrections and higher education spending by the Washington, DC-based Justice Policy Institute (JPI) entitled *Cellblocks or Classrooms? The Funding of Higher Education and Corrections and Its Impact on African American Men*.

The progress made in improving access to college for African Americans has been eclipsed by the growth of the nation's African American male incarcerated population. Using data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics, the report, released in August, estimates that between 1980 and 2000, three times as many African American men were added to the nation's prison systems than were added to college and university enrollment. In 2000, more African American men were in prison (not including jail inmates) than in college in at least 13 states. From 1980 to 2000, JPI estimates that 38 states and the federal government sent more African American men into their prison systems than they took into their respective higher education systems.

Vicious Cycle

In allowing this to happen, the states spin a vicious cycle that unfairly targets Black people for incarceration. Repeated studies, including those by the Building Blocks for Youth Initiative, have demonstrated that African Americans are treated more severely for similar offenses than White people at all stages of the criminal justice system. This severely reduces the

likelihood that Black youth will enroll in college. Prison doors appear to open wide for some young African Americans from troubled neighborhoods, while the possibility of a college education seems all too distant.

"It is sad that our states are finding it easier to contribute more to incarcerating our men and women and creating a downward spiral of poverty and destitution rather than investing through our educational system to create an upward spiral of accomplishment and achievement," said Hilary O. Shelton, director of the NAACP Washington Bureau. "The NAACP sees a direct link between the spending trends of the states and the plight of African American men today, and we are committed to correcting these misplaced priorities."

Fortunately, those priorities are changing in some states. Several have reformed incarceration policies with an eye toward controlling the cost of corrections while pursuing programs that also control crime.

Drawing upon statistics from the National Association of State Budget Officers and the Bureau of Economic Analysis, *Cellblocks or Classrooms* shows that as corrections expenditures have grown, state spending on higher education has not kept pace. Between 1985 and 2000, spending on corrections doubled or tripled in most states, while only one state doubled its higher education spending in real dollars. During that same period, the increase in state spending on corrections was nearly double the state-level increase to higher education (\$20 billion versus \$10.7 billion). While total spending on state higher education grew by 24 percent, it grew by 166 percent for corrections.

"When you think about how much money is being spent on our prisons and

how many prisoners are nonviolent offenders, it's just astounding," said William Spriggs, director of the National Urban League's Institute for Opportunity and Equality. The Justice Policy Institute estimates that approximately 1.2 million of America's 2 million prisoners are incarcerated for nonviolent offenses, at a cost of \$24 billion annually.

Dramatic Tradeoff

California and New York provide poignant examples of the funding shift from universities to prisons, especially since they are states whose university systems are often viewed as models of public higher education. In New York, state spending on higher education actually declined by 25 percent (\$848 million) between 1985 and 2000, while prison spending grew by 137 percent (\$1.4 billion). Likewise, in the Golden State, Californians experienced a 16 percent (\$1 billion) drop in higher education funding, while prison spending mushroomed by 184 percent (\$3 billion).

"The dramatic tradeoff between growing prisons and shrinking classrooms is outrageous," said United States Students Association President Jo'ie Taylor. "American students will not tolerate the prioritizing of unnecessary prisons over our education. The United States Students Association opposes budget policies that hurt students and African Americans, and demands that states give schools the resources they need to provide fair access to education."

As corrections assumed a larger share of state spending, the burden for paying for college has shifted to students. From 1980 to 1998, tuition and fee support for higher education has risen at eight times the rate

of state support. For low-income families, the cost of paying for tuition at a four-year institution increased from 13 percent of their income to 25 percent.

Federal aid to needy students also covers far less of the total cost of tuition than it did in the 1980s. The average Pell Grant covered 98 percent of a recipient's tuition in 1986, but by 1998 it covered only 57 percent. Over the 1990s, federal financial aid shifted support from grants to loans, increasing the debt load students carry after graduation.

All of this adds up to bad business, according to Michael Widmer, president of the business-backed Massachusetts Taxpayer Foundation. "Given that we rightly talk about our work force as one of our most important competitive advantages, with respect to higher education, we're not putting our money where our mouth is."

Texas Senator Rodney Ellis, who serves on the state's jurisprudence committee, also points out that these spending priorities ignore what drives offenders into prison in the first place. "I think society is better served if we do put more resources and emphasis on the problems that lead to a life of crime, rather than on what happens to people after they commit crimes," he said. "We might be better off spending money on drug treatment programs and education on the front end than on prison beds on the other end."

Shifting funds from prisons into community alternatives is just what several states have done over the past year according to JPI's previous report, *Cutting Correctly* (May 2002 FOCUS). In Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Michigan, Indiana, Connecticut, Utah and North Dakota, policy makers have abolished mandatory sentences for some offenders and returned sentencing discretion to judges.

In Arizona and California, voters have overwhelmingly passed ballot initiatives that divert nonviolent drug offenders from prison to treatment, saving their states millions. Similar initiatives are before voters in Ohio and the District of Colum-

bia. A Buckeye Poll in Ohio has that initiative with a 74 percent approval rating.

And in Texas, Ohio and Kansas, parole reform has allowed corrections officials to increase parole releases and reduce returns to prison for technical violations of parole, saving those states million of dollars in prison costs.

Perhaps in part because of policies such as these, prison population growth has slowed to its lowest level in decades, and 13 states actually saw reduced prison populations last year, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Programs that cut prison spending while also fighting crime are becoming more popular among policy makers such as Texas Senator John Whitmere, vice chair

of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee. He echoed a sentiment that is more and more common among policy makers concerned about the criminal justice system. "We have to fight the crime issue by being tough and smart," he said. "No one questions that we are being tough enough. We may be coming up short on how smart we have been." ■

Vincent Shiraldi is president of the Justice Policy Institute and author of Cellblocks or Classrooms? The Funding of Higher Education and Corrections and Its Impact on African American Men. It is available at www.justicepolicy.org. Contact FOCUS writers at focuswriters@jointcenter.org.

Changes in State Spending on Higher Education and Corrections, 1985-2000

	Higher Education	Corrections	Higher Education	Corrections
AL.....	41%	70%	NE.....	41% 148%
AK.....	-53%	45%	NV*.....	105% 107%
AR.....	32%	188%	NH*.....	4% 138%
AZ.....	50%	191%	NJ.....	44% 137%
CA.....	-16%	184%	NM*.....	49% 48%
CO.....	16%	366%	NY.....	-25% 137%
CT.....	37%	262%	NC.....	8% 149%
DE.....	39%	156%	ND.....	-17% 250%
DC*.....	-7%	-5%	OH.....	38% 211%
FL.....	88%	217%	OK**.....	64% 128%
GA*.....	93%	234%	OR.....	64% 314%
HI.....	3%	164%	PA.....	25% 413%
ID.....	64%	424%	RI.....	-2% 188%
IL.....	30%	110%	SC.....	29% 113%
IN.....	39%	214%	SD.....	2% 214%
IA.....	60%	107%	TN.....	22% 74%
KS.....	30%	192%	TX*.....	47% 346%
KY.....	33%	164%	UT.....	48% 195%
LA.....	6%	13%	VT.....	-3% 179%
ME.....	30%	75%	VA.....	42% 76%
MD.....	37%	29%	WA.....	13% 138%
MA.....	16%	273%	WV*.....	25% 139%
MI.....	27%	227%	WI.....	29% 274%
MN.....	73%	148%	WY*.....	-15% 110%
MS*.....	34%	185%		
MO.....	52%	236%	Average.....	29% 175%
MT.....	-14%	181%		

Source: Justice Policy Institute: National Association of State Budget Officers, State Expenditure Reports, 1985; 2000 (1987; 2001). *Some states did not publish fiscal data for 1985. Data from 1986 was used for those states. ** 1987 data for Oklahoma.

POLITICAL REPORT

Black Votes Crucial To Capitol Control

By David Bositis

The very narrow party margins in Congress will make the upcoming general election a particularly eventful one for American politics. There are several close election contests that could decide which party will control the House and Senate starting in January 2003, and many of those contests are in states and districts with substantial Black voting populations. There are also several important gubernatorial offices up for grabs in those states.

Despite the importance of the election and the potential for increased voter concern over the possibility of war against Iraq, indications are that turnout will be light. Turnout in the primaries this year was generally quite low; low primary turnout is often a prelude to low turnout in the general election. It is a common midterm election problem. Turnout in the 1998 midterms was 36.06 percent — the lowest level since 1942.

One factor that could boost African American turnout is the presence of several prominent Black candidates for high level office, including Senate nominee Ron Kirk in Texas and gubernatorial nominee H. Carl McCall in New York, both Democrats. Also, the state of Georgia could make history by electing five African Americans to the House — it would be the largest number — and the largest proportional representation of African Americans in any state's delegation in history.

Currently, Democrats control the Senate and Republicans the House by razor thin

margins — one seat on the Senate side and six in the House. Hence, the campaigns for every closely contested federal office will be of critical importance in deciding which party will control the Capitol. Since nine-in-10 African Americans usually vote Democratic, without doubt there will be an intensified effort to turn out Black voters in support of those Democratic candidates.

In the 1998 midterms, the Black vote was critical in determining the outcome of several important elections, including those in Alabama, Georgia, and South Carolina. In the states with large Black populations, there are competitive senatorial contests this year in Arkansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Jersey, and North Carolina. Such states with competitive gubernatorial elections include Alabama, Florida, Illinois, Maryland, Michigan, and Pennsylvania. In three states with large Black populations — South Carolina, Tennessee and Texas — there are competitive races for both governor and senator. In addition to the Kirk and McCall candidacies, in Nevada an African American is running for governor — Joe Neal.

A victory by any of these candidates would be historic. The two candidates for governor are running against incumbents, and are clear underdogs, though polling data indicate McCall has gained ground against George Pataki, the Republican incumbent. Kirk is seeking an open Senate seat, and has a real shot at winning. Recent polls in Texas have shown the race to be close, with different polls showing Kirk, and his opponent John Cornyn, with small leads.

In other major statewide contests, there are four Black candidates running for lieutenant governor with one certain to win, because Ohio has two Black women facing off for that office. At least 17 prominent Black candidates are running for statewide office, including three running for secretary of state and two for attorney general. Of the 17 candidates, 13 are Democrats and four are Republicans. Five of the candidates are incumbents seeking re-election.

Interesting developments are taking place with respect to Black candidates for the House and the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC). First, Republican Rep. J.C. Watts of Oklahoma is retiring. It is unlikely there will be any Black Republicans in the House in the 108th Congress, even though there has been at least one Black Republican in the House since 1991 when former Rep. Gary Franks of Connecticut took office. This year's campaign has shown a sharp decline in the number of Black Republican

2002 Black Major Party Nominees for Statewide Office (Partial List)

State	Office	Black Nominee(s)
Arkansas	Lieutenant Governor	Ron Sheffield (D)
Georgia	Attorney General	Thurbert Baker (D)*
	Commissioner of Labor	Michael Thurmond (D)*
Illinois	Secretary of State	Jesse White (D)*
Maryland	Lieutenant Governor	Michael Steele (R)
Nevada	Governor	Joe Neal (D)
New York	Governor	H. Carl McCall (D)
Ohio	Lieutenant Governor	Jeanette Bradley (R)
		Charleta Tavares (D)
		J. Kenneth Blackwell (R)*
South Carolina	Secretary of State	Steve Benjamin (D)
	Attorney General	Rick Wade (D)
	Secretary of State	Ron Kirk (D)
Texas	U.S. Senate	Michael Williams (R)*
	Chairman, Railroad Commission	

* Incumbent

nominees for House seats. There are only eight such nominees now, as compared with 24 in 2000. In fact, since 1990, there have been on average 18 Black Republican nominees for House seats, with a previous low of 11 in 1990 and a high of 24 in 1994 and 2000. Four of the Black Republican nominees are running against Black Democrats, and four are running against White Democrats. None is expected to win. In contrast, the number of Black Democratic nominees is 44, only one less than in the record setting year of 2000.

The Congressional Black Caucus will have a substantial number of new members in the new Congress. Representatives Cynthia McKinney and Earl Hilliard were defeated in their primary elections, and will likely be replaced by African Americans Denise Majette and Artur Davis (See August and September FOCUS). In Florida, Rep. Carrie Meek is retiring, and will be replaced by her son, state Rep. Kendrick Meek. In North Carolina, Representative Eva Clayton is retiring, and will most likely be replaced by Frank Balance, a long-time aide. Finally, the CBC is likely to have two new members from Georgia — Charles “Champ” Walker, Jr., and David Scott. Scott and Walker are the Democratic nominees in two new Georgia districts, the 12th and 13th respectively, which are heavily Democratic, (though not majority Black) districts. In sum, the CBC is likely to have six new faces when the 108th Congress meets next year. Nine CBC incumbents and one nominee, Kendrick Meek, have no major party opposition.

Finally, the potentially historic developments in Georgia deserve special notice. If Walker and Scott are elected, along with candidates from the three districts that already have African American representatives, then not only will Georgia have five Black House members, but 39 percent of its delegation will be Black. That’s particularly significant given that the state’s Black voting-age population is 26.6 percent of its total population.

Up to this time, California and New York have had the most Black members of Congress — four. However, in California,

Black members are only 7.5 percent of the state delegation, and in New York, they are only 13.8 percent. ■

Black Major Party Nominees for Federal Office, November 2002

U.S. House of Representatives

District	Democrat	Republican
AL 7	Artur Davis	Unopposed
CA 9	Barbara Lee*	Jerry Udinsky
CA 32	Diane Watson*	Andy Kim
CA 35	Maxine Waters*	Ross Moen
CA 37	Juanita Millender-McDonald*	Oscar Velasco
D.C.	Eleanor Holmes Norton*	Unopposed
FL 3	Corrine Brown*	Jennifer Carroll
FL 17	Kendrick Meek	Unopposed
FL 23	Alcee Hastings*	Charles Laurie
GA 2	Sanford Bishop*	Unopposed
GA 4	Denise Majette	Cynthia Van Auken
GA 5	John Lewis*	Unopposed
GA 12	Charles Walker, Jr.	Max Burns
GA 13	David Scott	Clay Cox
IL 1	Bobby Rush*	Ray Wardingley
IL 2	Jesse Jackson, Jr.*	Doug Nelson
IL 7	Danny K. Davis*	Mark Tunney
IN 10	Julia Carson*	Brose McVey
LA 2	William Jefferson*+++	+++
MD 4	Albert Wynn*	John Kimble
MD 7	Elijah Cummings*	Joseph Ward
MI 13	Carolyn Kilpatrick*	Unopposed
MI 14	John Conyers*	Dave Stone
MS 2	Bennie Thompson*	Clinton LeSueur
MO 1	William Clay, Jr.*	Richard Schwadron
MO 5	Karen McCarthy	Steve Gordon
NV 1	Shelley Berkley	Lynette Boggs McDonald
NJ 10	Donald Payne*	Dirk Weber
NJ 12	Rush Holt	DeForest Soaries
NY 6	Gregory Meeks*	Unopposed
NY 10	Edolphus Towns*	Unopposed
NY 11	Major Owens*	Susan Cleary
NY 15	Charles Rangel*	Jessie Fields
NY 31	Kisun Peters	Amo Houghton*
NC 1	Frank Balance	Greg Dority
NC 12	Mel Watt*	Kim Holley
OH 2	Charles Sanders	Rob Portman*
OH 11	Stephanie Tubbs Jones*	Pat Pappano
PA 2	Chaka Fattah*	Thomas Dougherty
SC 3	George Brinton	J. Gresham Barrett
SC 6	James Clyburn*	Gary McLeod
TN 9	Harold Ford, Jr.*	Unopposed
TX 18	Sheila J. Lee*	Phillip Abbott
TX 30	Eddie B. Johnson*	Ron Bush
VA 3	Robert Scott*	Unopposed
VA 4	Louise Lucas	Randy Forbes*
WI 2	Tammy Baldwin*	Ron Greer
VI	Donna Christian-Christiansen*	Lillian Belardo de O’neal

U.S. Senate

Texas Ron Kirk John Cornyn

KEY: White candidates' names are underlined; * incumbent +++ There are no major party nominees because LA has no pre-November primaries; multiple candidates appear on ballot.

ECONOMIC REPORT

Good News, Bad News for America's Cities

By Margaret C. Simms

Several studies on local communities released in the past year provide both bad news and good news for America's cities.

First the bad news. In August, the National League of Cities (NLC) released its annual survey of municipal finance officials. Not surprisingly, the officials were quite pessimistic about fiscal conditions for the coming year. Even during a period when the economy is improving, past experience indicates that municipal tax collections lag behind economic recovery. Officials expected city revenue to grow by only 1.2 percent in fiscal year 2002, while the NLC survey predicted a 5.6 percent rise in spending. This will put cities in a bind, one they have only been able to avoid this past year by using rainy day funds accumulated during the 1990s.

Housing Strong

The strong housing market has kept property tax collections strong, but flagging consumer confidence and reduced tourism have put a large dent in the collection of sales tax. In the first quarter of 2002, the NLC report said that sales tax receipts were 8 percent below projections by city finance departments. Estimates for tourist-related tax collections were off by 18 percent. On the other hand, heightened security and public safety projects have boosted expenditures in 72 percent of the cities surveyed. Fiscal pressure on municipal budgets also is coming from increased health insurance premiums for public workers and infrastructure needs.

The good news is that using the latest technology, city officials are developing innovative programs to strengthen their local communities. A report funded by the Pew Charitable Trust reveals how use of the Internet has changed the way city governments and community activists are addressing problems. *Cities Online: Urban Development and the Internet* examines initiatives in five cities — Austin, Texas; Cleveland, Ohio; Nashville, Tennessee; Portland, Oregon; and Washington, DC. The report identifies best practices and best cities among the five studied. Portland receives the largest number of positives in the evaluation. The study author, John B. Horrigan, attributes Portland's success to three factors: strong commitment from city government, interested citizens, and an existing infrastructure of community development organizations.

Among the Portland Internet initiatives cited by Horrigan is the Portland Area Housing Clearinghouse. This electronic clearinghouse, supported by funding from the National Telecommunication Information Administration's Technology Opportunity Program (TOP), is expected to vastly improve the ability to link low-income people with available housing in the Portland area. The system will allow service providers to search efficiently for housing that meets the client's needs and budgets. Moreover, it will create a record of services provided so every social worker who sees the client will know what he or she has previously received. A similar system is in place in Cleveland.

The Internet has also been used to halt or delay local government efforts — for example community activists employed e-mail and listservs to stop a community

planning initiative in Southwest Portland in the late 1990s. The activists were concerned about the environmental impact of the plan on streams in the area. By using the listserv to exchange technical information and refine written arguments, they were able to make a stronger case to the city government. This social networking strategy works to promote economic development as well. In Portland, city officials used the Internet to stimulate the demand for products produced by local firms and to find capital for business projects.

Sustaining Progress

Capital is clearly important for community development, but often private capital can only be attracted if a community has basic infrastructure and other amenities. During the 1990s, a consortium of public and private funders played a major role in addressing these needs. In August 2002, Living Cities, formerly the National Community Development Initiative partnership, announced it would continue its commitment to Community Development Corporations (CDCs) for the next decade at twice the level of its prior investment. The initial investment of \$254 million, for the 1991-2002 period, leveraged another \$2 billion for affordable housing and commercial business development.

The consortium of 17 corporations and foundations, together with the federal Departments of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and Health and Human Services (HHS), have funded initiatives in 23 cities, working primarily through the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) and The Enterprise Foundation. (See box.)

LISC is a national nonprofit community building organization with local programs in 38 cities and 66 rural areas. It serves as an intermediary, raising money from a variety of donor-investors to support local development efforts. The Enterprise

Foundation is a nonprofit organization with 2200 members who provide housing services and facilitate community development in localities all across the country.

In one of a series of evaluation reports from the Urban Institute, *Community Development in the 1990s*, authors Christopher Walker and Mark Weinheimer note that since the National Community Development Initiative began in 1991, Community Development Corporations (CDC) have been transformed from ad hoc entities into the “most productive developers of affordable housing for low-income residents” and participants in a wide array of community-building activities. The study credits the NCDI initiative with the creation and strengthening of CDCs in Portland, a community strength cited by the Horrigan study on effective Internet use.

Providing Information

As this brief review indicates, there are a lot of innovative ideas in communities across the United States and some resources to support them. Unfortunately, many communities in need of examples to follow or data to support their case for economic development find themselves stymied in their efforts to move forward. Two initiatives here at the Joint Center are designed to make this critical information more readily available.

One project, supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is designed to amass and present information on promising practices that promote community economic development. In the first phase of the project, Senior Research Associate Wilhelmina A. Leigh and other Joint Center staff identified programs or initiatives that either fostered economic development through provision of health services or improved health through economic development efforts. A recently published *Resource Guide to Community-Based Health and Community Development Initiatives*, profiles 44 programs illustrative of the

varying pathways between health and community economic development. It also provides information on the sources of funding used by these initiatives.

The Joint Center’s DataBank program, which provides fact sheets and detailed socioeconomic data tables via our web site, uses funds from the Kellogg and Ford foundations to build a data warehouse for community planning and development. It would give community organizations and local leaders an on-line digital capacity to access, manipulate, analyze, graph and map a wide range of data germane to their community improvement objectives.

23 Cities With Programs Funded Through the National Community Development Initiative

Atlanta, Georgia
Baltimore, Maryland
Boston, Massachusetts
Chicago, Illinois
Cleveland, Ohio
Columbus, Ohio
Dallas, Texas
Denver, Colorado
Detroit, Michigan
Indianapolis, Indiana
Kansas City, Missouri
Los Angeles, California
Miami, Florida
(including Dade County)
New York, New York
Newark, New Jersey
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Phoenix, Arizona
Portland, Oregon
San Antonio, Texas
San Francisco Bay Area,
(primarily Oakland, California)
Seattle, Washington
St. Paul, Minnesota
Washington, DC

Source: NCDI

When fully constructed it will provide information important to the NCDI/Living Cities initiative, including data on communities, and on local and regional economies. This would be the type of information that professionals typically need to plan comprehensive business development efforts.

After the planning and development service is fully online in about two years, it also will provide analytic information of what has proven effective in communities with similar problems and resources, in similar local and regional economies and policy environments.

DataBank also will provide analytic information allowing users to compare what has proven effective in communities with similar problems and resources, in similar local and regional economies, and in similar policy environments.

The information will be provided in ways that permit community developers and residents without statistical training to create profiles, graphs, and maps helpful in documenting and understanding the intricately interrelated conditions in their communities. The end goal is to use the Internet to give communities access, through a single interface, to the vast storehouse of data that federal and state agencies have collected on communities and localities.

To obtain further information about the National League of Cities report on fiscal conditions in cities, go to www.nlc.org. The “Cities Online” report can be obtained at www.pewinternet.org. For information on the Living Cities/National Community Development Initiative, visit www.ncdi.org or the Urban Institute web site at www.urban.org. The Joint Center Resource Guide can be obtained by going to www.aecf.org. For related information, also visit the Joint Center and DataBank web sites at www.jointcenter.org. ■

NOVEMBER VOTER TURNOUT MIGHT SET RECORD LOW

POOR SHOWING IN PRIMARIES SETS TONE

BY GREG McDONALD

Voter turnout this year was an almost record low for state primaries. Just 17 percent of the electorate voted, barely above the 16.8 percent of 1998.

Blame it on erosion of trust in political leaders, a decline in civic education and political discourse, busy lives, or whatever you want. Pick almost any reason, and chances are it bears some of the blame for the declining interest in the nation's political process, says Curtis Gans of the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate.

There were slight gains in voter numbers in many states, especially those where tight races and economic issues were prevalent, according to Gans. But overall, the numbers nationwide appeared to be on par with the 1998 elections. In a few states, such as Minnesota and Rhode Island, they will be lower.

"Turnout at this time is running at about the same level as 1998," said Gans, adding that the final tallies will be "a fraction of a percentage higher...or lower" than that year.

Gans said state primaries closer to the November 5 general election tended to have higher turnouts than primaries in the spring or mid-summer. For example, in most of the 11 states holding primaries on September 10, the turnouts on average were better. Some of the more closely contested races — like the Florida battle between Bill McBride and Janet Reno for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination -- probably played a role in getting more voters to the polls.

"That drove turnout up, but it drove turnout up in such small numbers that we are still facing a long-term crisis of the decline in the civic religion," Gans said, pointing out that voter participation has steadily declined since the 1960s, when

nearly 60 percent of registered voters went to the polls. "Civic religion," he explained, is the faith that if you perform your civic duties by voting and participating in politics, good things would result.

Florida hasn't had a 60 percent turnout since the 1960 presidential election. In 1998, when Jeb Bush was elected governor, the state's primary turnout mirrored the national average at 17 percent. But this year's September 10 primary produced a turnout of 28.7 percent, which made state election officials downright giddy.

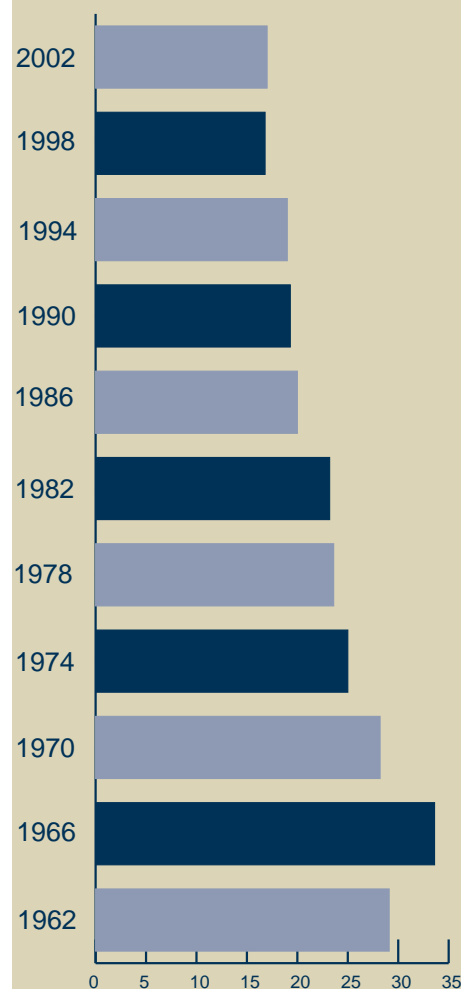
"This is great," said one records-keeper for the Florida elections division. "I don't know what it means for the general election, but it shows that people are interested in the governor's race this year."

But in Minnesota's September 10 primary, there seemed to be a lack of interest in the campaign to replace Independent Gov. Jesse Ventura, who opted not to run for re-election. This year's turnout in Minnesota was only 18.5 percent, compared to the 1998 primary turnout of 19.6 percent.

David Bositis, a senior research associate at the Joint Center, says this is a difficult year to predict the level of Black voter turnout in November. He cited the anger many African Americans felt after the 2000 vote-count debacle as one reason why according to one theory- this could prove to be a strong year for voter participation. The flip side of that theory, however, is that anger could have left people disillusioned and discourage November voting. The same two-sided prediction could apply to the impact of last year's terrorist attacks, Bositis adds.

"It would seem that circumstances would make this a year when people would be really keen to turn out," he said, "but I haven't seen any evidence of that." ■

Overall Primary Turnout: The average percentage of age-eligible persons who voted in 37 states that held statewide primaries in both major parties this year and the average turnout for these states in the years 1962-2002:



Source: Committee for the Study for the American Electorate

Greg McDonald writes for Stateline.org, which granted permission to reprint this article. Joe Davidson and Courtney Mosby contributed to this story.



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IRAQ TO WAR OR NOT...

Continued from cover

Americans, at least as those views are expressed by Black members of Congress.

The circle of influence reflected on Air Force One became wider and whiter when Bush held his first White House war conference with congressional leaders. Images of the Sept. 4 meeting, flashed around the world, show a stark lack of diversity in the group of lawmakers conferring with the president about likely military action against Iraq. Although African Americans are some of the most senior House members, none was seated at the table that day. Nor were there any Latinos or Asian Americans. Only one female legislator, House Democratic whip Nancy Pelosi, was in the group. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) pressed for inclusion in further meetings on Iraq and, later, some CBC representatives were briefed at the White House.

Black Caucus Statement

The briefings, however, did not prevent the CBC from opposing Bush's proposed policy toward Iraq. A CBC statement said: "We oppose a unilateral first-strike action by the United States without a clearly demonstrated and imminent threat of attack on the United States." It added that "a unilateral first-strike would undermine the moral authority of the United States, result in substantial loss of life, destabilize the Mideast region and undermine the ability of our nation to address unmet domestic priorities."

Two Caucus members, California's Barbara Lee and Florida's Alcee Hastings, sponsored alternatives to the Bush resolution, which sought sweeping authority to use military force against Iraq. Lee and 12 other Caucus members

urged a resolution calling for renewal of the UN inspections of Iraq's weapons program as a way to forestall any unilateral American military action. "The dangers of unilateral military action are enormous, including undermining our broader foreign policy goals and diverting badly needed resources from our own domestic needs, including homeland security," Lee said in a letter seeking support for her alternative.

Hastings favored the use of force only on the condition that Bush certify and provide documentation to Congress that Iraq is continuing to develop weapons of mass destruction, poses an imminent threat to the United States or U.S. interests, and pledges that the U.S. government will use diplomatic and peaceful means to obtain Iraq's compliance with UN resolutions.

Furthermore, polls taken by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press in August and mid-September indicated "there is less support for the war among African Americans than Whites," said Michael Dimock, Pew's research director. Although the number of Black people questioned was small, those surveyed were far more likely than White respondents to say they oppose taking military action in Iraq to end Hussein's rule, according to the Pew study.

New York Rep. Charles Rangel, ranking Democrat on the tax-writing Ways and Means Committee, says Bush should spend more time "making the case to the American people [than building support abroad.] Say who's with us, what's the length of time, what's the cost in terms of manpower and money."

The job of rounding up allies, or at least muting public criticism from foreign leaders, falls to Powell. That Bush took

his case against Iraq to the United Nations at all reflects the secretary of state's influence within the administration.

Bush calls Powell "my chief negotiator" in the campaign to win international cooperation and support for U.S. action to disarm Iraq and remove Saddam Hussein as its leader. For a while during the summer, Powell seemed to be on the sidelines as Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld carried the ball on Iraqi policy. But, the secretary of state has emerged, for better or worse, as the man to push Bush's proposed war policy on an international community unconvinced by U.S. charges that Iraq's development of weapons of mass destruction makes it an immediate threat to the United States and the world.

Instead of endorsing the unilateral and preemptive military action that Cheney and Rumsfeld appeared to favor in public speeches and press briefings, Bush embraced Powell's argument for initial consultations with the United Nations and U.S. allies.

Powell "Good Soldier"

While rumors that Powell had been relegated to a minor part in Bush's foreign policy script swirled through the capital, the secretary worked the phones and plied world leaders at international meetings with the outlines of Bush's plan for disarming Iraq. Ever the good soldier, Powell "gets beaten up by the (Republican) right wing. But he's willing to play that role," says University of Maryland political scientist Ronald Walters.

Eventually, both Bush and Powell addressed the rumors. The president discounted talk of Powell's unhappiness as the murmurings of remote, low-level bureaucrats who have no idea of private White House-Cabinet dynamics. Powell dismissed the whispers as pure fiction, noting that his record in public life shows perseverance, not quitting.

As if to punctuate his position as chief diplomat, spokesman and adviser on Bush

administration foreign policy, Powell hit the Sunday chat-show circuit and went to Capitol Hill to testify on Iraq. He was greeted warmly by members of Congress and testified at length on Iraq, the war on terrorism, Israeli-Palestinian hostilities, and other issues.

Unlike Powell, Rice has no operational role in foreign policy. What she does have in common with him, though, is experience with military and diplomatic operations in the Persian Gulf region gained from her White House years as a foreign policy adviser with Bush's father, George H.W. Bush.

Rice's chief responsibility is to coordinate Bush's national security policies, ensuring that positions taken in his name indeed reflect his views. She is also



charged with seeing that Bush's decisions are informed by the best analysis available from government experts at various departments, including State, Defense, Treasury, Justice, as well as the Central Intelligence Agency and U.S. Trade Representative.

Cabinet officers are confirmed by the Senate and outrank Rice, but few enjoy Bush's confidence as much as she. Rice talks with him several times a day and tutored him on foreign policy issues almost daily during the presidential campaign.

She is the driving force behind Bush's far-reaching national security strategy,

which he released last month. It outlines a more aggressive preemptive, first-strike approach that would swing the foundation of the nation's international security strategy in the post-Cold War era "from deterrence to dominance," in the words of a *Washington Post* headline.

As of late September, the White House insisted Bush had not reached a decision to use military force in Iraq. But he was seeking an expansive congressional resolution that would cover any action, including a first-strike war without UN approval, that he deems appropriate. Looking for support, he invited several CBC members with foreign policy and intelligence expertise to highly classified briefings, along with other lawmakers, in secure settings at the White House.

Caucus chair Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas, New Jersey's Donald Payne and Harold Ford of Tennessee attended one recent meeting. Bush, Cheney, CIA Director George Tenet, Rice, and her deputy, Steve Hadley, briefed the lawmakers on details of Iraq's progress with chemical, biological and nuclear weapons.

Despite the attempt to reach out, African American leaders say there are still more questions than

answers. One key question concerns the cost and the impact on domestic programs of a war in Iraq. Bush's economic adviser Larry Lindsey puts the cost estimate at between \$100 billion and \$200 billion.

Rangel dismisses those statements as "guesstimates." He says the costs will depend on answers to many other questions. "We have no idea how long we would be there," he says. "There's the whole question of support in the area. Whose troops are going to be there? What about the war on terrorism? What happens with other parts of the world? We are America.

We don't just take people out."

With mid-term elections set for next month, many lawmakers are nervous about clashing with the president on a matter of national security, especially involving the volatile Middle East. Two Caucus members, Georgia's Cynthia McKinney and Earl Hilliard of Alabama, lost primaries this summer in which the Palestinian/Israeli conflict played a role, at least for national observers. Both members were targeted by pro-Israeli advocates, because of comments and votes deemed too pro-Palestinian or too unsupportive of Israel.

The prospect of sending U.S. troops into Iraq has triggered controversy on the campaign trail in Bush's home state of Texas too. Senate Democratic nominee Ron Kirk questioned whether his Republican opponent, John Cornyn, would be so quick to send young American men and women into Iraq if they came "from families who earn a million dollars or more" rather than those who are "disproportionately ethnic... disproportionately minority."

Kirk, the only major party African American Senate candidate, later expressed regret for the remarks, saying his comments were intended to notice those who will serve on the front lines of any battle. "Any discussions about the war in Iraq must include the potential dangers all our soldiers will face overseas," he added.

But, while some politicians have been cautious in their statements about the prospect of war, Michigan Rep. John Conyers, ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee and CBC dean, has been outspoken on the need for people to vigorously express themselves about the prospect of entering a new war. Harking back to the Vietnam War era, he says: "The people rose up and said: No more!" ■

Jessica Lee has is on leave from USA Today, where she covered national politics. Joe Davidson and Courtney Mosby contributed to this report. Contact FOCUS writers at focuswriters@jointcenter.org.

AFRICA FIGHTS GRAFT WITH NEW TREATY

CORRUPTION PRICE TAG: \$148 BILLION

ADDIS ABABA (IRIN) - A dozen African Union (AU) ministers have endorsed tough new laws aimed at wiping out corruption that has cost the continent an estimated \$148 billion annually.

Meeting in this Ethiopian capital in September, they signed two dozen articles, known as the "Convention on Combating Corruption." Heads of state are expected to adopt it at the AU summit in Maputo, Mozambique next year. Under the treaty, countries would agree to extradite officials who are suspected or have been convicted of corruption. Governments will also have the power to confiscate documents from banks to help with prosecutions. A key element of the convention would be the authority to seize assets belonging to people convicted of corruption.

The meeting was the first time that countries in Africa have drawn up a universal policy designed to tackle the insidious effects of corruption. The draft bill calls on all public officials to declare their assets when they first take office and states that they should be trained in ethics.

The anti-corruption blueprint includes an article guaranteeing fair trials to those arrested for corruption. The laws would include a "double jeopardy" rule, which

means that no-one can be tried for the same crime twice.

"The objectives of this convention are to promote and strengthen the development in Africa by each state party of mechanisms required to prevent, detect, punish and eradicate corruption in public and private sectors," the draft treaty says.

Though corruption is a big and expensive problem, the turnout at the corruption summit was dismal. Only some 13 ministers attended a summit of 42 African countries.

A spokesperson for Transparency International (TI), a leading pressure group against corruption, said he was surprised so few ministers participated in the Addis Ababa meeting. The group criticized the United Nations for failing to send a team.

"Corruption is a very serious problem in Africa – the number one developmental problem," Kumbirai Hodzi, from Transparency International, told IRIN. "It is responsible for most of the ills the continent is facing and has played a role in at least four wars in Africa," he said. "We had expected more ministers to attend to show their support for fighting corruption. We would urge them to start taking this more seriously."

"If the UN had sent a delegation it would have been a tremendous help," he added. "Corruption is not just an African problem, it is an international problem."

Although TI members were disappointed by the low turnout, they also welcomed the initiatives being made by the AU. The AU argues that by fighting corruption, African countries will "remove the obstacles" hindering their economic development. Analysts estimate that corruption in Africa increases the cost of goods by as much as 20 percent.

"Corruption is currently one of the major afflictions seriously confronting Africa," an AU report said. "Not only is it rampant all over the continent, it is deeply rooted in society, in the public treasury and critical sectors of the economy of African countries."

"A direct consequence of this is the emergence of a small young class of billionaires while the rest of the population is wallowing in misery," the report added. "It is Africa's impoverished citizens who bear the brunt of corruption."

IRIN, the Integrated Regional Information Networks of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, provided reprint permission for this story.



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