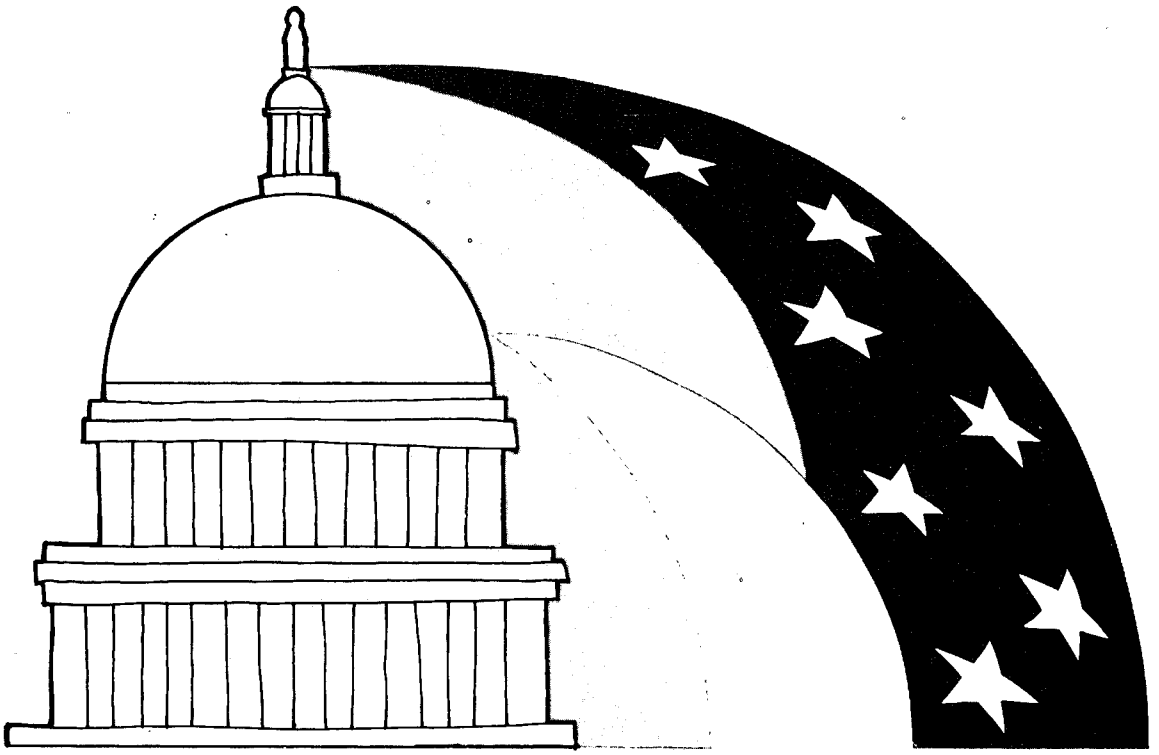
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FOCUS



THE BLACK VOTE 1980

Joint Center for Political Studies

Perspective

As the political debris settles and we prepare to face a somewhat uncertain future, two things must be clear in our minds: we can neither be oblivious to the portents of the November 4 elections, nor can we afford to falter in our continuing struggle for liberty and justice for all.

The election results tell us a number of things. For the vast majority of black voters, the other side won. There is growing conservatism in the land. Some influential conservatives, unfortunately, are right-wing zealots. Federal influence is likely to diminish in the distribution of public benefits and in assuring civil rights.

The political post-mortems are still in progress. However, Governor Reagan's landslide victory appears to suggest that the voters wanted him to do several things: improve the economy, increase the nation's military power, and improve America's image in the eyes of the rest of the world. Perhaps in these areas, Mr. Reagan did receive a mandate.

In these broad terms, this is a mandate with which black Americans agree. Therefore, over the next four years, blacks must insist on playing a vital role in defining this mandate and in charting the course to economic revitalization, national security, and international prestige. We must do this, not only to protect the national interest, but to protect our own interests. Rather than this being a time for despair and withdrawal, it is a time for activism.

To be effective in a conservative political environment, we must readjust some of our perspectives. In the White House and in the Senate new people will soon be in charge, and they purport to have new ideas and different ways of doing things. Humphrey-Hawkins is out and Kemp-Roth is in as a legislative remedy for joblessness and declining productivity. In many instances the challenge ahead will be to bend conservative initiatives to our interests rather than trying to supplant them with Democratic-liberal shibboleths of the past. Where the goals of Republicans and blacks converge, there ought to be room for give and take, on both sides, on the means of achieving shared goals. Where the goals are different, we must, as in the past, chart our own course.

Beyond legislation and public policy, there should be other opportunities for blacks to increase their influence in the political arena. We must insist upon playing a major role in the restructuring of the crumbled Democratic Party. If we are to take the President-elect at his word, there also should be greater opportunities for involvement in the Republican Party. On January 15, 1977, following Gerald Ford's defeat, Mr. Reagan said:

"The time has come for the Republicans to say to black voters: 'Look, we offer principles that black Americans can, and do, support. We believe in jobs, real jobs; we believe in education that is really education; we believe in treating all Americans as individuals and not as stereotypes.' "

On the same occasion Mr. Reagan said that those who are attached to the GOP should "have a say in what goes on in the Party."

This could be a reassuring note for blacks who, on the whole, have been troubled by some of the espousals and adherents of the Republican Party. President Reagan could work to change all that. He must realize, however, that his pledge to abolish some federal programs and to transfer others to states and localities strikes fear in the hearts of minorities and the poor.

The ensuing fight over program demolition and policy change will turn, hopefully, on the merits in specific cases. But if the state and local level is where the conservatives insist the action will be, then so be it. That's where we must be—as registered voters, elected and appointed officials, citizen lobbyists, moral persuaders, and as public opinion molders.

Even before the conservative sweep in the November 4 elections, it was clear that the time had come for us to reassess the nature and extent of our participation in the political system, not only in terms of the two major parties, but also in terms of how we organize and develop strategies to increase our influence. No doubt this process will now be accelerated.

The calls for a separatist black political party must be assessed in this context. Although I per-

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Blacks And The 1980 Presidential Election

by Dr. Milton D. Morris

(Dr. Morris is the Director of Research and Policy Studies at the Joint Center).

The recently concluded 1980 presidential election undoubtedly ranks among the most important in this century. Its importance derives from the decisiveness of the country's rejection of the Democratic incumbent in favor of an avowedly conservative challenger, and the unexpectedly large gains made by the Republican Party in Congress, especially the defeat of several nationally prominent liberal Democratic senators by more conservative Republicans. Together, these developments suggest a major shift toward a more conservative posture by the electorate.

In the presidential race, Governor Ronald Reagan won 489 electoral votes compared to 49 for President Carter, and he won 51 percent of the popular vote to President Carter's 41 percent. This constitutes the largest margin of victory ever by a challenger over an incumbent President and only the second time that an incumbent Democratic President has been defeated in a bid for a second term.

The scale of the Republican victory in Congress was equally impressive. Unofficial returns indicate that the Republicans achieved a net gain of 12 Senate seats to win control of that Chamber by a 53-46 margin. (Senator Robert Byrd of Virginia is an Independent who joins the Democrats for organizational purposes.) In addition, they considerably strengthened their position in the House of Representatives by gaining 33 seats. The Republican Party had not controlled one Chamber of the Congress since 1954.

What role did blacks play in this pivotal national election and what might the results mean for them? It is still too soon for definitive answers to these questions, but they will continue to occupy the thoughts of analysts for the next several months. However, some important early evidence is available.

Black Americans were not part of the rightward shift by the electorate that resulted in the sweeping Reagan victory. In sharp contrast to the rest of the electorate, an overwhelming majority of blacks who voted on November 4th supported President Carter. This is the preliminary finding of a two-part national study of black voting in the election conducted by the Joint Center for Political Studies. One part of that study consisted of exit interviews of over 600 black voters in randomly selected precincts across the country. The other part is based on actual votes cast in about 700 randomly selected precincts with 90 percent or more black populations.

Preliminary findings from the study show that the black vote followed closely the pattern of 1976 with President Carter receiving approximately 89 percent compared to about 8 percent for Governor Reagan. Independent candidate John Anderson obtained just under 2 percent of the black vote with the remainder shared by several minor party candidates.

The Joint Center's election study also indicates that although Governor Reagan received only about 8 percent of the black vote nationwide, he did substantially better in the Midwest where he received approximately 13 percent of the black vote. He did especially well among blacks in small midwestern cities. Furthermore, in a few southern states, the black vote he received exceeded his margin of victory in the unofficial returns. In Arkansas, for example, where Reagan won by 4,285 votes, he received more than 8,000 black votes. Similarly, in Tennessee where his winning margin was 5,732 votes, Reagan recieved more than 16,000 black votes.

Although blacks voted overwhelmingly for President Carter, they did not turn out to vote in overwhelming numbers. Preliminary analyses of the Joint Center's data shows that only about 60 percent of registered voters went to the polls. Although there is no entirely reliable information on the number of blacks who are registered, one reputable public opinion survey reported that roughly 67 percent of the approximately 17 million eligible blacks were registered. This means that approximately 11.4 million blacks were registered and about 7 million, or 40 percent of all eligible blacks voted. This is a few percentage points higher than the Joint Center reported in 1976.

By any measure, this turnout rate by blacks is low especially in view of massive national registration and get-out-the-vote drives by the Joint Center's Operation Big Vote and by other national and local organizations. However, initial estimates are that turnout for the nation reached an all-time low of 52 percent. Low turnout, therefore, was not confined to blacks. In fact, the 12 percentage point gap between black voter turnout and the national turnout rarely has been narrower.

A higher black voter turnout probably would have contributed to President Carter's success in a few states where Governor Reagan won by narrow margins. However, it would not have changed the outcome of the election. The black vote can be and has been decisive when it remains unified in a closely contested election. However, when the consensus among other elements of the electorate is as great as was reflected in this election, the black vote loses its decisiveness. In recent years, the black vote has been especially important in the large and often critical states of the Midwest and Northeast, particularly Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York. However, Governor Reagan won such widespread support among other segments of the electorate that the black vote on any scale could not have reversed the outcome with the possible exception of New York. Excluding New York, Governor Reagan won by between 7 and 13 percentage points in each of these states.

Of course, not being a critical factor in the outcome does not mean that the black vote was insignificant. As with the population at large, the direction of the black vote is a reflection of the

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Blacks and the Election (continued)

interests, outlook, and policy preferences of that segment of the society. In this election, blacks appeared to have held steadfastly to the progressive social, economic, and civil rights policies supported by an active federal government in recent years, while the vast majority of the electorate sought or were willing to accept major shifts in direction and in emphasis in national policy.

The presidential race has been the focus of national attention, but the results of the congressional races also are extremely important to the future course of the federal government. Of the 32 Senate seats that were being contested in the election, 24 were held by Democrats and 10 by Republicans. The Repub'icans retained control of all of theirs and won 12 of those held by Democrats to gain control of the Senate. Not only will that Chamber be considerably more conservative and controlled by Republicans, but Republicans next year will take over the chairmanship of and have a majority of votes on all the standing committees. This will considerably enhance their leadership role in national policymaking.

The House of Representatives remained in the control of the Democrats, but their majority will be 243-192 instead of the 273-179 they held prior to the elections. Here, too, the success of Republicans ensures a more conservative chamber, especially since several prominent Democratic leaders lost their seats.

Amid the massive changes that have taken place in Congress, the Congressional Black Caucus will increase its membership by one but will have four new faces. One member of the Caucus, Republican Melvin Evans, the non-voting delegate from the Virgin Islands, lost his seat. Meanwhile, blacks picked up two new seats as Gus Savage won in Illinois' 2nd Congressional District (Chicago); and Mervyn Dymally won in California's 31st District (Los Angeles). The other new faces include retired Judge George Crockett, Jr., who was elected to the seat vacated by Charles Diggs in Michigan's 13th District (Detroit), and Harold Washington who replaced Bennett M. Stewart in Illinois' 1st District. Seven other blacks seeking election to Congress lost. Six of them were Republicans, and one, Dr. Leslie McLemore in Mississippi's 4th Congressional District, was an Independent.

Clearly, Governor Reagan does not owe his election to the support of black voters as was the case with President Carter in 1976 or John Kennedy in 1960. Blacks have not been a prominent or influential segment of the Republican Party. Furthermore, the Republican platform and many of the positions espoused by Governor Reagan in his long campaign for the presidency are very different from the positions supported, for many years, by politically active blacks. Not surprisingly, many black observers fear that under these circumstances the new administration might be unsympathetic to their interests or might even permit a major national retreat on the progress the society has made on racial matters over the past two decades.

Although these developments are possible, and indeed might be urged on the President by some of his supporters, they need not occur. To an extent, these fears stem from an exaggerated view of the protection provided blacks by their support for a winning candidate, and they underestimate the capacity of the political system to maintain a high degree of continuity in public policy. Such fears also fail to take into account that what is good for blacks may also be in the best interest of the Republican Party and the Reagan Administration.

In a post-election press statement, JCPS President Eddie Williams noted that Governor Reagan and the Republican Party now have an outstanding opportunity to build bridges to the black community and thus make significant inroads into one of the principal elements of the traditional Democratic Party coalition. They can accomplish this by being sensitive and responsive to the interests of blacks and other minorities. One meaning of the low turnout among registered black voters, Williams suggested, might be that many blacks were not hostile to the prospect of a Reagan presidency and so did not feel compelled to vote against Governor Reagan. This posture by a substantial segment of the black population might very well provide a basis for a generally constructive relationship between blacks and the Reagan Administration.

Such an essentially optimistic approach to the Reagan Administration by no means ignores the great potential for serious setbacks to blacks as a result of the change of administration. There are profound differences between the preferred approaches of the Republican Party to many of the pressing social and economic problems confronting blacks specifically and the country at large, and the approaches blacks have supported over many years. Moreover, the absence of significant visible ties or access to the Reagan Administration by blacks seems likely to greatly reduce their capacity to help shape policy decisions in which they have a vital interest. These conditions pose major challenges for politically active blacks as well as for the new administration. The extent to which both sides rise to the challenge will be crucial to the well-being of blacks, to the future of the Republican Party, and to the well-being of the country.

In addition to the special challenges blacks face in working with a Reagan Administration, the drastically altered Congress will provide its own formidable challenges. Although a more conservative Congress can be safely predicted, much remains unclear about its likely performance. One reason for this is that both houses have experienced extremely high turnovers in recent years. When the new Congress convenes in January, more than half the Senate and almost half the House will have been in office for less than four years.

Another source of uncertainty involves the new leadership cast, especially in the Senate. The new Senate majority leader, Howard Baker of Tennessee, has had an outstanding Senate career and is highly regarded by virtually all elements on the political scene. However, most of the new committee chairmen are not well known leaders in the Congress. The most notable Senate Committee

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Census Bureau Must Adjust Minority Count

by Eddie N. Williams

Blacks, Hispanics, and the nation's cities were clearly the winners in the September 25 Federal court decision calling for an adjustment of the 1980 census figures to reflect more accurately the minority population count. The judge ruled that a substantial census undercount in areas of black and Hispanic concentration would cost those areas congressional seats and hundreds of millions of dollars in federal money.

However, the long term effect of this decision remains in doubt. The U.S. Department of Justice is now deciding whether to go along with it or to appeal on the grounds that it violates the U.S. Constitution or sets up goals that are impossible to attain.

In the case of Detroit Mayor Coleman Young versus Secretary of Commerce Philip Klutznick and Census Bureau Director Vincent Barabba, U.S. District Court Judge Horace W. Gilmore directed the Census Bureau to present a plan "to make an adjustment for the differential undercount" before "delivering any population count to the President or the various states."

This directive brought to a head a controversy that has been raging since 1970 when the Census Bureau acknowledged that it failed to count 5.3 million persons and that the undercount among blacks was four times higher than among whites; 7.7 percent compared to 1.9 percent.

The undercount controversy emerges out of a clash between constitutional and contemporary population counting procedures. The Constitution requires the Census Bureau to conduct a population headcount by enumerators every 10 years. However, based on birth, death, immigration and other records, Census Bureau computers can determine a population count that most experts believe to be more accurate than the door-to-door enumeration. The difference is the undercount.

The census undercount is significant in three critical areas:

1. Federal agencies use census data to allocate billions of dollars of public assistance funds to localities. To the extent that their populations are undercounted, localities are short-changed in federal money.

2. Census data are also used by state legislatures to determine congressional districts and state legislative districts. A population undercount leads to inaccurate and unfair apportionment and redistricting and ultimately to a denial or a dilution of political rights.

3. Because the undercount is disproportionately high among blacks and Hispanics and because these groups are concentrated in major cities, the undercount has a differential impact which smacks of discrimination and which robs cities both in terms of dollar allocations and political representation.

With these critical areas in mind, Judge Gilmore delivered the following findings in *Young* v. *Klutznick:*

1. It is the right of every person within the United States of America on April 1, 1980 to be counted in the Census, and the Bureau of the Census is required by Article 1, Section 2, Clause 3 of the U.S. Constitution to count such persons, where it is reasonably possible.

2. Where a known differential undercount of black persons and Hispanic persons as compared with white persons of 4 to 1 has the effect of denying persons equal weight of vote and equal representation by virtue of the large concentrations of blacks and Hispanics in metropolitan areas and/or regions of the Southwest, the principal of the one-man, one-vote is clearly violated.

3. The Bureau of the Census is constitutionally required to adjust the decennial census population count for the differential undercount of black and Hispanic persons, where such adjustment will bring the adjusted population count closer to the truth than the raw, unadjusted census count.

4. The Bureau of the Census admitted, and the Court held, that the Bureau had the necessary know-how to adjust the population count for the differential undercount, much as they did during the 1970 decennial census, in a manner which is statistically defensible.

5. The right to vote and the right to equal weight of vote is a cherished right essential to a democratic society and can be abrogated as much through dilution as through denial. The Constitution has long been interpreted so that not only does an individual have the right to vote, but also the right to have his or her vote counted.

6. The plaintiff, Coleman Young, has standing to sue, and the Federal Courts have jurisdiction, because all of the fifty states are constitutionally required to use, and do use, population counts taken from the decennial census, in the first instance, for the purposes of congressional redistricting.

7. The defendants' contention that the Constitution required solely a headcount, unadjusted for the differential undercount, rings hollow in light of the plain wording of Article 1, Section 2, Clause 3, and the practice of the Bureau in imputing 4.9 million people into the 1970 decennial census population count, where the Bureau did not have hard evidence, such as a census questionnaire, that many of the persons existed in the numbers imputed into the 1970 count.

8. The Bureau of the Census is ordered to make an adjustment for the differential undercount within the time constraints imposed by Title 13 of the U.S. Code, of January 1, 1981, and April 1, 1981, but if, after good faith effort, such adjustment cannot be made within said time limits, the Bureau may petition this Court for an extension of time.

(continued, next page)

Census Minority Count (continued)

9. The Bureau is enjoined from delivering any population count to the President or the various states until the above-described adjustment is made and until further order of this court.

The Detroit decision contained two surprises. One was its timing. The decision came about three months before the Census Bureau was required to present its 1980 report to the President. In effect, it said that data from the 1980 census cannot be used until they have been adjusted, a process that the Census Bureau says would take at least a year if it can be accomplished at all. As a result, federal program allocations and political representation would be frozen in place until after an adjusted census has been prepared.

The second surprise in the Detroit case was its coverage of political representation, a matter covered by the U.S. Constitution. It has long been assumed that the Constitution mandates an actual headcount by enumerators for purposes of redistricting and reapportionment and that an adjusted census, involving computerized data, was unconstitutional. Judge Gilmore said this line of thinking "rings hollow." It is in this area that some say the Detroit case may well precipitate a major constitutional debate.

The census undercount has been the subject of much study and debate in recent years. While there has been general agreement that the undercount leads to inequities, there has been no concensus on what to do about the problem. Two strong arguments have emerged. One calls for the use of computers to synthetically adjust census figures. The other argument only calls for improving the procedures under which the Census Bureau collects population data.

Despite improvements in the conduct of the census over the years, the decennial census continues to be an incomplete snapshot of the national population. Its incompleteness is due to inadequate counting procedures, poverty and illiteracy, fear of the census, and high mobility rates. In recent years the undercount problem has been compounded by the knowledge that some groups are undercounted more than others and by the fact that more and more federal funding formulae include population as one crucial factor in determining the amount of federal aid that goes to localities.

In 1978 the prestigious National Academy of Science recommended that the Census Bureau adopt a procedure to make an adjustment for any undercount that might occur in 1980 so as to assure greater equity in the distribution of federal funds. The NAS cited three adjustment techniques which could be used. Census experts generally agree that there are three feasible and defensible adjustment methodologies but that all have shortcomings. However, there is general concensus that one of the adjustment methodologies is preferable to the others. It is called the "synthetic" adjustment.

In a study of the validity of the synthetic method, National Urban League Research Director, Dr. Robert Hill comments as follows: "The synthetic method is a statistical procedure for distributing the undercount of a larger geographic area (such as a nation, state, county, or city) among its sub-units (such as a state, county, city or congressional district, respectively). For example, this method permits one to distribute the total 5.3 million people that the Census Bureau estimated had been left out of the 1970 census not only among *all* 50 states, but also among *every* sub-division (such as SMSA's, counties, cities, towns, congressional districts, wards, neighborhoods, census tracts, planning areas, etc.) within *each* state. Similarly, the synthetic method allows one to distribute the 1.9 million blacks and 3.4 million whites that were not included in the official 1970 census throughout all geographic subdivisions below the national level."

An earlier study, published by the Joint Center for Political Studies, also recommended the synthetic method of adjustment as a means of correcting for the 1970 undercount in general revenue sharing allocations.

The National Academy of Science study concurred that the synthetic method can be used to adjust population for areas of any size, but it cautioned that "the smaller the area the more unstable the adjusted data would be . . ." The Census Bureau contends that it "has been unable to develop a methodology of estimating the undercount with any degree of certainty for all geographic areas in the United States, and for the major racial and ethnic groups in these areas. Whether the synthetic method produces better estimates for all areas is still being evaluated."

This is where the demographic debate stood at the time of Judge Gilmore's ruling. But demographic arguments aside, it was political pressure that catapulted the undercount issue into the political and judicial limelight and such pressure will no doubt keep it there until the matter is resolved one way or the other.

Strong sentiment in the black community surfaced earlier this year when the National Conference on a Black Agenda for the '80s adopted a "demand" calling for the "mandatory use of an adjusted population figure . . ." The U.S. Conference of Mayors, Hispanics, and numerous demographers echoed this point of view. Several members of Congress, including Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY) and Rep. Robert Garcia (D-NY), introduced legislation dealing with the undercount, and lawsuits were filed by the cities of Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, Baltimore, Newark, and Chicago.

If the Detroit decision is appealed by the Department of Justice, the U.S. Supreme Court will most likely have an opportunity to rule on the undercount issue. If it stands, the Census Bureau will be required to devise ways of adjusting the undercount to achieve greater equity in the distribution of public monies and in the protection of political rights.

Telescope

Myron Thompson Sworn in As Federal Judge in Alabama

Myron H. Thompson, the first black assistant attorney general of Alabama, has become the second black federal judge in that state since Reconstruction.

His appointment follows the appointment of U. W. Clemons, who recently became the first black to hold a federal judgeship in Alabama in modern times.

Clemons, a former Alabama state senator and Fred Gray, a Tuskegee civil rights lawyer, were both nominated to federal judgeships in Alabama by President Carter, but the American Bar Association opposed the appointment of both men, calling them "unqualified" and successfully blocked the confirmation of Gray. Clemons was eventually confirmed and Myron Thompson was nominated by U.S. Senator Howell T. Heflin (D-Ala.) for the judgeship to which Gray was originally nominated. Thompson's confirmation was without controversy.

The 33-year-old Thompson attended Yale College as a national achievement scholar, receiving his B.A. in political science. He received his J.D. from the Yale Law School in 1972 and was admitted to practice in all Courts of the State of Alabama.

Following graduation from law school, Thompson returned to Alabama where he became the first black assistant attorney general in the state's history.

He is considered to be an expert in the area of education law, having handled numerous cases involving school desegregation, teacher rights, and the rights of students.

Senator Heflin, in a statement before the Senate on behalf of Thompson's confirmation said, ". . . I would simply remind the Senate of the importance—both symbolically and substantively—of elevating minorities to the Federal bench. On a previous occasion before the Senate, I have affirmed my belief in a society in which true equality is a national birthright. I have indicated how fervently I believe that one way we correct many years of injustice and oppression is to see to it that no Americans are precluded from consideration for the Federal bench because of color of their skin, their sex, or their surname."

"By entrusting to those who have known inequality and injustice firsthand the important responsibility for guaranteeing the rights afforded under the Constitution, we insure—one, and for all—the protections of liberty and justice to which we all aspire. Myron Thompson will do that, and do it with distinction."

Black Historical Sites Established By Carter Administration

President Carter has signed into law two bills establishing a Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historical Site and Preservation District, in Atlanta, Ga., and a Boston African American National Historic Site in Massachusetts.

The King historic site includes the Martin Luther King, Jr., Memorial and Center for Social Change, Dr. King's birthplace and gravesite, the Ebenezer Baptist Church and other buildings in the immediate vicinity, as well as, the King home. The site will be maintained and administered by the Department of Interior.

The Boston African American National Historic Site includes 16 structures located in the Beacon Hill area of Boston. It is the largest assemblage of pre-Civil War Afro-American structures in the urban United States and was where, shortly before the 19th century, a free black community was developed.

It includes the first black church in New England; the African Meeting House, constructed in 1806 which now houses the Afro-American Museum of Boston; the Lewis Hayden House, one of the stations of the Underground Railroad in Canada; and the William C. Nell House, named after one of this country's first published black historians.

This bill also establishes a National Afro-American History and Culture Commission to develop a plan for a National Center for the Study of Afro-American History and Culture. The Center will be built in Wilberforce, Ohio.

EEOC Recommends Alternatives to Layoffs

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) has urged employers and labor unions to find alternatives to laying off workers, because of the disproportionately harsh impact it may have on minorities, women and older workers.

The Commission recommended that "work-sharing," reducing the work week to four days and combining it with unemployment insurance, be used as an alternative to layoffs.

EEOC contends that "layoffs on a last-hired, first-fired basis" have an adverse effect on minorities, women and older workers, and that it may eventually eliminate affirmative gains made in the workplace.

According to the Commission, almost one-third of all union contracts provide for work-sharing as an alternative to layoffs.

The Commission has urged governors and state legislators to make minor changes in their state's unemployment compensation laws, to allow unemployment insurance to be used as compensation for a partial work week.

Two Conferences of Black Elected Officials

Two conferences of black elected officials were held in Atlanta, Ga. recently.

The National Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (NBC/LEO) held its 10th annual conference November 28-December 3, 1980, at the Atlanta American Motor Hotel.

The NBC/LEO conference was held in conjunction with the National League of Cities' 1980 Congress of Cities & Exposition.

Following the NBC/LEO conference, the Annual Conference of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators (NBC/SL) was held December 4-7, 1980 at the Atlanta American Motor Hotel.

See the next issue of **Focus** for more information.

Perspective

(Continued from page 2)

sonally consider this strategy to be shortsighted and unrealistic, there is clearly a need for greater political organization among blacks. We need a more systematic way to sort out priority issues, increase voter participation, and to target our support to candidates who are friendly and our opposition to those who are not.

These are some of the themes that we must discuss and debate in the months ahead. Surely, none is more important than the rediscovery of our self-confidence and self-reliance. And none is likely to speak more to the future than the simple assertion that we are not powerless and we cannot afford to feel defeated.

Eddie N. Williams
President

Blacks and the Election

(continued from page 4)

leadership changes, from a black perspective, involve the Judiciary Committee, to be headed by Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, and the Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Committee, to be headed by Senator Jake Garn of Utah. The Judiciary Commitee, a powerful force in shaping the federal justice system, will be especially critical in screening appointments to the Supreme Court, in dealing with several controversial proposed constitutional amendments, and in anticipated congressional action on renewal of the Voting Rights Act. The Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs Commitee has been central to the development and implementation of current housing and urban policies; areas that directly affect the lives of large numbers of blacks. The kind of leadership these new chairmen provide will determine, in large measure, whether these policies will be reversed.

A third broad area of concern stemming from the election is the immediate outlook for the pattern of black voting behavior. At least since 1940, most blacks have supported Democratic candidates for President and since 1964 have provided massive support, casting from 85 to 94 percent of their votes for Democrats. The extensive gains of the Republican Party and the defection of many traditional elements of the Democratic Party in this election raise several questions about the future of the party and about the future of black partisan support.

One such question in whether the interests of blacks are threatened by the persistance of their high level of support for one party. Another concerns the steps that might be undertaken in the near future to rebuild old a'liances and forge new ones that will help to protect the interests of blacks, other minorities and the disadvantaged in the society. In the coming months and years blacks, as well as others in the society, will need to find answers to these questions and to develop strategies for action.

The 1980 edition of the National Roster of Black Elected Officials on sale soon. To reserve your copy, send $21.50 for each copy to Publications Department, Joint Center for Political Studies, 1426 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C., 20005. Single copy orders must be paid in advance. Orders of two or more copies may be billed, but postage and handling will be added.

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