



FOCUS[®]

MAGAZINE

BLACKS AND THE 2006 MIDTERM ELECTIONS

By David A. Bositis

November 7, 2006 was a good day for the Democratic Party and for many of its black nominees. The Democrats gained control of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate, as well as a majority of the governorships and the state legislative bodies in the country. And in addition to victories by black candidates in a number of statewide races, an unprecedented number of Congressional Black Caucus members will chair committees and subcommittees in the 110th Congress. This preliminary analysis reveals the significance of African American voters in a number of closely contested races, especially for the U.S. Senate, and examines some of the key outcomes of the 2006 midterm elections.

The Critical Role of African American Voters in Democratic Victories

Although black turnout nationally increased only modestly between 2002 and 2006 (Table 1), black turnout in the 2006 midterm elections was strategically effective in several places, although not enough in others. There were significant increases in black turnout in Florida, Michigan, Missouri, Ohio,

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

It is an honor and a dream come true to be chosen to lead an organization as prestigious as the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. When I learned of my appointment, I felt that somehow I had come full circle and had arrived home. Perhaps this is because at almost every critical juncture of my life, the Joint Center has never been very far away.

In 1969, when Dr. Kenneth Bancroft Clark conceived the idea for this organization, I was preparing to graduate from the all-black high school in Orangeburg, South Carolina. The previous year, my friend and classmate, Delano Middleton, was one of three young men killed when law enforcement officers opened fire on a crowd of 200 unarmed black people gathered on the campus of South Carolina State College to protest segregation of a local bowling alley. Another 27 protestors were wounded by gunfire. This event would much later be called the Orangeburg Massacre. But at the time, the authorities called it "an unfortunate incident." This description was generally accepted by the media and the public at large, which reserved their indignation for a similar incident that happened the following year at Kent State in Ohio. How could such a thing come to pass? And how could our voices be silenced in the aftermath?

For those of us close to this tragedy, it served as a lesson in what happens—and what doesn't happen—when a particular segment of the community lacks voice, representation, and empowerment. And I recall thinking that the Joint Center, with all its promise of nurturing and increasing black political participation, was part of the solution to all of this. Change would surely come.

And it did. Just a few years later, my Daddy and two other men broke the political color barrier in our community with their election to the Orangeburg County Council. Following his election, he talked about how Eddie Williams and the Joint Center were assisting him and other new office holders as they sought to transform their new political power into a better life for African Americans everywhere.

I have no doubt that the Joint Center's work laid the groundwork for me to go to Washington in the late 1970s and join the staff of Senator Fritz Hollings and, later, to become the staff director of a major Senate committee. The same is true for when I was selected to be the first African American partner of a law firm with more than 1,000 attorneys. I worked hard for the opportunity, but benefited from the struggle and sacrifice of so many who came before me.

My late parents, both educators, always told me that I could grow up to be whatever I wanted to be. Their love and encouragement—and their shining example—helped me navigate past the injustices that were all around us and left me with a burning desire to help create solutions for improving the lives of African Americans and other people of color. Inspiration also comes from the words of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays, the great educator and mentor of Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who said "whatever one touches, his aim should always be to leave that which he touches better than he found it."

So, here I am—at a place that truly feels like home—ready to lead the Joint Center into a new era and to enhance its position as the preeminent source of information, analysis, and ideas on issues that matter to people of color. We have so many opportunities at our doorstep if we are bold enough to try new approaches and take some risks. Our society's ever-increasing thirst for knowledge, as well as the ongoing expansion of channels for delivering information, plays directly to our strengths, but we need to look beyond our core competencies and develop new areas of research and new products as our society and our communities evolve.

Now is the time to dream, to imagine, and to think big. Why not? People of color all across this country are doing it. How else could a self-described "skinny kid with a funny name" shake up the presidential primaries merely by considering a run for the highest office in the land? How else could a black lawyer now be living in the Governor's mansion in Boston, scene of such racial strife and division not so very long ago? Could we have dared to envision just a few years ago that African Americans would run the most powerful committees in the U.S. House of Representatives?

I fully intend that the Joint Center will be right there with them, helping identify, articulate, and disseminate African American perspectives on all public policy issues. We will work with friends of all political affiliations to ensure that when key decisions are made, we are counted. Our obligation is to see to it that, before they make the decisions that affect our communities, policymakers and other people of influence will ask: What does the Joint Center think?

And we will tell them what we think.

It's good to be home.

*Ralph B. Everett
President and CEO
Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies*

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JOINT CENTER'S NEW PRESIDENT, RALPH B. EVERETT, RECEIVES WARM WELCOME



On January 1, 2007, the Joint Center welcomed trailblazing lawyer Ralph B. Everett as its new president and chief executive officer. Mr. Everett was the first African American partner at the leading international law firm of Paul, Hastings, Janofsky & Walker LLP, where he has worked since 1989 as a specialist in transportation and communications policy. Previously, he became the first African American to head the staff of a U.S. Senate committee when he was appointed to be Democratic staff director and minority chief counsel of the Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. Mr. Everett has been active in national and community affairs, including six years on the board of the National Urban League, more than ten years on the board of the Center for National Policy, and service as a member of the President's Board of Advisors on Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

A native of Orangeburg, South Carolina, Mr. Everett is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Morehouse College and has a juris doctor from Duke University Law School, where he was an Earl Warren Legal Scholar. He began his professional career as a lawyer in the North Carolina Department of Labor in Raleigh and moved to Washington to work as a legislative assistant in the office of Senator Ernest F. Hollings (D-SC).

"Ralph Everett is a man of enormous energy who has the experience and the vision to lead the Joint Center into an exciting future. We are delighted that he will be putting his extraordinary networking and coalition-building skills to work for the nation's foremost policy research institution on African American issues."

— Elliott S. Hall
Chairman of the Joint Center's
Board of Governors

"The selection of Ralph Everett is an excellent one. His blend of legislative experience combined with both private sector experience and contacts will energize the excellent work of the Joint Center. I applaud his selection and look forward to working with him on matters of mutual concern."

— Marc H. Morial
President and CEO
National Urban League

"Ralph Everett is an individual of great intellect, integrity, and vision. He will do an outstanding job leading the Joint Center and advancing public policy issues of concern to African Americans."

— Thomas J. Donohue
President and CEO
U.S. Chamber of Commerce

Statements of Support

"I am delighted with the appointment of Mr. Everett as the president of the Joint Center. He is a pioneer who understands the challenges facing black public officials and the policies about which we and our constituents are most concerned. He brings great experience and energy to the Joint Center and to the National Policy Alliance, which includes the nine organizations that represent the nation's 9,500 black elected officials and the several million black public employees at all levels of government.

Those of us who have worked with the Joint Center to bring these organizations together welcome Mr. Everett to his new position, and we look forward to working with him to further strengthen the Alliance."

— Johnny Ford
Mayor of Tuskegee, AL
Founder of the World Conference of Mayors, Inc.
Co-Chair of the National Policy Alliance

"We are but the sum-total of our experiences. A fellow South Carolinian, Ralph Everett has a broad, distinguished, and diverse wealth of experiences that will serve the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies well. He has become a widely recognized expert and person of influence on the issues of telecommunications, transportation, and commerce through his work in the executive, legislative, and judicial areas in Washington. Ralph Everett will build upon the Joint Center's groundbreaking legacy as the first African American think tank. Under his leadership, the Joint Center will soar to new heights and play an important role in shaping good public policy."

I congratulate Ralph and look forward to working with him as we embark on the 110th Congress, a historic moment for this country in which African Americans will chair ... [several] of the most powerful committees in the House of Representatives and serve in the highest levels of Majority Leadership."

— Congressman James E. Clyburn
House Majority Whip

A NEW CONGRESS, A NEW DIRECTION

An Interview with Congresswoman Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick,
Incoming Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus

Now in her sixth term serving Michigan's 13th Congressional District, Congresswoman Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick is the incoming Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) for the 110th Congress. She is also a member of the House Appropriations Committee. Congresswoman Kilpatrick was the 2nd Vice Chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus and she was selected to serve as the first Chairwoman of the CBC's Political Action Committee. Congresswoman Kilpatrick also was the first African American woman to serve on the Michigan House Appropriations Committee and has been appointed to the United States Air Force Academy Board, becoming the first African American member of Congress to serve on the Board. In the following interview, Congresswoman Kilpatrick outlines some of the key priorities for the CBC and the constituencies that its members represent.



Focus: *Congresswoman Kilpatrick, how do you feel about the results of the 2006 midterm elections and the upcoming composition of the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate?*

Congresswoman Kilpatrick: I am strengthened and encouraged by the results of the past election. The American people voted for change, and I am proud to be part of the group of leaders that will help shape that effort and chart a new direction for families across the country. I am especially pleased with the Democratic takeover of the House and the Senate. I know that we will strive to work together to create policies that increase the minimum wage, strengthen Medicare and Medicaid, lower prescription drug costs, and fund job training for displaced workers.

I was disappointed by the passage of the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative, a proposal against affirmative action. This is a setback for all Michigan residents and my district—which includes the city of Detroit—in particular. Women and minorities will lose access to opportunities in employment, education, contracting, and health care. For example, programs that grant certain groups access to services—such as breast cancer and cervical cancer screenings for women or initiatives targeting sickle cell and diabetes, conditions that disproportionately affect African Americans—could be eliminated.

Diversity is one of our nation's strengths. We all benefit when students from diverse backgrounds and races learn together at our universities. Many corporations support affirmative action because they

embrace diversity; our companies are more competitive when women and people of color are involved in developing strategies to solve business problems. Our communities are stronger when all those who comprise their populations—African Americans, Arab Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, and European Americans—work together to address issues that affect us all. We will have to find other ways to make sure that this type of collaboration continues.

Focus: *What are some of your priorities as the incoming Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus?*

Congresswoman Kilpatrick: As Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), I will work to secure maximum participation from CBC members and strengthen black elected officials. I want to implement several initiatives to mobilize, organize, and educate our constituencies. For example, I have been gathering information to develop a national integrated communications strategy for the CBC. While we will continue to use traditional avenues such as print, radio, and television media to share our message, I want to strengthen our relationship with black elected and appointed officials and collaborate with them to establish a greater Internet presence through the use of electronic newsletters, blogs, and podcasts. Efforts will also focus on increasing communication and outreach with our natural constituencies, including African American churches, community leaders, professionals, and young leaders.

I will continue the outreach program initiated by Congressman Mel Watt. I want CBC members to continue going into communities around the country to talk to people about real issues—such as education, jobs, alternative energy, and prescription drugs—that are important to them. We must continue to bring Congress to the community so that we can learn first-hand how these issues affect the ability of families to exist and survive in America.

I also want to empower our constituents with information about legislation created by CBC members and policies that affect their families. This would be accomplished through the publication and distribution of Congressional Action Updates, Joint Center briefings, and white papers.

I want the CBC to take the lead in two areas that are vital to America's position as a world leader: agriculture and energy. I would like to see a concentrated effort to create legislation designed to decrease domestic and world hunger, impact the new farm bill, and foster an environment for the creation of renewable and sustainable sources of energy. I want to work with black farmers to help identify and produce crops such as beans and corn that can be used to produce energy. This would generate revenue for them, while creating domestic sources of energy so that we do not have to rely on foreign countries.

As national leaders, I believe CBC members must work with young leaders between the ages of 21 and 40 who want greater access to the political process and increased involvement in helping set the agenda for our community. I want to use

technology, town hall meetings, media outlets, seminars, and conferences to bolster their participation. We must motivate, mentor, and mobilize our young people so that they are encouraged and empowered to create change in their communities.

Focus: What will be the likely budget priorities of the CBC for the upcoming Congress?

Congresswoman Kilpatrick: In addition to the initiatives I have already mentioned, we will also focus on securing increased funding for issues such as public education, training and retraining, health disparities, and financial literacy.

The federal government must fund public education; the burden must not rest entirely on the states. We must reduce interest rates on student loans. We must also focus on providing funds for job training so that young people who either choose not to or do not have the resources to attend college can secure skilled trade or other positions that will enable them to provide for their families. Greater emphasis on education will ensure that our young people can attain success and that America can remain competitive.

We need to increase funding for programs that raise awareness about health issues, including HIV/AIDS, diabetes, hypertension, breast cancer, and obesity, that disproportionately affect African Americans. We must spread the message of prevention in our communities and ensure access to information, resources, and health care that will help our constituents live longer lives and build stronger communities.

We will continue to help African Americans build wealth and achieve economic security by promoting financial literacy and working to increase home ownership rates. We will also continue to fight against the privatization of Social Security to ensure that everyone has access to retirement security.

The CBC was successful in securing emergency funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) in the Gulf Coast region that were affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We must

build upon these efforts during the next funding cycle so that we can continue to address the needs of people in these communities.

Focus: How do you think the new composition of the House of Representatives will affect the CBC's agenda?

Congresswoman Kilpatrick: Several members of the CBC, including Congressmen Jim Clyburn, Charles Rangel, and John Conyers, will hold leadership positions in Congress. This gives the CBC more power and influence. It also places the organization in a good position to help set and push the overall policy agenda. Most of the issues that we want to change—access to education, decreased energy costs, the availability of health care—are of particular interest and importance to African Americans and other groups that have been disenfranchised for too long. For example, we want to fix the prescription drug program. Under the current program, Medicare cannot negotiate for lower prices; seniors cannot purchase their prescriptions in Canada, where they are less expensive; and many seniors have to pay the full cost of their prescriptions or go without their medicine because of the “doughnut hole,” an annual temporary lapse in coverage that occurs when a certain spending level is reached. We must change this. We will also revisit other issues like the minimum wage and stem cell research.

Focus: How do you think the National Policy Alliance (NPA), an alliance of the nine major organizations that represent black public officials, can be most useful?

Congresswoman Kilpatrick: The Alliance will help black leaders sharpen our focus. A partnership such as this gives us a chance to explore how issues affect African Americans at the city, county, state, and federal levels. We can then develop a more strategic, coordinated approach to tackle the challenges that we face. For example, input and involvement from the Alliance can strengthen the CBC's outreach efforts. The CBC represents 26 million people

of all ethnic and racial backgrounds. By creating an ongoing dialogue and sharing information and resources, we can strengthen relationships and serve our constituents more effectively.

I would like the NPA to work together to increase options available to voters. For example, with advances in technology, all jurisdictions should have a voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) for the voting process. Such a paper trail would give voters the opportunity to make sure that their ballots are recorded accurately. The NPA can be instrumental in helping legislators push for this change, particularly at the state level. We also need to explore options such as same-day voting and early voting to make sure that the system provides everyone with an opportunity to exercise their right to vote.

Focus: What message would you like to share with the 9,500 black elected officials throughout the country?

Congresswoman Kilpatrick: The CBC will initiate an Internet communication system by March 2007 that will allow us to talk with one another, report to one another, and mobilize for instant action on specific issues. As elected black leaders, we will mobilize, organize, and educate our communities for maximum participation to vote, rally, and solve the many problems of our communities.

Americans across the country voted in record numbers because they want a new direction for America. We will work together with business, community, and religious leaders to keep this momentum going. We must take our country back for our children's sake. We must take back the Presidency in 2008. I am excited about working with leaders across the country to discuss how we can move forward together. □

For more information on the CBC and its policy agenda, go to <http://www.congressionalblackcaucus.net/>. For more information on the National Policy Alliance, convened by the Joint Center, see the March/April 2006 issue of Focus, available at www.jointcenter.org.

Michigan Vote Faces Court Challenge

In a result that seems at odds with the prevailing political winds, Michigan voters on November 6 approved by a wide margin a referendum on a measure ironically called the Michigan Civil Rights Initiative. Despite considerable opposition from the business and education communities and a controversial endorsement of the measure by the Ku Klux Klan, 58 percent of Michigan voters favored a ban on preferential treatment to groups or individuals based on their race, gender, color, ethnicity, or national origin for public employment, education, or contracting purposes.

The ban was scheduled to take effect on December 22, 2006, but as of this writing, court challenges already are emerging. Immediately after the result, Michigan ACLU Executive Director Kary L. Moss announced, "It's necessary for the courts to slow this thing down and ... interpret some of the language." And University of Michigan President Mary Sue Coleman vowed to explore the school's legal options. In 2003, the University was the defendant in separate legal challenges to its affirmative action undergraduate and law school admissions policies. The U.S. Supreme Court struck down the undergraduate admissions policy that awarded points in the evaluation process to "underrepresented minorities," but upheld the law school's admissions policy that "considers race" among other factors in evaluating candidates for admission.

Supreme Court Hears Arguments on Seattle and Louisville Cases

The U.S. Supreme Court on December 4 heard oral arguments on two separate cases concerning race and education. While they are technically not affirmative action cases, these cases can have a significant bearing on public school efforts to promote a racially diverse learning environment at a time when, according to the Harvard Civil Rights Project, schools have actually been

re-segregating. The Harvard Civil Rights Project found that the percentage of black children who are attending schools that are mostly minority increased from 66 percent in 1991 to 73 percent in 2003.

The two cases involve challenges to voluntary integration plans of school districts in Seattle, Washington, and Louisville (Jefferson County), Kentucky. In the Seattle case, authorities, in an effort to overcome segregated housing patterns, allow students to choose the high school they wish to attend. However, because some of the schools are overcrowded, admission is denied to new students whose race would result in an overcrowded school having a student body that is more than 15 percent outside a 60-40 nonwhite-white ratio.

In Louisville, a policy that is in effect from first grade through high school seeks to prevent any school from having a student body that is less than 15 percent or more than 50 percent black. Ironically, until 2000, Louisville was under a court order to desegregate its schools.

White parents in both cities challenged the constitutionality of these policies when their children were not allowed to attend the schools of their choice. The plaintiffs, supported by the Bush administration, charge that these policies are not true efforts at diversity, but, according to the Bush administration's brief, "outright racial balancing."

Supporters of the school districts' policies cite the 2003 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the University of Michigan law school case, in which then-Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, writing for the 5-4 majority, found a compelling government interest in creating diverse student bodies. According to the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, which supports the voluntary school integration policies, "Studies have consistently demonstrated the benefits of diverse educational settings for children of all races."

Anurima Bhargava, assistant counsel for the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, and Elise Boddie, visiting assistant professor of law at the Fordham Law School in New York, have written, "These cases are

not affirmative action cases: they involve student assignment to public schools—where every child is guaranteed a seat—rather than competitive admissions to select institutions. However, they could have a far-reaching impact on the power of school districts to pursue voluntary measures that preserve integration in elementary and secondary schools in order to avoid the harmful educational effects of racial isolation."

In his December 4 appearance before the Supreme Court, Seattle school district lawyer Michael Madden argued that the Seattle plan was so "narrowly tailored" that it was acceptable. He said that Seattle students who do not get to attend the schools they want are "not being denied admission" but are rather being "redistributed." Some members of the Supreme Court, notably Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justice Antonin Scalia, seemed skeptical in their questioning.

Lower courts have upheld both the Seattle and Louisville policies, citing O'Connor's 2003 opinion regarding the government interest in diversity. Federal Appeals Court Judge Alex Kozinski, a Reagan appointee, wrote in the Seattle case:

No race is turned away from government service or services. The plan does not segregate the races; to the contrary, it seeks to promote integration. There is no attempt to give members of particular races political power based on skin color. There is no competition between the races, and no race is given preference over another. That a student is denied the school of his choice may be disappointing, but it carries no racial stigma and says nothing at all about that individual's aptitude or ability.

Since the Michigan decision, Chief Justice Roberts and Associate Justice Samuel Alito have been appointed to the Court. The decisions in both cases, which may signal the philosophical leanings of the two new justices, are expected by June. □

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Black churches are pivotal institutions in African American communities; they provide focus for charitable giving, social support, and civic engagement, as well as spiritual strength. They may therefore be viewed as logical participants in the Faith-based and Community Initiative (FBCI), established by the Bush administration in January 2001. However, little is actually known about their level of engagement in this program, their interest in being involved, or their capacity to meet the requirements for participation.

To examine black churches' views on the FBCI and their participation in the program, the Joint Center conducted a national survey of 750 black churches between November 2005 and January 2006. The findings were released at a forum in Washington, D.C., in September 2006. The panelists at the forum included Jay Hein, director of the White House Office of the FBCI; Robert Franklin, Distinguished Professor of Social Ethics, Candler School of Theology, Emory University; and Fred Davie, president of Public/Private Ventures. The panel was moderated by E. J. Dionne, Jr., a *Washington Post* columnist and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

Perceptions of the FBCI

The survey's findings reveal that, on balance, most black ministers viewed the Faith-based and Community Initiative favorably. As expected, Evangelical and Pentecostal ministers and ministers from churches with a conservative theology viewed the program more favorably than others, and those ministers who have spoken with members of their congregations about the FBCI report that their members largely favor it. Overall, however, the ministers were less certain how their congregations as a whole would feel about participation in the FBCI, with roughly equal numbers believing that their participation would be viewed positively and negatively; however, the most common response from the ministers was that they did not know how their congregations felt about the program.

Three-quarters of the ministers had heard of the FBCI, but less than one in three of the ministers interviewed had any detailed understanding of the FBCI or had discussed with a lawyer or accountant the requirements for participation in the program.

A majority of the black ministers (53 percent) indicated that their churches were interested in participating in the FBCI, with Evangelical and Pentecostal churches showing the most interest. Ministers from larger churches and urban churches expressed more interest in FBCI participation than smaller or rural churches. Some of the ministers viewed the FBCI as primarily a conservative initiative, since it was a project of the Bush administration. However, the ministers who expressed interest in participating were generally not from the most conservative churches or regions of the country. The churches in the Northeast region were more interested in participating than those in other areas of the country, and churches with progressive theologies and socially liberal congregations were more interested in participating than conservative churches.

Only a small percentage of the black ministers surveyed expressed doubts about the political motivations behind the decisions concerning which churches received FBCI grants, although about three in ten said that they had no idea what types of churches were receiving grants. Among those expressing an opinion, almost half thought that the grants were going to all churches that applied, while about one-third of the ministers believed that the grants were going primarily to mega-churches. Relatively few of the ministers thought that FBCI grants were primarily directed at Christian right or conservative Evangelical churches.

The black ministers who were lukewarm or skeptical toward the FBCI expressed a variety of philosophical and practical reasons for their misgivings about the program. Among them were the belief that the government was trying to shift its responsibilities to the church; that involvement with the government was problematic, in part because they believed

that acceptance of money from the government led to the loss of the right to criticize it; that the government would insist upon exercising control of their social ministry work; and that there were serious issues involving separation of church and state. There were also ministers who doubted that significant funds were actually available or who objected on principle to competition for funds. Other ministers said that they were not interested because the FBCI application process was too cumbersome and time-consuming to complete, while others said they lacked the technical capacity to participate in the program.

Who Applies and Who Participates?

While only one in nine of the churches surveyed had applied for an FBCI grant, the profile of ministers from churches that had applied was quite different from the other ministers. They were much more likely to have been personally contacted about applying to the FBCI, to have spoken with congregation members about the program, and to report that their congregations were supportive of FBCI participation. The churches that applied for an FBCI grant were generally larger churches with higher revenues, more likely Evangelical or Pentecostal than Baptist or Methodist, and urban and suburban rather than rural. Most of the churches that applied had consulted with a lawyer or accountant before submitting their applications. Churches from the Northeast were more likely to have applied than those from other regions, and churches with a liberal theology were more than twice as likely to apply as those with a conservative theology. In addition, churches that applied to the program were more likely to offer certain social ministries, including clothing banks, prison ministries, health care programs, after-school programs, drug abuse counseling and education programs, and shelter for the homeless.

The percentage of churches that actually received money from the government was the same as the percentage that had applied

for FBCI grants. However, not all of these churches received money from the FBCI. Only about one-quarter of the ministers who said that their church received money from the government for their social ministries said that the funds were from the FBCI. However, the actual percentage of black churches that received money from the FBCI program may be higher since some of these ministers may have unknowingly received money from the FBCI through intermediary organizations, such as local and state governments. Since 11 percent of the ministers reported receiving money from the government to provide social services, but only 2.6 percent said that they were FBCI funds, the actual percentage receiving FBCI grants must fall between those figures. Nonetheless, only the smaller percentage of black ministers perceived their churches as beneficiaries of the FBCI program. Based on the 2.6 percent of churches receiving FBCI grants, the success rate of FBCI applicants was about one in four (again, if some of the ministers misidentified the source of their funding, that rate may be higher).

The profile of the churches that have received money from the government differs in several respects from those whose ministers approve of the FBCI or applied for a FBCI grant. Paradoxically, the churches whose ministers disapproved of the FBCI were more likely to apply for an FBCI grant than churches with ministers who approved of the FBCI. This unexpected relationship reflects the fact that liberal ministers were less likely to approve of the FBCI than conservative ministers, but liberal churches are more likely to be engaged in active social outreach ministries than conservative churches and hence, more likely to apply for grants to provide services. Large churches with high yearly revenues, churches in the Northeast and Midwest, Methodist churches, and churches with progressive or moderate theologies were more likely to receive money from the government.

Political Implications of FBCI Participation

Ministers from churches with a progressive theology differed from those with a conservative theology in interesting

ways. While the ministers from the progressive tradition were more likely than their conservative brethren to have an unfavorable view of the FBCI, to believe that the government was reducing social spending because of the program, and to think that diminishing social services was a major problem, these ministers were more interested than their conservative colleagues in participating in the FBCI, more likely to believe that black churches play a major role in providing social services, less likely to believe that complying with the FBCI rules would require them to change the content of their religious services, and more likely to have been contacted about, to have applied for, and to have received funds from the FBCI.

Churches in “blue states”—i.e., states won by Al Gore in 2000 and John Kerry in 2004—were more likely to have received FBCI grants than those in “red states”—i.e., states won by George W. Bush in 2000 and 2004. Churches in New Jersey and New York led the list of recipients, while Ohio and Florida—the two main battleground states in 2004—each had only one church that received an FBCI grant. These findings seem to cast at least some doubt on the view that the FBCI represents a political tool—at least insofar as black churches are concerned.

The Capacity to Participate

Finally, while a majority of black ministers approve of and would like to participate in the FBCI, there are serious challenges facing smaller churches and churches with limited revenues. It is clear that even the larger and wealthier black churches need legal advice and help with paperwork, policy information, the formation of collaboratives, and program evaluations, while the needs of smaller and (especially) rural black churches are even greater—so much so that many are not interested in participating because they believe that they lack the capabilities to apply. Churches need to invest or leverage their own resources in order to complete an application for the FBCI—and some may even need to overhaul their administrative structure once they receive the funding. It is likely that smaller churches do not have these resources and do not know how to network

in order to leverage them from sources outside the congregation. In short, they not only have limited resources, but they are also embedded in a very limited network.

Policy Implications

Key policy implications may be derived from the findings of the Joint Center’s survey:

- Greater outreach and information dissemination is needed to inform black churches about the program. Only about one in six churches had been contacted about applying; significantly, a majority of the churches that received FBCI grants were contacted about applying.
- Churches that lacked the technical capacity to participate or thought the application process was too cumbersome could be provided with capacity-building assistance. One of the most promising avenues for addressing capacity-building needs is for denominational and intermediary organizations to facilitate partnerships with other churches and organizations in order to seek funding for social services.
- Most black churches have an interest in participating, have a variety of social service programs in place, and would seem capable of participating in the program. This potential capability clearly needs to be enhanced by technical training, including grant application training, help in forming collaborations with others, legal advice, assistance with program evaluation, and better access to public policy information. □

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POLITICAL REPORT

EVERY VOTE COUNTS: IMPROVING THE ELECTORAL PROCESS IN THE 2006 ELECTIONS

by Gracia Hillman

Early reports on the 2006 midterm elections indicated that the U.S. Department of Justice and other Election Day voter hotlines received fewer calls about problems than in 2004, even in proportion to the number of people who voted. In addition, exit polls from the elections reported that 88 percent of voters were confident that their votes would be counted accurately. These are good indications that improvements to our system of voting have been made under the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) of 2002.

Meeting HAVA Requirements for the 2006 Elections

HAVA was passed to make certain that every eligible citizen could vote and that each vote would be counted as intended by the voter. Under HAVA, Congress appropriated about \$3.1 billion to states to help pay the costs of improving the administration of federal elections. These improvements were necessary to correct flaws that became evident during the 2000 presidential election. Improvements included the use of voting systems that notify voters of over-vote errors on the ballot; permit voters to privately and independently correct the errors and otherwise verify and change the votes they selected before casting their ballot; and produce a permanent paper record of all votes cast, with a manual audit capacity.

Every state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the three territories received their share of these federal funds. HAVA also established the United States Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to distribute the federal funds, monitor and audit state spending of these dollars, establish a clearinghouse of information on election administration and voting procedures, and work with the states to rebuild voter confidence in America's voting procedures.

To prepare for the 2006 elections, the EAC issued guidance and best practices on

the HAVA requirements. It also published a series of Quick Start Management Guides on managing and securing voting systems and training poll workers. The EAC also produced a Voters' Guide that informs voters about the complex process of administering elections.

Most states met the final HAVA deadlines in 2006. The mandates included replacing outdated punch card and lever action voting systems, placing at least one accessible voting system in each polling place to provide privacy and independence for voters with disabilities, and establishing a computerized database that would produce the official statewide voter registration list for use in federal elections. These changes were in addition to 2004 HAVA requirements for provisional voting as a fail-safe system for voters whose eligibility had been questioned for any reason, procedures for voters who want to file a complaint, and programs to inform voters about all of these changes.

On May 1, 2006, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), which is responsible for enforcing HAVA, sued Alabama for not having the statewide voter registration database in place. The database helps ensure that ineligible or duplicate names do not remain on the lists maintained by various local jurisdictions within the state. It also helps election officials and poll workers to direct voters to their proper precincts, thus reducing the instances of provisional voting. The DOJ also sued New York for missing several of the HAVA deadlines, including the placement of at least one accessible voting system in each polling place for voters with disabilities.

The EAC's enforcement responsibilities are to make certain that the federal funds are properly spent. Improper spending or non-replacement of the voting systems can result in the repayment of funds to the state's HAVA administration fund or the federal government. For example, a special audit of California resulted in the Secretary of

State's office repaying about \$2.4 million to its state HAVA fund and \$500,000 to the federal treasury. New York will have to repay about \$50 million to the EAC because it did not replace its lever machines by the 2006 deadline.

New Voting Systems

HAVA mandated significant changes to our voting systems to reduce the error rate and produce permanent paper records of all votes cast with a manual audit capacity. The overwhelming majority of local voting jurisdictions now use some form of an optical scan or a direct recording electronic (DRE) voting system (also referred to as touch screen voting systems).

In the 2004 and 2006 elections, sporadic disruptions occurred as election officials and poll workers learned how to operate the new voting systems. These disruptions were caused by a number of things, including insufficient training of staff and poll workers on how to operate and troubleshoot the systems; simple human error of not plugging the machines into electrical outlets; calibration errors resulting from touch screen machines that are not set up with the proper balance; and paper jams and other problems with the printers that produce a voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT). In 2004, there was a confirmed report of 4,000 votes being lost on one machine during early voting in one county in North Carolina. The election staff did not recognize the error warning being signaled by the machine when it had stopped counting votes.

Some public officials, scientists, and voters have expressed concern about the accuracy and security of DREs. They believe that the systems are vulnerable to tampering and hacking, though such situations have never occurred during an election. At the same time, others vouch for the accuracy, efficiency, and ease of use of DREs. They point to the features that empower voters;

the machines do not allow a voter to over-vote the ballot and they permit privacy and independence for voters with disabilities, including persons who have trouble marking a paper ballot. There are additional concerns about badly designed ballots that can result in “lost” votes due to erroneous markings by the voter and about touch screen machines that do not produce a paper ballot (VVPAT), which can be verified by the voter for accuracy. While HAVA requires a permanent paper record of all votes cast, which is not necessarily visible to the voter, VVPAT is not mandated by federal law and not all states require it.

The EAC has some authority to address these concerns. Its 2005 voluntary voting system guidelines include standards for the new electronic voting systems and VVPAT technology, and the EAC has a program to test and certify all voting system hardware and software. In addition, its best practices programs include ballot design and poll worker training.

Voting systems will be tested against the 2005 guidelines beginning in 2007. States requested this delayed time line so that they could make necessary changes to their laws to incorporate the new requirements. This is the first time that a voting system test program is being conducted under the auspices of the federal government. Manufacturer and state participation in this program is voluntary under HAVA, but manufacturers have committed to submitting all of their voting system hardware and software to this certification program. Currently, about 39 states require that the voting systems they use must be nationally certified; others are working to adopt requirement laws and procedures.

An Early Assessment of the 2006 Elections

The overwhelming majority of jurisdictions had successful experiences with their voting systems during the 2006 elections, but there were some instances of voting system and administrative anomalies in several states. EAC commissioners spent Election Day in Indiana, Kentucky,

Maryland, Ohio, and Tennessee. From the commissioners’ observations and early reports received about voting nationwide, the problems did not seem to be more heavily concentrated in minority communities than in other locations.

The most frequently reported problem was the late opening of polls caused primarily by poll workers arriving late or delays encountered in setting up the voting systems. Among the states with jurisdictions that experienced these problems, which can be corrected through more extensive poll worker training, were Colorado, Florida, Indiana, and Pennsylvania. Very long lines caused additional problems at several polling locations in Maryland and Ohio, indicating the need for more voting machines in those locations.

Several states also experienced voting machine problems. In Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Montana, New Jersey, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, problems were directly related to human error—election staff and poll workers forgetting required steps or not having sufficient knowledge about the system. Problems that appear to be related to machine malfunctions also were encountered in Arizona and Florida.

Election officials are responsible for post-election administrative audits to identify and fix problems; however, they cannot always fix the problems created by “misinformation” campaigns conducted by others just before or on Election Day to confuse or discourage voters. Examples of such campaigns are telephone calls, official-looking letters, or flyers that tell voters that their polling locations have been changed or offer nonexistent transportation to the polls. If successful, these tactics prevent voters from getting to their polling places. Often, voters believe that the information comes from the local or state office of elections and the ensuing confusion frequently results in mistrust and loss of faith in the system. The voters most frequently targeted by these campaigns are African American, Hispanic, low-income, or elderly.

These deceptive practices do a great disservice to the voters, the candidates, and,

most importantly, to democracy in America. As they did in this past election season, voters should clarify all information they receive with their local election officials. Further, they need to report immediately all questionable calls and other sources of “misinformation.” In turn, election officials are responsible for reporting questionable activities to the appropriate authorities, although it is usually very difficult to trace the misinformation back to the original source.

Ensuring an Accurate, Secure, and Fair Voting Process

HAVA imposed minimum standards for federal elections. Important voter rights are also afforded under the Voting Rights Act, the National Voter Registration Act (“Motor Voter”), the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act, and other federal laws. All of these laws must and can work together. The federal government delegated responsibility for the administration of federal elections to states, and there is great diversity among state and local laws that govern how this will be done. At the same time, while there is no denying that America’s voting systems will benefit from advances in technology, disruptions will occur from these necessary changes. In short, the task of achieving election reform nationwide is complex, but important to ensuring an accurate, secure, and fair voting process.

HAVA is an affirmation that all eligible citizens have the right to vote and to have that vote counted accurately. No voter should ever be turned away from the polls or otherwise disenfranchised due to voting equipment or election administration problems. At the beginning and the end, it is the voter who matters most. □

Gracia Hillman is a commissioner on the U.S. Election Assistance Commission and former chair of the EAC. For more information on HAVA, go to www.eac.gov or <http://www.jointcenter.org/programs/index.php>

HEALTH REPORT

PUBLIC SECTOR LEADERS TAKE UP THE CHARGE OF THE DELLUMS COMMISSION

by Gail C. Christopher

It was national policy...that permitted the citizens of this country to badger these young people [young black men], goad them, and humiliate them to the point that they could not be easily reached. But all young black people, young black males, must be reached, through legislation, through good will, understanding, and compassion. The test of an advanced society is not in how many millionaires it can produce but in how many law-abiding, hard-working, highly respected, and self-respecting loyal citizens it can produce.

– Dr. John Hope Franklin, Conference Keynote Address,
“Black Male Youth: Creating a Culture for Educational Success,”
The City University of New York, 2006

The reality of limited life options faced by young men of color in the United States is a health issue. Multiple social, economic, environmental, and health factors contribute to extreme disparities in mortality in early and late life among men of color compared with other groups. Such stark disparities led the Joint Center Health Policy Institute to create the Dellums Commission to study life options of young men of color and formulate a comprehensive policy agenda to expand their life paths. On November 15, 2006, the Dellums Commission’s landmark study was released to a capacity crowd at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. However, the real “news” of the day came from leaders of key sectors (including labor, academic, and government) and organizations, who pledged to take up the charge and work to improve life circumstances for young men of color. Two significant public sector commitments came from the National League of Cities (NLC), the nation’s oldest and largest organization representing municipal government, and the Health Brain Trust of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Taking the Lead at the City Level: Statement by the NLC

Taking a prominent role in efforts to improve life options for men of color and the well-being of their communities, the

National League of Cities is providing a strong example for elected and appointed officials at all levels of government. Speaking on behalf of the NLC at the November 15th press conference, the Honorable Cynthia McCollum, the NLC’s second vice president, committed to enhancing the organization’s ongoing work in this area and highlighted examples of how city governments can serve as catalysts, conveners, facilitators, and advocates for social equity and poverty reduction:

Through our Institute for Youth, Education, and Families, the NLC is helping city leaders re-engage youth ages 16 to 24 who are disconnected from education, employment, and caring adults. These young people are often re-entering the community from juvenile detention or adult correctional facilities; transitioning from foster care; are unemployed; or did not finish high school. In 2007, we will share promising approaches from eight cities that are collaborating across public agencies at the city, county, and state level to help these youths get their lives onto a positive path.

The Dellums Commission draws attention to the need to “aggressively and creatively stem dropout rates among young men of color.” The NLC is assisting city leaders to expand high school options and alternatives that offer flexible systems of support with an academically rigorous and personalized education.

The NLC is also working with city leaders to develop and share strategies for protecting the safety of our young people. A forthcoming NLC report will document and highlight effective partnerships between mayors and city police departments to help keep young people safe. In addition, the NLC’s Institute recently launched a new network of 13 major cities in California that will focus on strategies for reducing gang violence.

Finally, through its Municipal Action to Reduce Poverty Project, the NLC has highlighted the work of ten cities that have infused a poverty reduction and equity agenda into their local economies and cultures. These cities are actively working to help men of color achieve economic success. For example, the city of Kalamazoo, Michigan is collaborating with the business community and neighborhood groups to attack the city’s poverty problems, revitalize neighborhoods, and host a summit on racism. In Dayton, Ohio, a city-county partnership has led to new youth programs, anti-predatory lending actions, a living wage ordinance, workforce training, efforts to connect residents with an Earned Income Tax Credit, and a dialogue on race relations.

Moving Toward National Policy Change: Message from the CBC

Congresswoman Donna Christian-Christensen, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus Health Brain Trust, also spoke at the November 15th event, eloquently describing the new opportunity for prioritizing a domestic policy agenda that can lead to improved life options for young men of color:

I come to you this morning representing not just the Health Brain Trust—which understands that the death and the destruction of our young men is a public health issue of paramount importance which we will continue to address using legislation that many of you in this room helped to create and shape and which will further be shaped by the recommendations of this report—but I also come to you on behalf of the entire Congressional Black Caucus.

On behalf of John Conyers, for example, a drum major for justice who initiated our Criminal Justice Task Force and in his new leadership position will do what he can to make sure that the hand of the law bends toward justice and fairness for our young men and all who have been denied; for Danny Davis, who was here earlier, who heads up our State of the Black Male Task Force that has reached out to young men across this country over the last several years; for Bobby Scott, who when I first came headed up the Juvenile Justice Task Force and continues to be a leader on those issues; for Barbara Lee, who carries on the great work that Ron [Dellums] started in the Congress and then some; for the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, which recently reported on the limited job opportunities for black high school dropouts, which this report takes a step further to remedies; and for all of us, the Congressional Black Caucus members whose communities could each be the poster communities for this report and who welcome it and will use it to shape our agenda going forward and who will run, take it out across this country, and with it take hope to those communities.

Given the changing dynamic here in Washington for the Congressional Black Caucus, this report and its smart, comprehensive, forward-thinking, and achievable strategies to address the core social determinants that have left our young men with fewer opportunities and more at risk than ever could not have come at a better time.

Mayor-elect Dellums, the Joint Center—I came to bring a message from the CBC. And I think I can speak for the Hispanic and Asian Pacific caucuses, who will be meeting here in Washington, DC this weekend. This will not be just another report gathering dust.

All of us have a role that we must play in implementing the recommendations of this report for our children, for us, and for the future generations who depend on us to leave them a world of peace, justice, and opportunity.

- Congresswoman Donna Christian Christensen

And as the other work of the Joint Center Health Policy Institute has informed and shaped our health agenda, A Way Out will serve through us as a social and public policy roadmap for change. And I can promise you this: my colleagues and I on the Congressional Black Caucus will work with those in the other minority caucuses, those in key leadership positions, with our new Majority Leaders in the House and Senate, and of course with our new Speaker, Nancy Pelosi, to ensure that the health, education, employment, and other social policies that we work to pass and enact reflect the findings and the recommendations of this report.

All of us have a role that we must play in implementing the recommendations of this report for our children, for us, and for the future generations who depend on us to leave them a world of peace, justice, and opportunity. And we have the obligation to do this for our nation's security and its prosperity.

Keeping the Momentum Forward

The midterm elections shifted the balance of power and leadership in Washington, D.C. and in many localities across this nation. The domestic issues that pertain to fairness, equal opportunity, and social justice may be given more consideration in this emerging climate. Legislative issues such as raising the minimum wage and increasing tuition grants for college education for low-income students will help to improve life options for young men of color. Many other related policy initiatives in education, child welfare, juvenile justice, and health care can be orchestrated at local, state, and national levels and across the public and private sectors. Future *Focus* articles will describe how other key sectors, such as labor, academic, and media, responded to the Dellums Commission's recommendations.

But real policy change will require sustained efforts of a well-informed, organized, and mobilized constituency. To that end, the Joint Center Health Policy Institute is forming the Coalition to Improve Life Options for Young Men of Color, which consists of a range of organizations engaged in related activities. Coalition members will pursue actions—separately and in collaboration with fellow members—that eliminate barriers to young men of color and expand the life options of these youth. Through the Coalition, the Joint Center Health Policy Institute will work to ensure that the momentum created by the Dellums Commission study and the important commitments made by leaders in various sectors will continue to build toward the kind of sustained efforts that are necessary to achieve policy change nationwide. □

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ECONOMIC REPORT

LOOKING FORWARD TO RETIREMENT: PREPARATION, KNOWLEDGE, AND VIEWS OF SOCIAL SECURITY AMONG AFRICAN AMERICANS BY INCOME

By Danielle Huff

THIS IS THE THIRD ARTICLE IN A THREE-PART SERIES REPORTING ON THE JOINT CENTER'S NATIONAL OPINION POLL OF AFRICAN AMERICAN ADULTS ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY AND WEALTH

Social Security and retirement have been frequent topics of discussion in recent years, due in large part to fears that the Social Security Trust Fund will become insolvent as large waves of baby boomers begin to retire and receive their Social Security benefits. President Bush's proposal to partially privatize the Social Security system also fueled the discussion. The Joint Center conducted a National Opinion Poll of African American Adults About Social Security and Wealth in late 2005 to examine the opinions of African Americans ages 18 and older on issues related to Social Security and retirement, including the partial privatization proposal. This article examines the survey's findings on differences among African Americans by income group.

The most striking dissimilarities, as might be expected, exist between African Americans with the highest and lowest incomes, especially with regard to retirement preparation and expected dependence on Social Security in retirement. In terms of knowledge about Social Security and support for proposals to reform the program, however, the survey generated more surprising findings for respondents across the various income groups.

Source of Retirement Income

The retirement savings rate for African American adults correlates with income level—the higher the income level, the higher the savings rate. Two-thirds (66 percent) of African Americans with incomes of \$75,001-\$90,000 and three-quarters (75 percent) of African Americans with incomes greater than \$90,000 report saving “some money” or “a lot of money” for retirement, while only seven percent of those with incomes of \$15,000 or less and 22 percent of those with incomes of \$15,001-\$35,000 report the same. A majority of the latter two groups (56 percent and 53 percent,

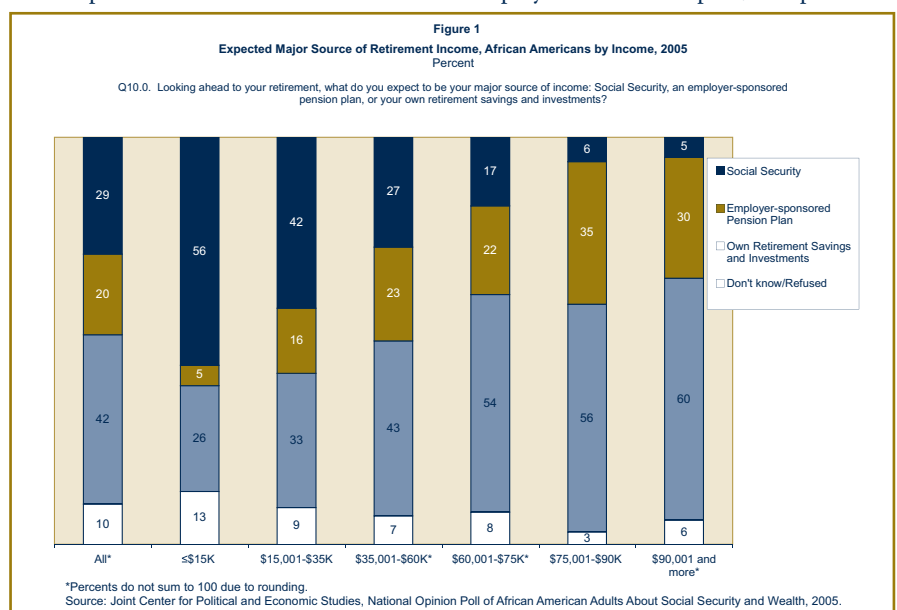
respectively) report that they want to save every month, but are not able to do so.

African Americans with lower incomes are more likely than African Americans with higher incomes to say that they expect Social Security, rather than employer-sponsored pensions or personal retirement savings and investments, to be their major source of retirement income. More than half (56 percent) of African American adults with incomes of \$15,000 or less expect Social Security to be their major source of retirement income, while 26 percent expect their own retirement savings and investments to be their major source of income and five percent expect to depend mostly on an employer-sponsored pension plan.

In contrast, only five percent of African American adults with incomes greater than \$90,000 expect Social Security to be their major source of retirement income. The majority (60 percent) of African Americans in the highest income bracket expect personal savings and investments to be their major source of income, while 30 percent expect to depend mostly on employer-sponsored pensions.

An employer retirement plan, such as a 401(k), is one vehicle (different from an employer-sponsored pension plan) that many African Americans use to amass retirement savings. The likelihood of a respondent's employer offering a retirement plan increases with the respondent's income. Only one-fifth (19 percent) of African Americans with incomes of \$15,000 or less have employers who offer retirement plans, while nearly four in five (79 percent) African Americans with incomes greater than \$90,000 have employers who offer retirement plans.

Among the subset of African Americans whose employers offer retirement plans, participation varies widely by income. While African Americans in the middle income ranges have similar participation rates (between 77 percent and 84 percent of those with incomes of \$15,001-\$35,000, \$35,001-\$60,000, \$60,001-\$75,000, and \$75,001-\$90,000), the participation rates for those with the highest and lowest incomes differ greatly. Nearly all (97 percent) of the respondents with incomes greater than \$90,000 participate in their employer's retirement plan, compared to



fewer than half (42 percent) of those with incomes of \$15,000 or less.

Knowledge about Social Security

Despite their greater expectation of future dependence on Social Security, African American adults with lower incomes are less knowledgeable than their higher-income counterparts about some aspects of the Social Security program. For instance, the percentage (68 percent) of African American adults with incomes of \$15,000 or less who know that Social Security taxes paid by workers today are used to pay benefits to current retirees is much less than the percentage (92 percent) among African Americans with incomes of more than \$90,000.

African Americans with the lowest incomes are also the most likely to mistakenly believe that Social Security taxes pay for the Medicare and Medicaid programs. Among African Americans with incomes of \$15,000 or less, 58 percent believe that Social Security pays for Medicare and 48 percent believe Social Security pays for Medicaid. In comparison, 45 percent of African Americans with incomes greater than \$90,000 believe Social Security pays for Medicare and 28 percent believe Social Security pays for Medicaid.

African Americans with the lowest incomes are aware that they are not well-informed about some aspects of the Social Security program. About half (48 percent) of African Americans with incomes of \$15,000 or less reported that they were “not too well-informed” or “not at all informed” about Social Security. About half (51 percent) reported that they were “very well-informed” or “fairly well-informed about Social Security.” In contrast, two-thirds (67 percent) of African American adults with incomes of \$15,001-\$35,000 reported being very or fairly well-informed, as did 79 percent of African Americans with incomes of \$75,001-\$90,000.

African Americans with lower incomes are *more* informed than their higher-income counterparts about other features of the Social Security program, however. Knowledge of the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) is one such feature—

knowledge declines as income increases. A majority of African Americans with incomes of \$15,000 or less and between \$15,001 and \$35,000 (58 percent and 63 percent, respectively) know that Social Security benefits automatically increase with the rise in the cost of living, while a majority of African Americans with incomes of \$75,001-\$90,000 and greater than \$90,000 do not know this. Only 45 percent and 39 percent of these higher-income groups, respectively, know about the annual COLA.

Social Security Reform Proposals

Despite the fact that they are the most likely to know about the annual COLA and the most likely to expect to rely heavily on Social Security upon retirement, African Americans with the lowest incomes are also the most likely to support reducing the annual COLA on Social Security payments to foster the program’s solvency. More than two-fifths (43 percent) of African Americans with incomes of \$15,000 or less support this proposal, compared to 24 percent of African Americans with incomes of greater than \$90,000. This finding is noteworthy because one might expect respondents with the lowest incomes to be the least supportive of a proposal that would reduce their expected future Social Security benefits. Conversely, one might have expected African Americans with the highest incomes, who would likely be least dependent on their Social Security check and its annual COLA, to be more supportive of such a proposal.

Levels of support for the partial privatization proposal, however, are less surprising—support increases as income level increases. Among all income groups, African Americans in the lowest brackets (\$15,000 or less and \$15,001-\$35,000) are the least likely to support partial privatization of the Social Security system (22 percent and 23 percent, respectively), while African Americans with the highest incomes (\$75,001-\$90,000 and greater than \$90,000) are the most likely to support it (32 percent and 36 percent, respectively). This finding is more consistent with what one might expect, since African Americans with the highest incomes are more likely to have private investments and therefore

might be more comfortable with taking risks with their future Social Security benefits. Also notable is the finding that a full 30 percent of those in the lowest income bracket (\$15,000 or less) responded “Don’t Know/Refused” to the question of whether they agree or disagree with this proposal—the highest percentage to choose this response category in any of the income groups. This indicates the need for enhanced efforts to inform certain segments of the public about Social Security reform proposals.

Support for a proposal to raise the Social Security eligibility age also varies by income, though not in any clear pattern. The strongest supporters for this plan are African American adults with incomes of \$60,001-\$75,000 (31 percent support the proposal), while African Americans with incomes of \$35,001-\$60,000 are the weakest supporters (19 percent). Levels of support among African Americans in other income brackets fall between these two groups.

Conclusion

Overall, the results of the Joint Center’s survey indicate that African Americans with higher incomes are saving more for retirement and believe that such savings will sustain them in retirement. In contrast, African Americans with the lowest incomes are not saving much for retirement and recognize that they will have to depend on Social Security for the majority of their retirement income. Despite different levels of personal preparation for retirement, however, support for Social Security reform proposals does not strictly correlate with income levels. Knowledge about the Social Security program also does not strictly correlate with income level, although African Americans with higher incomes tend to be more knowledgeable about the program. Given the relatively higher stakes that African Americans with lower incomes have in the Social Security system, work needs to be done to engage this group in educating themselves about Social Security, proposals to reform it, and potential ways to better prepare themselves for retirement. □

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BLACKS AND THE 2006 MIDTERM ELECTIONS

(continued from front cover)

Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Virginia, and probably a slight increase in Maryland. Black voters were important in electing a Democratic governor (Ohio) and re-electing three Democratic governors (Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee) and two Democratic U.S. Senators (Florida and Michigan).

More important for the narrative of the 2006 midterm elections, black voters were critical in electing four new Democratic U.S. Senators in Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, which helped the Democrats regain control of the U.S. Senate. In Pennsylvania, overall turnout increased from 38.6 to 43.3 percent from 2002 to 2006, while the black share of the total vote increased from six percent in 1998 to eight percent in 2006. In Missouri, overall turnout increased from 45.0 to 48.3 percent from 2002 to 2006, while the black share of turnout increased from eight percent in 1998 to 13 percent in 2006. Black voters represented 24 percent of the total vote for Claire McCaskill (D), who narrowly defeated incumbent Jim Talent (R) 50 to 47 percent. In Virginia, African Americans were 16 percent of all voters

in 2006, and overall turnout there rose from 23.1 percent in 1998 to 43.8 percent in 2006. Black voters were 27 percent of Virginia Democrat Jim Webb's vote in his very narrow victory over Republican incumbent George Allen (49.6 to 49.2 percent). In Ohio, turnout increased from 38.4 to 44.6 percent from 2002 to 2006, while the black share of turnout increased

Black voters were critical in electing four new Democratic U.S. Senators in Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, which helped the Democrats regain control of the U.S. Senate.

from 10 percent in 1998 to 12 percent in 2006. In that state, black voters represented 18 percent of Sherrod Brown's (D) vote in his 56 to 44 percent win over incumbent Mike DeWine (R).

African American voters were important to a number of other Democratic victories. For example, in Maryland, where Benjamin Cardin (D) defeated Michael Steele (R) 55 to 44 percent, black voters represented 31 percent of Cardin's total. Also, in Michigan, black voters were 19 percent of Debbie Stabenow's (D) vote in her victory over Republican Mike Bouchard (57 to 41 percent).

Further, the Democrats did not lose a single U.S. House incumbent. Black voters were critical in salvaging the elections of Democratic Representatives Jim Marshall (GA-8) and John Barrow (GA-12) in a poor year for Democrats in Georgia. Black voters also were significant contributors to the election of Democrat John Yarmuth (KY-3), who defeated incumbent Anne Northup. Nationally, the black vote in U.S. House elections was 89 percent Democratic and 11 percent Republican.

Overall, there was no partisan shift toward the Republican Party among black voters in 2006 despite Republican National Committee Chairman Ken Mehlman's outreach and the prominence of three high-ranking black GOP nominees. There

TABLE 1. THE BLACK VOTE BY STATE, 1998–2006 (SELECTED STATES)

State	BVAP (%)	Black Share of Total Vote: Exit Polls			Total Voter Turnout			Black Partisan Vote, 2006			
		1998 (%)	2004 (%)	2006 (%)	1998 (%)	2002 (%)	2006 (%)	Democrat (Gov.) (%)	Democrat (Sen.) (%)	Republican (Gov.) (%)	Republican (Sen.) (%)
California	6.4	6	6	5	42.5	36.6	32.4	71	88	26	12
Florida	12.7	10	12	14	36.7	44.2	37.5	81	92	17	7
Georgia	26.4	29	25	16	32.4	34.2	32.1	81	--	7	--
Illinois	13.8	17	10	10	40.8	41.8	38.5	80	--	16	--
Maryland	26.4	21	24	23	41.9	45.4	40.5	84	74	15	25
Michigan	13.1	19	13	12	43.0	44.1	51.5	91	90	9	9
Missouri	10.2	8	8	13	39.0	45.0	48.3	--	91	--	8
New York	14.8	9	13	10	38.0	36.7	33.8	89	88	10	11
Ohio	10.5	10	10	12	41.2	38.4	44.6	77	85	20	15
Pennsylvania	9.0	6	13	8	33.2	38.6	43.3	87	90	13	10
Tennessee	14.8	11	12	13	23.7	38.0	40.0	94	95	4	4
Texas	11.0	10	12	8	28.7	32.8	30.1	63	67	16	26
Virginia	18.4	n/a	21	16	23.1	29.2	43.8	--	85	--	15

Source: Information on the black voting-age population is from the U.S. Census publication, Voting and Registration in the Election of November 2004 (P20-556), Table 4a. The actual share numbers from 1998, 2004, 2006 are from VNS (1998) and Edison/Mitofsky (2004-06). Statewide turnout numbers are from the Committee for the Study of the American Electorate.

were individual Republican candidates who fared better with black voters than the black population's partisanship might suggest—e.g., Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger (CA) and U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison (TX), who each received 26 percent of the black vote in their states. However, this variability is exhibited every election year, as the idiosyncratic features of particular candidates and issues manifest themselves in the electorate.

The three prominent black Republican nominees lost their elections with varying degrees of black support. GOP gubernatorial nominee Ken Blackwell in Ohio received 20 percent of the black vote, which is above the 10 percent national average for Republican candidates. However, previous white GOP candidates for governor and for U.S. senator in Ohio have generally won larger shares of the black vote; when U.S. Senator George Voinovich was re-elected as governor of Ohio in 1994, he received 42 percent of the black vote. Hall of Fame football star Lynn Swann was

unable to effectively shift his talents from the gridiron to the political domain; he lost his race for governor of Pennsylvania, while receiving only 13 percent of the black vote.

Maryland Lieutenant Governor and GOP U.S. Senate candidate Michael Steele appears to have been the most successful Republican candidate courting black voters, receiving 25 percent of their votes in his losing effort. However, given the poor record of the Maryland Democratic Party in incorporating African Americans into their leadership ranks—with Democrat Kathleen Kennedy Townsend's notorious 2002 Lieutenant Governor choice emblematic of that neglect—Steele's increased share likely represents a protest vote against the Democratic Party there. Those protest votes were not entirely irrational. Black voters comprise a similar proportion of the electorate in Georgia, a Republican-leaning state, and Maryland, a strongly Democratic-leaning state. However, in Georgia, three of the eight Democratic nominees to statewide constitutional office in the 2006

elections were African Americans; two were re-elected. In Maryland in 2002, none of the four top Democratic nominees were black, although in 2006, gubernatorial nominee (now Governor-elect) Martin O'Malley selected State Representative Anthony Brown as his running mate; Brown will become Maryland's next lieutenant governor.

African American Victories in Federal and Statewide Elections

In 2006, there were 57 black candidates for federal office—54 for U.S. House seats and three for U.S. Senate seats. This was a decline from 62 in 2004, but more than in the 2002 midterm elections (55). The 2004-2006 decline came from the Republican side (six fewer candidates), while the number of black Democratic candidates increased by one and was a new record.

The outcomes of the 2006 midterm elections for black federal candidates were

TABLE 2. BLACK MAJOR PARTY NOMINEES FOR STATEWIDE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICE, 2006

State	BVAP (%)	Office	Black Nominee(s)	Vote (%)
CT	9.1	Treasurer	Denise Nappier (D)†*	64
GA	26.6	Attorney General	Thurbert Baker (D)†*	57
		State Superintendent of Education	Denise Majette (D)	35
		Commissioner of Labor	Michael Thurmond (D)†*	55
FL	12.7	Lieutenant Governor‡	Daryl Jones (D)	45
IL	13.8	Secretary of State	Jesse White (D)†*	62
MA	6.0	Governor	Deval Patrick (D)*	56
OH	10.5	Governor	J. Kenneth Blackwell (R)	37
		State Auditor	Barbara Sykes (D)	49
MD	26.4	Lieutenant Governor‡	Anthony Brown (D)*	53
NY	14.8	Lieutenant Governor‡	David Paterson (D)*	69
PA	9.5	Governor	Lynn Swann (R)	40
SC	27.2	Secretary of State	Cheryl Footman (D)	39

† Incumbent
* Winner
‡ Governor and Lieutenant Governor run together on the same ticket

BLACK MAJOR PARTY NOMINEES FOR STATEWIDE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICE, 2006 STATISTICAL SUMMARY			
Democrats		Republicans	
Won	Lost	Won	Lost
7	4	0	2
63.6%	36.4%	0.0%	100.0%

generally unsurprising, albeit with some new additions to the CBC. All black Democratic incumbents won reelection, including U.S. Representative William Jefferson (D-LA), who won a run-off against Democratic State Representative Karen Carter on December 9. There were three non-incumbent black Democratic candidates who were victorious: Hank Johnson (GA-4), who won a primary battle against incumbent Cynthia McKinney; Yvette Clarke (NY-11), who replaces the retiring Major Owens; and Keith Ellison (MN-5). Ellison is the first black U.S. representative from Minnesota and the first Muslim elected to the U.S. House. The black Democrats who faced opposition averaged about 73 percent of the vote. All black Republican nominees lost, averaging 32 percent of the vote.

Of the 13 black candidates for statewide constitutional office in the 2006 elections (11 Democrats and two Republicans), seven were winners—all of whom are Democrats (Table 2). In 2002, all four black GOP statewide candidates won, while only four of 11 Democratic candidates triumphed. Among the Democratic black statewide nominees, the most prominent victors were Massachusetts Governor-elect Deval Patrick, only the second elected black governor since Reconstruction; New York Lieutenant Governor David Paterson, the state's first black lieutenant governor; Maryland Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown; Georgia Attorney General Thurbert Baker; Georgia Commissioner of Labor Michael Thurmond; Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White; and Connecticut Treasurer Denise Nappier. Baker, Thurmond, White, and Nappier were all incumbents.

Unprecedented Power for CBC Members in the 110th Congress

All CBC members are Democrats, and since the Democrats gained the 15 seats needed to take partisan control of the U.S. House of Representatives, three CBC members will become chairmen of full standing committees in the 110th Congress. These members are John Conyers (MI), who will chair the House Judiciary Committee, Bennie Thompson (MS), who will chair

the House Homeland Security Committee, and Charles Rangel (NY), who will chair the House Ways and Means Committee. Congressman Thompson will be the first black member from the South to chair a full House committee. Additionally, Representative Juanita Millender-McDonald (CA) is positioned to become chair of the House Administration Committee.

In addition to the new CBC full committee chairs, James Clyburn (SC) has been elected Assistant Democratic Majority Leader (i.e., Democratic Whip), the third-

The CBC is likely to wield greater influence in the 110th Congress than at any time in its history.

ranking Democrat in the U.S. House of Representatives following Speaker-elect Nancy Pelosi and House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (MD).

There are also at least 15—and maybe as many as 18—CBC members who are poised to chair subcommittees in the 110th Congress. The committees that will have the largest number of CBC subcommittee chairs are Government Reform (4), Judiciary (3), and Transportation and Infrastructure (3). The subcommittees likely to be chaired by CBC members are as follows:

- Management Integration and Oversight (Homeland Security), Kendrick Meek (FL)
- Energy and Resources (Government Reform), Diane Watson (CA)
- Federalism and the Census (Government Reform), William Clay, Jr. (MO)
- Federal Workforce and Agency Organization (Government Reform), Danny K. Davis (IL)
- Government Management & Finance Accountability (Government Reform), Edolphus Towns (NY)

- Housing and Community Opportunity (Financial Services), Maxine Waters (CA)
- Africa, Global Human Rights, and Int. Operations (International Relations), Donald Payne (NJ)
- Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security (Judiciary), Robert “Bobby” Scott (VA)
- Commercial and Administrative Law (Judiciary), Mel Watt (NC)
- Immigration, Border Security and Claims (Judiciary), Sheila Jackson Lee (TX)
- Tax Finance and Exports (Small Business), Juanita Millender-McDonald (CA)
- Railroads (Transportation and Infrastructure), Corrine Brown (FL)
- Water Resources & Environment (Transportation and Infrastructure), Eddie Bernice Johnson (TX)
- Economic Development, Public Buildings & Emergency Management (Transportation and Infrastructure), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D.C.)
- Oversight (Ways and Means), John Lewis (GA)

This is the first time that members of the CBC have held this many chairs. Thus the CBC is likely to wield greater influence in the 110th Congress than at any time in its history, particularly on such key policy matters as taxes, immigration, and homeland security. □

David A. Bositis (dbositis@jointcenter.org) is a senior research associate at the Joint Center. For more analysis of the 2006 midterm elections, go to <http://www.jointcenter.org/Election/electionmain.php>.

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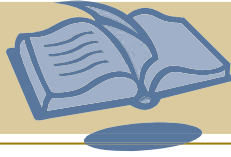
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RECENT PUBLICATIONS



A Way Out: Creating Partners for Our Nation's Prosperity by Expanding Life Paths of Young Men of Color, Joint Center Health Policy Institute's Dellums Commission

A "Shout Out" from Youth to Our Nation's Leaders, The Youth Task Force on the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Behavior of Young Men of Color

Black Churches and the Faith-Based Initiative: Findings from a Survey, David A. Bositis

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 17, 6:30-8:30 pm
Panel Discussion: "Social Security and Our Community"
University of the District of Columbia, Building 38, Room 201
Washington, D.C.

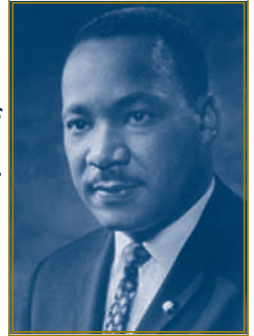
February 20
Symposium: "Research to Policy: Improving African American Birth Outcomes"
The Joint Center Health Policy Institute and the University of Michigan Roadmap Center for Birth Outcome Disparities
Washington, D.C.

February 22-24
2007 Annual Conference
Black Administrators in Child Welfare
Baltimore, MD

March 25-27
2007 Annual Conference
"Social Equity, Health, and Health Care: What? Why? and How?"
American Society for Public Administration
Washington, D.C.

WORDS THAT INSPIRED A NATION

In commemoration of the 78th birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on January 15, we present a brief selection of quotes from his writings and speeches in the hope that they will inspire readers of Focus to continue to pursue his dream.



"I submit that an individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and who willingly accepts the penalty of imprisonment in order to arouse the conscience of the community over its injustice, is in reality expressing the highest respect for the law."

"In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends."

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

"We must learn to live together as brothers or perish together as fools."

"The good neighbor looks beyond the external accidents and discerns those inner qualities that make all men human and, therefore, brothers."

"The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

"I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'"



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