

# By Any Means Necessary

## Voter Registration Among African-Americans: A Target at UNC

By Christopher A. Owens

With the most important presidential election in recent history in less than a month away, African-American organizations have combined efforts not only to register voters but also to educate people on the issues and candidates.

To combat the enemy of low voter registration among African-Americans, the Black Student Movement, in conjunction with the NAACP, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated and Kappa Alpha Psi, Incorporated, have organized several initiatives to get as many registered voters on campus as possible, with African-Americans as their main target.

LaVar Smith, a senior at UNC-CH and a member of Alpha Phi Alpha, explained the involvement of his fraternity in the voter registration movement on campus.

"One of the national programs that each chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha is mandated to do is a voter registration drive. The point is to educate the community on voter registration and on the election. Sitting in the Pit during prime hours is also a part of our agenda."

Statistics show that in the 1998

"We want to educate people about voting and the importance of voting. We want to educate on the candidates and platforms in general."

congressional elections, the black voter turnout in North Carolina was higher than in many other states. Overall voter turnout across the country, however, was on the rise while North Carolina had been stagnant over the last decade.

The number of African-Americans nationwide who voted in 1998, approximately 932 thousand, was not far from the total population of African-Americans in the state at that time.

Frank Ford of Kappa Alpha Psi said of his organization's influence in the drive, "we are sponsoring a forum on all the candidates with the NAACP. We're trying to register as

many people as possible and get black people involved. As college students, we need to know what

is going on because we are next in line to take over this country."

