

election. You cannot afford to have your franchise taken away. And of those thousands of voters that were discounted, undercounted, about 80 percent were African-American," Jackson said. "That suggested they were targeted."

The allegations of voter fraud led the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights to conduct a two-day investigation in Florida that included interviews with Secretary Harris and Florida governor Jeb Bush.

The non-partisan group is expected to release a report on its findings by early March. Clayton said she hopes that Bush will take the time to address the issue of voter irregularities in Florida. But she said lawmakers need to work alongside Bush to ensure that necessary actions are taken to modify the elections process and prevent problems like those faced in Florida.

"This issue is about more than Bush beating Gore," she

said.

While attention remains focused on the concerns in Florida, topics such as education, health care and the economy are among other issues facing the new administration.

Throughout his campaign, Bush pushed heavily for school vouchers that would allow parents of students in floundering public schools to use federal funds to attend a private or parochial school. Education Secretary Rod Paige, the former superintendent of schools in Houston, said he supports the use of vouchers, but only under certain circumstances.

Clayton said she opposes the use of school vouchers and doesn't believe members of Congress will vote in favor of a bill for the program.

"Vouchers not only are divisive but we need ways to strengthen public schools," she said. "I don't believe at this point that, at the end of the day, the majority of Congress will

vote for (vouchers)."

Bush also supports reforms in higher education, including increases in federal financial aid programs and additional financial support to historically black colleges and universities.

In his inauguration speech, Bush again voiced his desire to cut taxes using \$1.6 billion of the national surplus. Some experts say the economy is on the verge of a recession and Bush is hoping that a tax cut will help to ward off any effects on citizens. The proposed tax cut will likely face stiff opposition in Congress where the Senate is evenly divided and Republicans hold a slim majority over Democrats in the House.

Many believe Bush's ability to unite the parties – as well as the nation – will ultimately decide how successful his presidency is.

Clayton said, "His tenure will be enhanced by things he does early on to unify people."

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