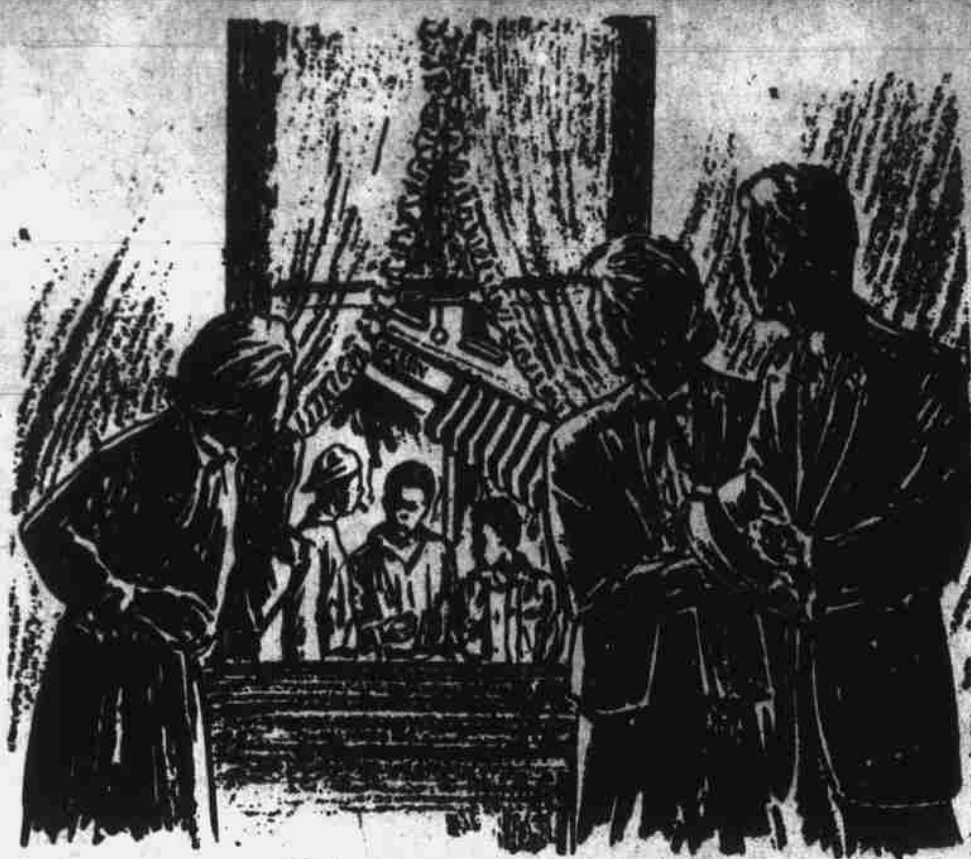


Crime In The Black Community Should Be Everybody's Concern



Black business is suffering from the effects of crime on an unprecedented scale, it is struggling to meet the high cost of their insurance, vandalism, shoplifting, and robbery. The problem centers around narcotics and drug-related crimes.

Pious

Guest Editorial

The Voting Rights Act

By Eddie N. Williams
President, John Center for Political Studies

The Voting Rights Act, first enacted in 1965 and extended in 1970 and in 1975, is now before the U.S. Congress. It is scheduled to expire in August, 1982, and faces an uncertain future. The Voting Rights Act has been the single most effective protection of the right to vote for blacks and Hispanics. The May, 1981 issue of *Focus*, the John Center for Political Studies' monthly newsletter, was devoted entirely to the Voting Rights Act. This reflects the John Center's very strong conviction, buttressed by research as well as keen observations, that the Voting Rights Act should be renewed for another ten years.

The Voting Rights Act is needed now more than ever. It is needed both as a protection and as an incentive to minorities in the political arena. It is needed as a bulwark against slick devices to discourage minority political participation altogether or to dilute their votes and mute their voices.

There is yet another compelling reason for renewal of the Voting Rights Act. It is clear now that the decade of the eighties will confront all of us with new realities flowing from conservative politics and economic stringencies.

Already the potential effects of a drastic reduction in the federal budget are well known. The promised and much hoped for "safety net" cannot possibly spare all those now strapped in poverty and defenseless against the long knives of the budget-cutters. The retreat of the federal government from the management and oversight of certain social programs will inevitably mean that minorities and the poor will have a harder time having their voices heard and their needs met at the state and local level.

Under these circumstances, the only real safety net that minorities and the poor can rely on is their own capacity to influence the political system. As voters and as public officials, they can seek to steer the flow of dwindling federal dollars to those in greatest need. The Voting Rights Act, in large measure, makes this possible.

Renewal of the Voting Rights Act is high on the agenda of blacks and Hispanics. However, as with other high priority issues, they can hardly afford to stand on the sidelines hoping someone will rescue the most important piece of civil rights legislation ever passed. Minorities themselves must lead the fight for renewal. They must demonstrate — in the states and cities as well as in Washington — just how much importance they attach to the Act.

There are a lot of potential supporters of the Voting Rights Acts who are waiting to see if we care enough to go to the mat for its survival. If we do not, they can easily assuage their consciences by saying: "If blacks and Hispanics are not willing to fight for their voting rights, why should I bother?" On the other hand, a strong demonstration of support by minorities in all quarters — leadership, churches, organizations, students, workers, professionals, indeed everybody right down to the individual voter — will serve as a magnet for others. At the same time, such massive support for the Voting Rights Act will help to open the eyes of certain members of Congress who are now opposed to the Act.

Protecting the right to vote is not an issue for minorities alone. It is an issue for all Americans. Businessmen who sincerely believe in corporate social responsibility can find in the effects of the Voting Rights Act many reasons for adding their support for its renewal. Institutions of higher education and the scholars who run them know full well how important the Act has been, and still is, in protecting minority political rights. The South, as a region, was liberated by the Voting Rights Act, and its leaders should be in the forefront of efforts to prevent any return to the dark past we would all like to forget.

Many of the traditional civil rights allies have rallied to the support of voting rights. That is encouraging. However, more allies are needed.

Things You Should Know

Dr. Henry M.

MINTON

Born in Columbia, S.C. in 1871, educated in New Hampshire; he was class orator and co-editor of his college paper! He got his Ph.D. in 1895; his M.D. from Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, in 1906! As a scientific researcher he made medical history with his pioneer work on the causes and prevention of Tuberculosis! He was also a celebrated chronicler of Negro History!

Continental Features



Did President Reagan Get A Mandate?

By Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins

Ever since the election last November newspapers, television and radio have constantly harped on the false theme that the American people gave President Reagan and his conservative cohorts a mandate to enact a budget which will repeal many of the social gains made during the past fifty years.

The truth of the matter is that in the November, 1980 Presidential election, less than 54% of the eligible voters actually voted in the Presidential column. And of those votes cast for President, Mr. Reagan received only slightly more than half. Thus, the overwhelming mandate, to which Mr. Reagan is so fond of referring, amounts to less than a third of the eligible voters of America.

The President, the conservative Members of Congress, and the Secretaries of Federal Agencies and Departments ranging from Agriculture to Health and Human Resources to Labor have spoken — and that they are responding by systematically dismantling and/or curtailing programs which assist not only the poor and working class people but also the middle class.

The Administration has said that the American people have spoken and that they (the Administration) are merely carrying out the peoples' wishes to curb Federal spending. So the Administration has begun efforts that will result in substantial cuts in the popular guaranteed student loan program, under which three million college students can borrow at low interest rates for their schooling; they have substantially curtailed

plans for new and refurbished units of public and rent-subsidized housing, which is so badly needed in nearly every major urban center of our nation; they have undertaken measures which will cut about one million of the 22 million recipients of food stamp benefits, at the same time they have made plans to reduce benefits to those remaining on food stamp assistance.

Moreover, the Administration has begun implementing a plan which will curtail trade adjustment assistance for workers idled by imports, while significantly tightening the eligibility requirement for unemployment compensation. Along with these cuts, the Administration also plans to reduce funding for child nutrition programs, social security and medicare/medicaid (medicare).

The Administration has proposed these regressive changes in the name of fiscal restraint. However, its misguided economic policies will only lead to higher unemployment, higher inflation and an even larger Federal deficit.

They fervently wave the flag and say that this is what the American people want.

I, too, believe that the American people want fiscal responsibility. However, I do not believe that when the American people went to the polls last November they voted to cut social security benefits to the elderly who have faithfully supported the system during their working lives. I do not believe that the American people gave anyone a mandate to turn back the hands of time and return us to an era when only the rich could afford to go to school. Nor do I believe that the

American people voted to turn their backs on those in our society who are in need.

I believe that the Administration is turning a deaf ear to the real mandate of the American people. I believe that those Americans who went to the polls, as well as those millions who stayed away out of sheer frustration, were sending a signal to elected officials that they (the American people) were tired of economic policies which only fuel inflation and promote unemployment. I believe that the American people were saying that they are fed up with fraud, waste and abuse in Federal programs ranging from medicare to farm subsidies. I believe that the American people were saying that they have grown tired of cost overruns, waste and incompetence in our defense programs.

I believe that the American people were signaling that they are ready for an America where a man or woman will be judged by the content of their character rather than their race, sex or religion. I believe that the American people were signaling that they are ready for true leadership rather than rhetorical sloganeering. I believe that the American people were signaling that they are ready for an America where the elderly can live their lives with the dignity they deserve. I believe that the American people were signaling that they are ready for policies which will promote balanced economic growth.

Above all, I believe that the American people are ready for a nation where there is no needless suffering.

A View From Capitol Hill:

An Independent Reports On Washington

By Gus Savage
Member of Congress

Reapportionment is a political reality that confronts members of the House of Representatives and their constituents every ten years. Because of the length of time involved, we tend to forget how important redistricting is and what it means not only during the ten-year period at hand but often for decades to come.

The U.S. Constitution requires each State's legislature to redraw its congressional district boundaries every ten years. This is to keep all districts equal, according to growth and shifts of population revealed by the latest decennial census.

When the population figures and the number of representatives to which the state is entitled are transmitted to the state's executive, the state has the duty to redistrict. In most States this duty is carried out by the State legislatures. However, regardless of the procedure used, the Federal courts step in if the process becomes deadlocked.

With this mandatory requirement to redistrict often arise various schemes to draw arbitrary boundary lines to determine the configuration of the congressional districts. This monster that rears its ugly head is called gerrymandering. In practice, gerrymandering is an excessive manipulation of a legislative district to benefit particular persons or parties. Gerrymandering gets its name from former Massachusetts Governor Elbridge Gerry and referred to an oddly-shaped district carved out in Essex county in 1812.

In my own state of Illinois, maps have been developed by two groups, the Independent Voters of Illinois and the Political Action Conference of Illinois, which smack of gerrymandering in its most blatant form. They violate the following principles that should be uppermost in the minds of all blacks concerned about fairness in the political process.

•No map should be gerrymandered or designed to lessen the likelihood of three blacks being elected to Congress from Chicago again, for this would be undemocratic and a step backward.

•No map should put residences of any two of Chicago's three black members of Congress into the same district. This would unnecessarily divide the black community. Divide and conquer is a tactic we should all recognize at this juncture in our political history.

•No map should extend any of Chicago's predominantly black districts into the suburbs. This, too, is unnecessary and elsewhere has been the illegal, though traditional, means of curbing natural and fair increases in black political representation. Since the passage of the Voting Rights Bill, this has been a common practice in the south.

While circumstances might cause the above principles to alter somewhat, generally they are applicable to every large urban

area in the nation in which there is a large concentration of black citizens.

Based on the 1980 census, sunbelt and western states win the redistricting sweepstakes: Florida stands to gain four seats while Texas will pick up three, and there is a possibility for blacks to gain seats in both states; Arizona, California, Oregon, Tennessee and Utah will gain one seat each. The major losers will be from the snowbelt and eastern states: New York will probably lose five seats; Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, two; Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri and New Jersey, one each.

Black members could be affected in at least three of these states: Illinois, Michigan and Missouri.

If the potential for black political power was not diluted through gerrymandering and other tricks, there is no question that we would have black members from Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina and other states based on population.

Therefore, reapportionment is a matter of grave concern for blacks if we are to hold on to the gains we have made in congressional seats. Moreover, if we are to make further gains, we must guard against efforts to pit one black against another — whether such efforts come from within or from outside.

We must be diligent and stand together in this important struggle.

Business In The Black

How To Cut Your Own Throat

Short Changing Social Security

By Charles E. Belle

President Reagan should remember that some people and their employer will pay 24% more in Social Security taxes this year. When he talks about cuts in social security, some people thought he meant in their taxes, not in the benefits!

The 1981 tax rate is 6.65%, and 8.48% increase over last year's 6.13% rate. The new wage base against which the higher rate will attack is \$29,700, up 14.0% over last year's \$25,900 level. Looks like Mr. Reagan is going to kick in the shins another group of voters who jumped over to his side.

President Reagan's proposed program to slice social security benefits will be the biggest cut immediately to the groups that gave him the biggest swing in his election. The New York Times/CBS News Poll indicates that both the 30-44 years old (31% of the voters) and the 45-59 years old (23% of the voters) made the biggest jump over from the Carter-Ford to Reagan run in the Presidential election. Reagan outran Ford in both these age groups as well as Carter. Now comes their reward from Reagan — a reduction in their retirement pay!

President Reagan's proposed social security cuts ignore the fact that this group is giving the greatest amount of money to the system. In spite of this, his plan is to penalize

them if they do not keep working! There are, of course, many who will be disappointed.

Those who expected to retire early and those who could have filled the vacated jobs more creatively will have to wait much longer. There are people in our society who are ready, willing and able to work long past age 65. However, there also exist many more who are barely able to continue to earn their daily bread because of failing health.

However, it is not only those who would take an early retirement who shall receive less in their old age, but everyone retiring after January, 1987, even at age 65 under President Reagan's plan.

The President plans a \$30-\$80 a month cut for you no matter how much of your hard earned wages have been taken out of your paycheck. In fact, even if you become disabled, his program calls for you to kick in an extra month before benefits will start.

Disabled workers are to wait six months instead of five months to draw benefits. In the event such a disaster does strike you, your doctor must dictate that your disability is going to last at least two years instead of twelve months or its no gold for you, baby! Brother, the currently retired persons would never have voted for this plan for themselves, so it's a bit amazing that the cur-

rently employed did this to themselves. It is very dangerous to play with knives. You could cut yourself.

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If there is no struggle, there is no progress. Those who propose to favor freedom and yet depreciate agitation are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean's majestic waves without the awful roar of its waters.

—Frederick Douglass