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Cotton-Laws Urges People to Get out And Vote

The Durham Committee on the Affairs of Black People held its Mass Get Out the Vote Rally Sun., April 29 at Union Baptist Church. Rev. Kenneth Hammond was the host pastor. Local elected officials identified reasons for getting out to vote for candidates that, as they described it, would fight for the interests of the African American community. N.C. Rep. Larry Hall placed a "hoodie" on a chair to remember Trayvon Martin and what that killing represents. A continued assault on young African American men by the judicial system. He described how that system is taking in far too many young men and boys because of the lack of opportunity in the job market and education.



RALLY PARTICIPANTS - From left to right are: Rep. Larry Hall with a "hoodie" to remember Trayvon martin; keynote speaker Rev. Dr. Michelle Cotton-Laws; and former Durham Committee Chair Dr. E. Lavonia Allison.

N.C. Rep. H.M. "Mickey" Michaux continued on that theme. "The assault on public education will have far reaching consequences for my grandchildren and your great grandchildren," Michaux said. He talked about the billion dollars that the Republican-led legislature has taken from the Education budget, yet still expects teachers to maintain high standards without the tools necessary. Michaux said he was often in court representing people with traffic violations and to defend them he had to get a MVR or Motor Vehicle Report. "What the Republicans are doing in the legislature is also a MVR ... Mean, Vicious and Racist. We have to continue to fight this type of legislation because we cannot afford to fail." N.C. Sen. Floyd McKissick, Jr. not only talked about the need to vote, but to look at what Republicans have already done on voting. "The have shortened the time of Early Voting, eliminated Sunday voting," where it was described as "Souls to the Pools." "All of this was done to reduce the impact African Americans have on this and the November election." He noted that Barack Obama only won the state of North Carolina by 13,000 votes. Rev. Dr. Michelle Cotton Laws was the keynote speaker for the occasion. She said we are witnessing the resurgence of segregation. "I get fired up when I think about these diabolical acts of pure hatred, racism a classicism that are being perpetuated by extreme far right Conservatives and lets face it some de-courting Democrats have left me alarmed. We are witnessing the resurgence of Jim Crow and it offspring." Rev. Dr. Cotton-Laws went on to talk about what this means for us going forward as a people. "We need to be on high alert. That these actions are not only taking place in North Carolina, but across the country." "When we assess the results of and implicated in the political suicide of 2010, it trouble me." When Republicans took over the not only the N.C. legislature but increased its clout nationally as well. That takeover during a redistricting year has seen Durham County split in what many Democrats and African Americans leaders see as a device to dilute the African American vote and its impact. "When they put Sarah Palin on the ticket, even a 'North Carolina' fourth grader in our Democratic Party is smarter than her. When we allow them to out-trick us, we must fight back. They are taking our agenda and twisting its meaning and calling good evil and evil good." She called it downright shameful. We must look at "the rulers of darkness of the rulers of this world and fight against spiritual wickedness by rulers in high places." Rev. Dr. Cotton-Laws talked about the assault on women, children, the elderly and poor. "We must remember who we are." As is often said we are all one or two paychecks from poverty. She described how some in New Orleans thought that when Hurricane Katrina was heading for that city, some thought that if flooding occurred, it would be in the Lower Ninth Ward, where some of the poorest and African Americans lived.

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Former NCCU Chancellor LeRoy T. Walker was remembered at NCCU's B.N. Duke Auditorium, April 30. See related photos on page 4. (Photo by Lawson)

*A Voteless
People Is A
Hopeless
People*

- L.E. Austin

Race and Rage: L.A. Civil Unrest 20 Years Later

By Yusuf Simmonds and Jennifer Bihm
Special to the NNPA from the Los Angeles Sentinel

Was it a rebellion, an uprising or a revolt? What it's called is not as important as what happened and why. Inevitably, positive changes have taken place in Los Angeles twenty years after the civil unrest began at Florence and Normandie. For example, "Generally there has been a diminishing sense of disrespect toward Black residents," says Professor David Horne, director of the Pan African Public Policy Institute at Cal State Northridge. "Arguably, one of the most significant changes is a marked cohesiveness in the efforts to improve the quality of life for all who reside here." Community leaders, elected officials, law enforcement agents and activists alike are rallying to panels, forums and town halls, continuously analyzing the environment and attitudes that led to the uprising. They are hopeful that lessons learned since then will serve as an effective preventative measure. However, some current statistics reveal that while reaching the goal of a more peaceful, economically just Los Angeles won't be impossible, it may be daunting. Currently, young Black males comprise 33 percent of youth in L.A. county probation system despite representing about 10 percent of the county's population. Black unemployment is about 20 percent here according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. And, according to the Department of Education, the county's Black students have an over 30 percent dropout rate. "Just look at the Trayvon Martin case and you can see that while much has been done there is much work remaining to keep our justice system on track," said Judge David S. Cunningham III on the rebellion. There were a variety of names for it: uprising, civil unrest, rebellion, urban insurrection, protest, revolt... The unchanging element was the fact that what triggered the L.A. riots was the April 29, 1992 acquittal of four White police officers accused of brutally beating Rodney King, a Black motorist, now infamously, and practically synonymous with the riots. "When I heard the words, "N****r run, we're gonna kill you, n****r run"... You know, here in a street fight that's to the death," King recalled during a recent interview with KTLA's Eric Spillman. "I knew life was just a matter of seconds of me dying, so I've gotta try and cover up what I can... Keep my hands above my brain and just scream as loud as I could and as long as I could." While the beating may have been the breaking point, many believe the real cause was decades of mistreatment and total lack of respect toward Los Angeles' black community. "Back then we had a massive and increasing amount of general disrespect for the African American community," explained Horne. "You had a number of immigrants coming over, sometimes Korean, sometimes Vietnamese. They would get liquor store licenses [whereas] Blacks could not." "They were in charge of all the swap meets. They would be in charge of a lot of gasoline stations in the community. And, with regularity, when people would stop to get gas or when people would try on something before they paid for it, the mantra was, "no, no, you're dirty. You cannot put on, buy or leave... That kind of conduct became typical." Also typical, was the violent but otherwise non-existent relationship between Blacks and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). By the time the world saw the four officers beat King via television and their subsequent acquittal on television, Blacks in Los Angeles had long realized that the system designed to protect, serve and render equal justice under the law had failed them. It was not the first time, nor was it the only time. Just days after the televised beating, Korean liquor store-owner Soon Ja Du, shot and killed 15 year old Latasha Harlins, a Black student, accusing her of trying to steal a bottle of orange juice. Despite the fact that Harlins was shot in the back of the head as she attempted to leave the store without the juice, Ja Du was sentenced to five years probation and a \$500.00 fine. The incident and weak-sentencing only served to exacerbate an already festering wound. "We were getting [disrespect] from the immigrants coming over; we were getting it from the police and we were saying, "no, we cannot stand it" and that's the major reason the dam broke." About three hours after the not-guilty verdict was read for the officers charged in the beating, a crowd at the now infamous corner of Florence and Normandie began to heat up. Non-Black motorists unfortunate enough to be caught driving by were pulled from their

vehicles, beaten and robbed. Reginald Denny, who like King, became an unintentional symbol of the 1992 civil unrest, received the most severe beating. When it was all over, there were about 53 deaths, thousands injured and arrested and approximately \$1 billion in property damage. "I sat down at 54th and Normandie at the RTD bus depot forever, before they actually let us out to do crime suppression and start making arrests in South Central Los Angeles," said Commander Robert Green. "The most vivid memory I have is that when we first came out and started rolling into the neighborhoods that I had policed for some time, people were coming out onto their porches and cheering. The good people in the neighborhood were terrorized and locked in their homes, afraid to come out. "I'll never forget that. [I was] thinking the system had completely failed these people. Not only had law enforcement's relationship deteriorated so significantly for a variety of reasons, but we had victimized the best people in the community... people who had supported us, people who really needed law enforcement more than anybody..." Like Horne, Green believed the explosion in 1992 didn't happen overnight, though his account of that time is now slightly different. "If you go back into the mid 1980s and early 1990s, we really had 10 years of extraordinary violence in Los Angeles. We had over a thousand murders a year. "The violence near 77th street alone for 10 years, we averaged 130 murders a year. The highest year we had 163 and when you look at those numbers and you look at the staffing levels of the police department, you had people who were constantly responding to significant problems. Crack cocaine was out of control. PCP was out of control. "It wasn't just the homicide victims, it was the people's lives that were destroyed. So, cops were tremendously overworked, responding to one violent incident after another, one emotional victim after another ... victims of crime. They weren't dealing with the community. There was no community policing at the time.

NC lawmakers want businesses to check immigration status

By Emery P. Dalesio
RALEIGH (AP) - The Republican-led General Assembly passed legislation June 18 that will require cities, counties and businesses to check the immigration status of new hires. The House voted 67-45 to require employers and local governments to use the federal government's E-Verify records system to prevent illegal immigrants from landing jobs. The legislation makes exceptions for companies that employ fewer than 25 workers or use seasonal workers. Gov. Beverly Perdue will decide whether to accept the measure or veto it. North Carolina's state government, universities and community colleges have used for the federal system for five years. "This is just common sense legislation that our people want. We need to pass it today and get it into law," said Majority Leader Paul Stam, R-Wake. Bill sponsor Rep. George Cleveland, R-Onslow, said he was disappointed that the measure would only affect about 20 percent of the state's businesses since the rest are small firms with fewer than 25 workers. He said he'll push to include small businesses in the requirement to check for illegal immigrants since "they're the ones employing them." The legislation allows people to anonymously report their suspicions that a company is employing an illegal worker. Filing a false complaint is a misdemeanor, but prosecution is not required. The state Labor Department would investigate complaints and would have the power to force companies to turn over records related recruitment, hiring, or termination policies as part of an investigation. Employers have been prohibited for a quarter-century from hiring illegal immigrants, but enforcement has been spotty. Federal contractors and subcontractors were required to use E-verify beginning in 2009, but there is no national law requiring other companies use it. North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee and Virginia are among 16 states that require some use of E-Verify before hiring, according to (Continued On Page 3)