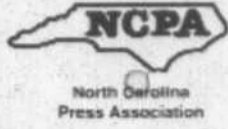


OPINION

THE CHRONICLE

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Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue has earned our support.

WE ALSO LIKE...

In case you have not figured it out yet, we are not like most media outlets.

When it comes to giving our support to the men and women seeking elected offices, we look far beyond the standard stuff. Sure, voting records and experience are important, but we believe that personality, vision and openness trumps the other stuff.

We want the kind of folks in our highest positions that will be right at home at our kitchen table on Sunday evening;

the kind who will be comfortable at our churches and community events; folks that won't just hear our concerns, but listen to them and take them to heart.

Bev Perdue has always been one of those kind of people. She has been a good friend to us and many, many people in this community, and her friendship, just didn't develop during election

years.

We enthusiastically support her to be our next governor. In terms of record and experience, her Republican challenger Pat McCrory doesn't even come close to Bev. But beyond that, McCrory has not reached out to black news media organizations to tout his plans and ideas for our community. (That is probably because he has none). Perdue, on the other hand, has been open to share her thoughts. She has sat in our conference room many times to talk about her exciting plans for education, health care and job creation. That says, a lot. Often, people view black-owned media as inferior and subpar. We feel if a candidate has that belief, than his or her feelings about minorities as a whole are probably similar.

State Sen. Kay Hagan has also reached out to us and sought our endorsement. We are proud to give it to her. There is no doubt that we need some fresh blood in the U.S. Senate, and that statement is no knock on Republican Elizabeth Dole's age.

It's not Dole's age that makes her out of date and stale, it's the philosophy that she embraces - the bad tax cuts for the rich, an unwillingness to admit that our fighting in Iraq was a mistake and on and on.

Part of Dole's problem is that she feels that she is entitled to her Senate seat just because of her decades of stellar public service to this country. Dole has not done much because like a monarch, she feels she can't be dethroned.

Hagan is ready to work hard for us. She's a fighter that will stand up against all forces to battle for all North Carolinians. We should all vote for Hagan and give Liddy a much-deserved retirement.

We also are voting for: Wayne Godwin for Commissioner of Insurance; Winston-Salem resident Mary Fant Donnan for Commissioner of Labor; Janet Cowell for Treasurer; Beth A. Wood for Auditor; Ronnie Ansley for Agriculture Commissioner; and Norman Holleman for Register of Deeds.

And please don't forget to vote for the judges at the end of your ballot. Their roles are vital. And please join us in supporting: Winston-Salem's own Suzanne Reynolds for the Supreme Court; and Legal legend James Wynn, Judge Cheri Beasley, Judge Linda Stephens, John S. Arrowood and Judge Kristin Ruth, all for the N.C. Court of Appeals.

VOTE TODAY!!!!!!!



Hill Harper
 Guest Columnist

The 2008 presidential campaign has electrified voters throughout a long process, as Americans have experienced a series of political firsts, including an African American major party presidential nominee, a woman mounting a serious challenge for a presidential nomination and the GOP's selection of a female vice presidential nominee.

Since January, excitement has built in the electorate, exemplified by the large crowds greeting the candidates and the massive turnout during the caucus and primary contests. But now our nation faces a crucial test as Election Day approaches: some states now have strict identification requirements for voters, a move that could stymie the anticipated growth in political participation.

Whatever the motive for the tougher voter requirements, public officials, civic leaders, activists and media outlets must work to ensure that voters in their states understand the rules and that they bring the proper identification to the polls. It would be a serious blow to our democracy if droves of voters, perhaps excited for the first time about their participation and choices, are turned away at the polls.

Given the low voter turnout rates we have witnessed over the past 30 years, our democracy cannot afford to disillusion people who may be participating for the first time.

Moreover, as the nation faces an economic crisis, it is more important than ever that the American people participate in the voting process and feel vested in selecting the path for the nation's future. This is especially true for those espousing that change is needed in Washington believing perhaps that our current public officials and representatives have not necessarily acted in the best interest of our families, our communities or our future.

Already, restrictive rules in many states that do not allow prisoners or even some formerly incarcerated individuals to vote have raised questions about the fairness of the electoral system. It is estimated that about 5.3 million prisoners or ex-prisoners won't be allowed to vote. In Texas alone, there are over 800,000 formerly incarcerated individuals who are by-law eligible to vote but today are unregistered, because most don't realize that the laws have changed and that they are in fact eligible to participate in our democracy. This disenfranchisement strikes a contrast to other democracies around the world where ex-felons are generally encouraged to vote once they return to their communities. Why? In part because voting is commonly recognized as one of our most effective tools for positive civic engagement and respon-

sibility.

While the debate will continue in the US over whether voting rights should be returned to the formerly incarcerated who have paid their debt to society, there is something we can do now to prevent onerous ID requirements from discouraging voters. We need to actively educate the electorate.

For instance, in Arizona, proof of citizenship is now required for NEW voters. To satisfy this requirement, new voters must bring a driver license or a non-operating identification license and a copy of a birth certificate. New voters can also bring their US passport. New Native American voters will need their Bureau of Indian Affairs card, tribal treaty card or tribal enrollment number.

In Florida, meanwhile, a photo ID is required to vote. Acceptable IDs include a driver's license, US passport, debit or credit card, military ID, student ID, retirement center ID, neighborhood association ID or public assistance ID. Similar photo IDs are required to vote in Michigan. What's clear is that just as more Americans appear poised to participate in the electoral process, there are more rules and regulations that they must follow.

It's the responsibility of our public servants, as well as dedicated activists, media outlets and other leaders, to inform the public of what they need to vote. Let's make sure everyone can participate. There are many organizations and campaigns underway that

are actively working to educate voters and it is up to each of us to actively support such initiatives. For instance, New American Media (NAM) which is a collaboration of ethnic news outlets are asking television stations to air a star-studded, 30-second PSA that I participated in with other entertainers, who care dearly about our nation's future. NAM has also made available broadcast quality voting TV and radio PSAs that can be aired on-air or from web sites, as well as voting print ads for newspapers and magazines. Collaborations such as this, to educate and encourage the electorate are essential as we approach this election.

I believe that in large part what makes our country the greatest in the world is that it is a participatory democracy, but that only works if we all participate. It is up to every one of us to work as diligently as we can to ensure that every American who is eligible to vote is allowed to have their vote counted, voice heard—and participate in this wonderful democracy.

Hill Harper currently stars in the hit television drama CSI: NY and is the New York Times bestselling author of "Letters To a Young Brother" and "Letters To a Young Sister." He is a Magna Cum Laude graduate from Brown University and recipient of graduate degrees with honors in both law and public administration from Harvard University, where he attended school with Sen. Barack Obama.

Don't blame minorities for subprime mess



Marc Morial
 Guest Columnist

In the last few weeks, I have undertaken an aggressive campaign directed at the nation's financial leaders to dispel the dangerous and growing myth that minority borrowers are primarily responsible for our country's current economic crisis. In letters to Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and Federal Reserve Chairman, Benjamin Bernanke, I have asked that they both publicly refute claims by some conservative pundits and politicians that most of the defaulted subprime loans at the root of the crisis were made to African Americans, Hispanics and other so-called "unproductive borrowers."

As the New York Times pointed out in an Aug. 3 article, Subprime Loans' Wide Reach, "While subprime loans deeply penetrated low-income and minority groups, a new study suggests that more upper-income borrowers and more whites took out such loans than any other groups."

It is becoming clearer everyday that a large number of people who ended up with



Controversial Republican Congresswoman Michele Bachmann of Minnesota.

subprime loans could have qualified for a prime loan. That's where the abuse lies.

In the face of these facts, we have heard conservatives - from Fox News Commentator, Neil Cavuto to ABC News Analyst George Will to Washington Post Columnist Charles Krauthammer say that government efforts to increase homeownership "put people in homes they could not afford" and are "at the root of our current calamity."

Rep. Michele Bachmann (R-Minn) added Congressional weight to this myth when she quoted an Investor's Business Daily arti-

cle from the floor of the House that said banks made loans "on the basis of race and little else."

In my view, this blatant scapegoating is an ugly attempt by the rich and powerful to shift the blame for this crisis from Wall Street and Washington, where it belongs, onto middle class families on Main Street and Martin Luther King Boulevard who are most victimized by their excesses.

I have taken up this issue for several reasons. First, now more than ever, America needs unity and real solutions to fix the economic mess that has engulfed our country.

Instead of having a healthy debate on what must be done to curb too much Wall Street greed and too little Washington oversight, too many are willing to waste precious time and energy blaming the victims.

Second, history provides too many lessons about the consequences of singling out only certain segments of the population as culprits for a country's woes. On the basis of hearsay, rumors and misinformation, seeds of division are being sown all across the United States in a volatile political environment where Americans are terrified by the economic situation.

That is why I have called on both Secretary Paulson and Chairman Bernanke to quell this false and unnecessary tempest. I will take my concerns directly to Congress on October 16th at a special hearing on this issue before the Senate Banking Committee. The National Urban League is also once again calling on the major broadcast and cable TV networks to increase racial diversity in their newsrooms as a way to prevent the dissemination of this and other dangerous myths by certain commentators and politicians.

Marc Morial is President and CEO of the National Urban League.