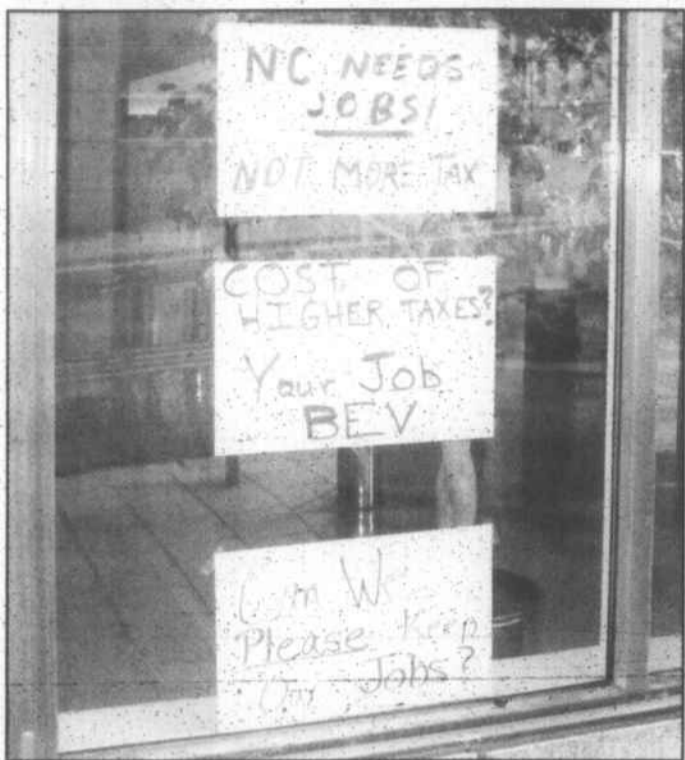


# OPINION/ FORUM

THE CHRONICLE

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Protest signs posted in the windows of Reynolds downtown headquarters express employees' opposition to the proposed tax hike.

## Hasn't Tobacco Had Enough?

Tobacco is once more the punching bag for elected officials. Last week, Congress pushed through a mess of a legislation that will give the U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulatory control over the industry. Yes, the same FDA that has done such a commendable job keeping us safe from tainted spinach, peanut butter and baby formula. Now, state lawmakers, led by Gov. Bev Perdue, want to raise taxes on cigarettes by \$1 to help lift the state out of its economic doldrums.

We say, "ENOUGH, ALREADY!" There is no doubt that for decades, Big Tobacco made mistakes and concealed information about the dangers of smoking, but the industry has bent over backward and done somersaults to right those wrongs and has, for the most part, willingly followed every directive set by the government.

But some seemingly will not be happy until every tobacco company in the country shuts down or moves to Europe, where folks have a clearer, more grown-up attitude toward smoking. Did it not occur to Congress and President Obama, who rushed to sign the new FDA bill, that now, with the economy still in the gutter, is not the best time to sucker punch an industry that employs thousands of Americans? Why would the governor pick now, with the state's unemployment rate higher than it has been in decades, to make a move that could force even more job losses? This all seems like common sense to us, but perhaps common sense is something that folks lose once they are elected to public office.

And speaking of common sense, is it a bit odd that other industries that hawk products that can be potentially dangerous to our health are allowed to frolic without lawmakers at their backs with knives drawn? Alcohol can be just as dangerous as tobacco, especially when combined with a motor vehicle. And, although heart disease, by far, is the nation's number one killer, our elected officials continue to allow us to eat up all the trans-fat that we want. If all of these laws and taxes are really about protecting folks' health, than perhaps that dollar tax should be slapped on the Monster Burger.

## Council Member Malloy

This city is fortunate that nearly all of our local elected officials are the down-home, personable type. This is especially true of the members of our City Council, but it will be without its most grassroots member next year.



Nelson Malloy

Council Member Nelson Malloy's decision to not seek re-election saddens us in many ways. But the fact that Malloy will now have time to focus completely on his health is a good thing. Although he relies on a wheelchair to get around and does not drive, Malloy was just as active - more so in many ways - than the more able-bodied members of the Council.

In him, the residents had their common, everyday man. He is reachable, understanding, and can relate to many of the problems that residents have because he too has been there at one time or another. One always got the sense that the people were the only special interests that Malloy served on the Council - his activist roots probably deserve credit for that.

We wish Council Member Malloy the best of luck and the best of health in the future. We know that as long as he is able, he will be active in the community and in the issues that affect the least among us.

## Is the Economy Rebounding?

**Julianne Malveaux**  
 Guest Columnist

It has been a scant nine months since former Treasury Secretary Henry Polson took three handwritten pages to Congress demanding a \$700 billion bailout for the financial sector.

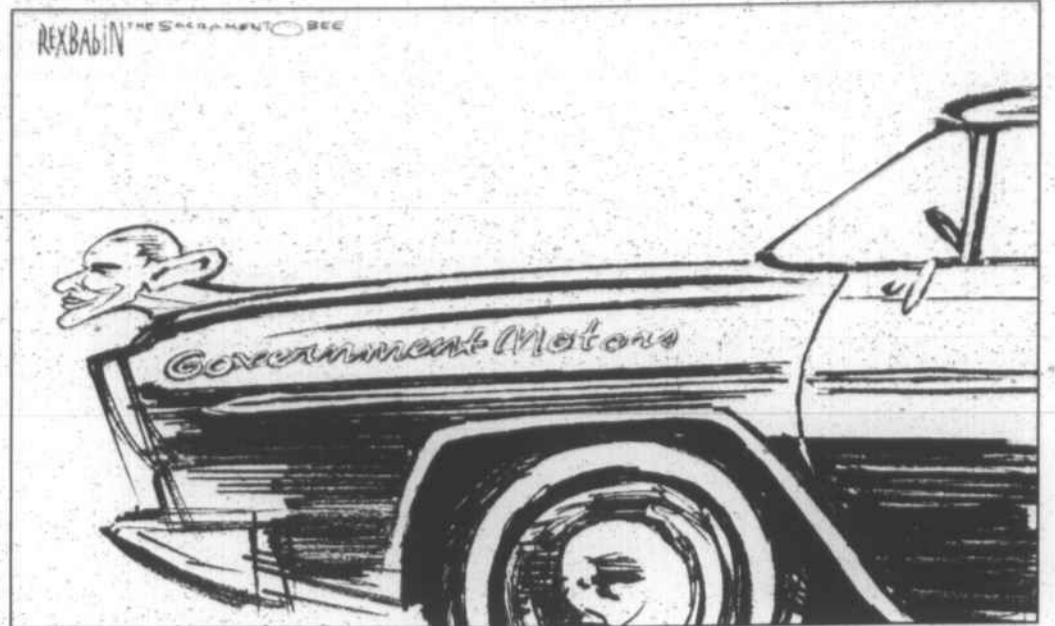
A scant five months since President Obama has taken office and put a \$787 billion stimulus package out there. While some money has been disbursed, mayors are still asking for direct appropriations to beleaguered cities, and at least 36 states are talking of education cuts for the next academic year.

Yet there are also those who say the recession is bottoming out, and the Chamber of Commerce is organizing to oppose government intervention in the economy with an "Enough is Enough" campaign. Because stock indicators look decent (so far), up more than a third since mid-March, there are those who think it is time to celebrate, or at least pause, on recovery efforts.

This is not the time to hold a party. Even as stocks gain momentum, not a day goes by without an announcement of another bankruptcy.

Furthermore, while Wall Street is finding its lot improved, there are still hard times on Main Street, especially among those homeowners who are struggling with underwater mortgages (mortgage worth more than the house).

That's not even mentioning the labor market, where unemployment rates will get to ten percent (if not more) before



they begin to head downward, and where unemployment rates in the African-American community exceed depression-level rates of 25 percent. The job-creation aspects of recovery have yet to be realized; yet this is the most essential part of recovery. It does us no good to look at stocks that are doing well if we cannot look at people that are doing well. This recovery has to trickle down!

It may also be time to talk frankly about targeting some aspects of recovery on communities most in need. The African-American community, in particular, has been extremely hard hit, but please don't say "African American" in a crowded room - you'll be accused of racism, or worse. Numbers don't lie and neither does drive by public policy analysis. Drive through an inner city neighborhood and then tell me that you see the same thing that you see in gentrified areas or in suburbs!

What about targeting young people? The unemployment rates among youth are staggering, with new college graduates

entering the worst job market that we have seen in at least 20 years. While everyone else is the world is lined up for a subsidy, we have yet to offer our students as good a deal as we are offering new car purchasers. Students pay interest rates no lower than 5 percent, and often as high as 12 percent.

New car purchasers get away with zero. It would be great to see an economic stimulus for young people.

This recession has caused enough angst for people to eagerly anticipate its end, but it is way too soon to talk about bottoming out, and it seems especially insensitive to those who continue to suffer for a few to talk about how much better they are doing. The members of the bottom-out team ought to be talking about targeting those who are suffering disproportionately - big cities, African-Americans, and young people. The macroeconomic indicators are undercut by the microeconomic angst that too many Americans are experiencing.

If the current economy is bottoming out, what about eco-

nomie restructuring? The fact is that economic fundamentals were weak, and that weakness led us to recession. Until we are able to restructure aspects of our economy, we will continue to have some economic weakness.

President Obama and his team have talked about new financial regulations. This is something to look forward to. These are also the things that Chambers of Commerce are protesting. The missing conversation is a conversation about economic distribution. One sector can lick its chops and talk about bottoming out and good times; while others are still wondering how they can make their mortgage.

It will be a shame if we miss an opportunity to look closely at economic fundamentals because optimists think good times are coming soon.

Julianne Malveaux is president of Bennett College for Women and a renowned economist. She can be reached at [presbennett@bennett.edu](mailto:presbennett@bennett.edu).

## Are Racist 'Lone Wolves' Really Alone?

**Ron Walters**  
 Guest Columnist

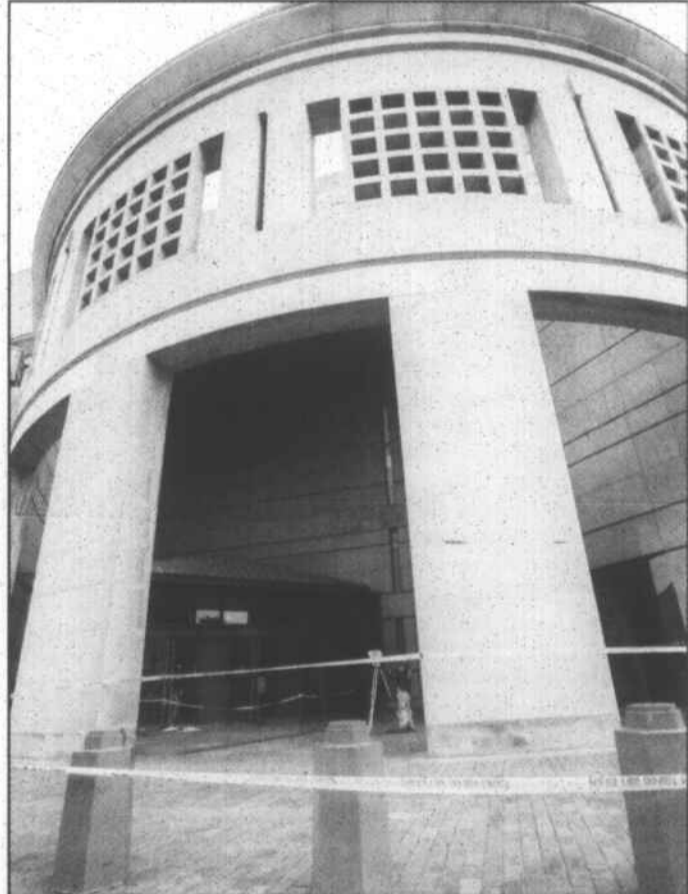
On Wednesday evening June 10, I was supposed to have attended the preview of a play by Janet Cohen, an African-American writer and wife of Jewish former Secretary of the Army, Steve Cohen at the Holocaust Museum.

But that day it was attacked by James von Brunn, long time avowed White racist. At the entrance to the Museum von Brunn shot and killed Stephen Johns, a beloved African-American security guard who had worked there for six years. This was a supreme irony because Janet's play, "Anne and Emmett" was about introducing more Americans to the lives of Anne Frank and Emmett Till, two Jewish and African-American icons of the human rights movement whose lives have been used to repudiate racist violence. Needless to say, the preview was cancelled and I awoke the next day to find the American media cutting the foundation of American racism out of the story by emphasizing that von Brunn was a "lone wolf."

But was he really? We make two points. So-called "lone wolves" are part of a larger official community which gives them substantial legitimacy and two, when that legitimacy falters they are most likely to show their violent fangs.

With the upsurge of the conservative movement, racist violence and hate speech became staples used to mobilize people, not necessarily into racist groups, but also into campaigns and voters for elected officials.

When Ronald Reagan ran for President in 1980, not only did he open his campaign in Philadelphia, Miss., where civil rights martyrs Schwerner Goodman and Chaney were killed by the Klan, but Klan



The U.S. Holocaust Museum shut down for a day last week after a deadly shooting.

members took off their sheets and staged "Vote for Ronald Reagan" rallies at events on the campaign trail.

And even though Reagan mildly repudiated their support, the new road to the legitimacy of the radical right had been forged.

In the 1990s, as one publication put it, "a feeling of rage is building across the country," an expression of which became the militias that were forming in many states, ostensibly to protect citizens from all sorts of government conspiracies.

Many of these had ties to racist, neo-Nazi and Aryan supremacy movements and most militia members were also card carrying members of the National Rifle Association, which gave them political protection. So serious was this movement regarded that in return for grassroots assistance, some members of Congress included them in campaign operations and gave

them access to government resources.

In March of 1995, the paranoid rumor of a federal plan to raid them prompted inquiries to Attorney General Janet Reno's office from mostly Republican members of Congress, such as: Robert Dornan (CA), Mac Collins (GA), James Hansen (UT), Larry Craig, (ID), Lauch Faircloth (NC), and Steve Stockman (TX).

Next month on April 19, when "lone wolf" Timothy McVeigh bombed an Oklahoma City federal building, because he had ties to the Michigan Militia, members of Congress with ties to such groups, such as Rep. Helen Chenoweth (ID) who had associations with the Commander of the United Militia Assn, and others were pressured to explain the nature of these ties.

Bill Clinton tried to delegitimize the hate-filled atmosphere with speeches

addressing directly the need for stronger hate crimes legislation. Official statistics indicate that most such crimes are oriented toward race and most of these involve African Americans.

But although the Clinton Administration wanted to expand it to include crimes against gays and provision related to the burning of churches, in his last days in office, he publicly regretted the fact that Republicans had prevented the passage of any hate crimes legislation.

Indeed, Republicans made such moves extremely difficult. When in 1999, Democrat, Rep. Robert Wexler (CA) attempted to pass a resolution condemning the Council of Conservative Citizens, a new version of the supremacist group, White Citizens Council, Republicans blocked it. Politicians who had associations with the Council included Senators Trent Lott, Jesse Helms, Bob Barr, Mississippi Gov. Kirk Fordice and others.

This led Wexler to ask why the Congress could pass a resolution denouncing Black hate speech by Khalid Muhammad, then of the Nation of Islam by 97-0, but did nothing in this case.

That same year, Congress also refused to denounce the speech of Republican Sen. Ernest Hollings, who called Black people "darkies" and Hispanics "wetbacks" and said that African heads of state came to International conferences to "get a square meal instead of eating each other."

With the latest change of administrations, it may appear that legitimacy for racism has weakened, and so the "lone wolves" may come out once more.

Dr. Ron Walters is the Distinguished Leadership Scholar, Director of the African American Leadership Center and Professor of Government and Politics at the University of Maryland College Park. Among his books is "White Nationalism, Black Interests."