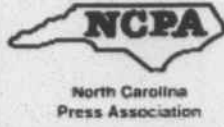


OPINION/ FORUM

THE CHRONICLE 36 Years

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Save and Support Black Colleges



Ben Chavis
 Guest Columnist

The survival of Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) is at stake. Today, more than ever before, there is an urgent necessity to stand up, speak out, and let the voice and fundamental interests of 45 million Black Americans be heard. Education has always been at the heart of our long struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. Proposed budget cuts by the U.S. Congress will put Historically Black Colleges and Universities and Predominantly Black Institutions (PBIs) in a severe fiscal crisis.

On April 6 and 7 in Washington, D.C., there will be a much needed show of force in support of HBCUs and PBIs in Capitol Hill. This is an urgent call to action for students, parents, teachers, administrators, ministers, leaders, activists, and the masses of African Americans to turn out in opposition to the proposed budget cuts to our colleges and universities. We have come too far, struggled and worked too hard, and sacrificed and bled too much in the establishment of these vital academic and career fulfillment institutions to now let the cold, damp hands of political dereliction snatch the fiscal life from our colleges and universities.

Power concedes nothing without a demand. There are too many in the U.S. Congress today who simply do not care about the future sustainability of African American institutions of higher learning. This is not a case of political or social ignorance. But, this is another clear case of racial discriminatory triage cloaked under the questionable guise of fiscal restraint and deficit reduction. We demand that the U.S. Congress refrain from cutting and gutting financial support for HBCUs and PBIs.

We join with the National Association For Equal Opportunity in Higher Education (NAFEO), United Negro College Fund (UNCF), Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF), the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), the Hip Hop Caucus, the Hip-Hop Summit Action Network (HSAN), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) to mobilize national support to let the U.S. Congress know that funding for our colleges and universities should not be cut.

Dr. Lezli Baskerville, the President and CEO of NAFEO, urged, "We need you to join us in D.C. and help us

educate Congress about why HBCU and PBI funding cannot be traded away for sustained defense funding or partisan posturing. We need HBCUs and PBIs to continue preparing diverse students in the arts and sciences, technology and engineering, and mathematics, as well as teaching health, globalization, greening, and sustainability professionals."

April 6 and 7 has been entitled, "Lift Every Voice & Be Heard" days of support for HBCUs and PBIs in Washington, D.C. If you are in D.C. or near D.C. on these days, you should come out and join this most important gathering. We have to send the right message to Congress and the time is now.

We have to make sure that Fiscal Year 2011 Budget funding for HBCUs and PBIs is not rescinded by Congress and that Fiscal Year 2012 Budget funding for our colleges and universities is at least level-funded and adjusted for inflation. What gets cut and who gets cut should be a matter of public policy impacted by the express will of the people and not left solely to the political whims of an extremely narrow view of the nation and world.

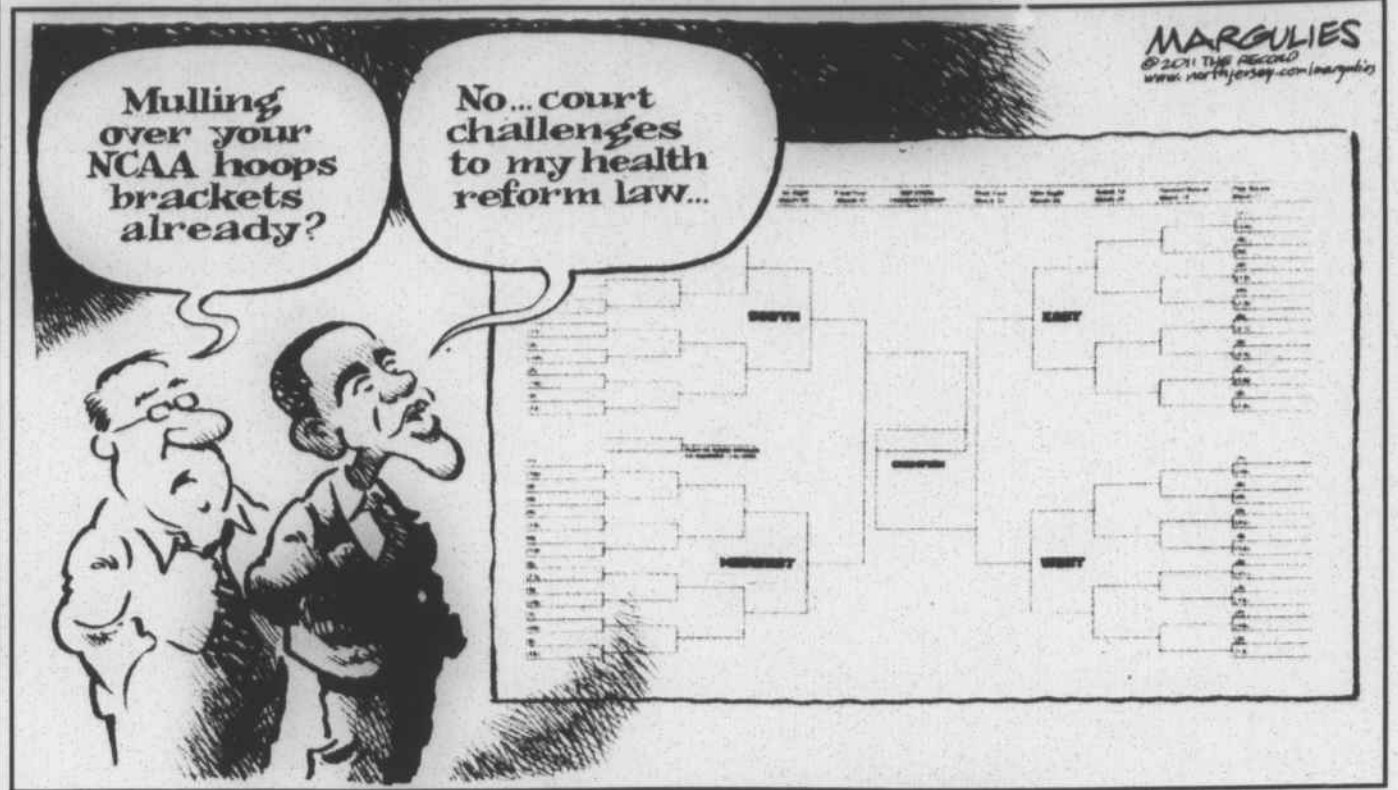
While HBCUs represent just 4% of U.S. universities, HBCUs confer 22% of all bachelor degrees earned by African Americans, 24% of all bachelor degrees awarded to African Americans in engineering, and 35% of all bachelor degrees in astronomy, biology, chemistry, mathematics, and physics. Fifty percent of all African American teachers attended and graduated from HBCUs. HBCUs and PBIs collectively employ more than 200,000 people and contribute more than \$10 billion annually to the U.S. economy. The historical legacy and the contemporary relevancy of these critical important educational institutions cannot be overstated.

If Black Americans do not assert the value of our educational institutions, who will? If we do not speak up now, who will? I will be in Washington, D.C. on April 6th and 7th. You should make every effort to join us. Our children and our grandchildren deserve the best and most equitable quality education from pre-K to post-graduate school. Now is the time, once again, for us to speak clearly and forcibly. The budget scalpel is swinging in our direction disproportionately. What are we going to do about it? Let's make sure our voices are "heard and felt" on this issue. Save, fund and protect our HBCUs and PBIs.

Dr. Benjamin F. Chavis Jr. is Senior Advisor to the Black Alliance for Educational Options (BAEO) and President of Education Online Services Corporation.

CORRECTION

The incorrect date for one of the Promised Neighborhood Collaborative community forums was listed in The Chronicle's March 3 story. The next meeting will be Monday, March 21 at 6 p.m. at Solid Rock Baptist Church, 3010 Carver School Rd. Another meeting will be on Tuesday, March 22 at noon at Brown & Douglas Recreation Center, 4725 Indiana Ave. To register, call 722-6296 ext. 221.



The Issue Is Jobs



Marc Morial
 Guest Columnist

From March 29th through the 31st, the National Urban League brings its fight for urban jobs to Capitol Hill with its 2011 Legislative Policy Conference. This year's summit will make the case for targeted action to tackle the persistent unemployment crisis in Black America.

Dozens of Urban League affiliate delegations comprised of CEO's, board chairs and the presidents of affiliate Guild and Young Professional auxiliaries will join us for meetings on Capitol Hill with U.S. Senators and Representatives.

The conference also serves as the backdrop to the release of the National Urban League's landmark annual publication, The State of Black America, being held this year at historic Howard University, with a Town Hall event featuring Howard students, faculty and others, moderated by Jeff Johnson and Roland Martin.

The highlight of this year's legislative summit and State of Black America report is jobs, jobs, jobs. The great recession is officially over. But, with



overall unemployment now at 8.9 percent and 13.7 million people still out of work, the recovery has been painfully slow and has yet to make a significant visit to communities of color. The U.S. Department of Labor's February jobs report shows Black unemployment at 15.3 percent. The rate is 16.2 percent for Black men and 11.6 percent for Hispanics. Clearly, the jobs crisis persists in urban America and an immediate national response is long overdue.

In the past, our nation has declared war on poverty, drugs and even obesity. Today, I call on Washington to declare war on unemployment, and the first line of defense must be urban America. The truth is, any recovery that fails

to bring jobs and prosperity back to urban and communities of color is a recovery in name only. America can only succeed if its cities and the people who live and work in them have access to jobs and are fully prepared to excel and innovate in those jobs. That is the key message of this year's State of Black America.

Our report takes an honest look at the reality and underlying causes of double-digit joblessness in Black America. But, we don't just point out the problem, we offer a solution with a 12-point blueprint for quality job creation. Our plan recognizes that as the nation takes steps to reduce our ballooning deficit, we must make tough choices. But if, as the President has said, we are going to "win the future," this

is no time to cut investments in our people. That means, among other things, we must invest in summer jobs for teens, broadband and green jobs for their parents, and direct job creation for cities and states.

Our report will also unveil the National Urban League's 2011 Equality Index, our annual comparison of the social, political, and economic status of African Americans and Latinos to that of Whites. It highlights some successful job-creating initiatives by the Urban League and others. And, we make it clear that every aspect of life in America is connected to jobs. Education is a jobs issue. Healthcare is a jobs issue. International trade is a jobs issue. Housing and transportation are jobs issues.

In 2011, the State of Black America is a jobs issue.

The National Urban League's State of Black America Town Hall event will be held on Thursday, March 31st from 10am - 12pm at Howard University's Crampton Auditorium. The event is free and open to the public. To view like webcast, visit nul.org.

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

Gender Equity is Everybody's Business



Julianne Malveaux
 Guest Columnist

March is Women's History Month, and the White House Council on Women and Girls, led by Valerie Jarrett, commemorated it by releasing a report on the status of women. According to the report, we've come a long way sisters, but we've still got a long way to go. Despite the fact that we out-enroll men in college, we under-earn them in the workplace. There are so many phenomenal women accomplishing amazing things, and at the same time there are so many women whose economic attainment is constrained by gender.

We in the African American community must be concerned with the social construction of gender and the ways that patriarchy shapes the futures of our young people, both young women and young men. The face of African American leadership, mostly all male, sends a signal to young women. It suggests that women's voices don't matter, that we have to scrap our way to the table. It denigrates the enormity of African American women's accomplishments.

From this perspective, I am grateful that Roslyn Brock is the Chairman of the Board of the NAACP. The sister exhibited her leadership chops when she gave her Chairman's



Dr. Regina Benjamin



Roslyn Brock

Award at the NAACP Image Awards to Surgeon General Dr. Regina Benjamin and lifted up a stalwart medical leader who has, against all odds, given of herself. That's women's history!

Dr. Regina Benjamin stands on the shoulders of other outstanding African American surgeon generals, including Dr. David Satcher, Dr. Jocelyn Elders, and others. She has the opportunity to deal with the crushing effects of health disparities, and she has the experience to illuminate the many inequalities that shape our health care system. Both race and gender shape the way that health care services are delivered, and we look forward to the ways that Dr. Benjamin will share that with the nation.

Anna Julia Cooper said, "When and where I enter, the interests of my race and my gender come with me." She was asserting the many ways that African American women

make a transformative difference in the development of educational, social and public policy. When and where I enter, I represent, our sister said nearly a century ago. Today, the same is true: Yet, for many, this Women's History Month is not about us, not about women of African descent. But, it can be our month, if we assert it.

We must claim this month, not simply as a statement of history, but also as an opportunity to remind the nation and the world that gender equity is a human imperative. In other words, we don't just want pay equity for women, but we want pay equity for families and for a nation. When women aren't well paid, families aren't well cared for. When women are kicked to the curb economically, children suffer and we experience generational reverberations. Fair treatment of women is an investment in the growth, development and success of our nation.

While women's leadership

is not as rare as it was a generation ago, it is still fairly scarce. Women represent less than one percent of the Fortune 500 leaders, are nearly absent in the civil rights leadership, and are fewer than 20 percent of our elected national leaders in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Indeed, with elected leadership, our numbers are dropping. We must celebrate this scarce leadership and more importantly, commit to finding new leaders, young women who have been nurtured and encouraged to step up and step out into leadership.

In these harsh economic times, it makes sense to pay attention to the macroeconomic beat down that the African American community has experienced, which often fully manifests itself with the marginalization of African American men in the labor market. Concomitantly, the status of African American women cannot be ignored. We lead too many African American families, are responsible for too many of our children, and are paid too inequitably to be able to manage. Gender equity is not a women's imperative, it is a community imperative. During this Women's History Month, and moving forward, our community must commit to our women as a way of committing to our future.

Dr. Julianne Malveaux is president of Bennett College for Women and author of "Surviving and Thriving: 365 Days in Black Economic History," available at www.lastwordprod.com.