

Editorials and Comments

Problems Of The Black Candidates

The Black candidates, who have recently announced for local public office, will undoubtedly make the same mistakes that were made by the Black candidates in past elections.

They seem to feel that they will have a better-than-average chance for getting elected simply because the color of their skin is black.

It is difficult to get elected under any circumstances. And it's even more difficult to get elected when the candidate operates without sufficient finance and good organization. There is no claim that Black people can vote their way out of poverty and oppression nor is there any claim that Black people can perform beyond second-class status in a city-wide campaign against the established organizations that offer white candidates for public office.

The Charlotte Black community needs a carefully planned program designed to get the maximum number of people to register and to vote, rather than an increase in the number of candidates seeking election to public office.

We take the position that the power of the black vote is only powerful if it is effectively used. We also believe that Black votes in Charlotte have not been dealt with effectively.

No one seems to come up with a logical answer on the important fact that less than one-third of the eligible Black voters in Mecklenburg County took the time to cast their ballots in the last election. And there is no reason at the moment to believe that there will be a larger turnout of Blacks in the next election.

It seems to us that a Citizen Organization, with non-partisan political affiliations, is needed here. This organization should be designed to attack the deeply rooted institutional problems which are faced by Black people as well as other minorities and the poor.

What we are saying is simply that no Blacks or anybody else can succeed in the electoral process unless he develops some degree of unity. This unity cannot be obtained without involvement of all segments of the Black Community.

It is difficult for us to understand how a candidate hopes to win elections when he has not provided a vehicle for achieving community cooperation, and black unity as well as providing a pool of information, experience and ideas necessary for the development of an invigorating campaign.

The results of past elections show clearly that the Black candidates seldom perform their homework. Most of these hapless candidates operate like a man in a small boat in treacherous waters -- they see where they want to go; and, they know that they must use their strength well in order to get through the waves. But, if they have not done accurate research, they are not aware of the flow of the currents and tides, which really determine where they are going.

Research is essential in developing a strong campaign. A candidate should be well aware of

the fact that politics is an art, science. There are three functions of political research.

The first is to analytically gather data and to find out what has

done and how best to do it. The second function is to develop a basis for argument to support and gain support from the public. The third function is the development of staff and community educational programs directed toward equipping people to carry out research and to apply information to their programs and their actions.

Research ought to include some information on the past vote participation of blacks and best to get the majority of people actively involved.

There should also be a gathering of information on the historical overview of black participation in electoral politics in the community.

One of the primary goals of political research we recommend that of creating a knowledgeable, active and informed citizenry in the Black community. People cannot be effectively involved in community affairs unless they possess fundamental insights into how their community political system is intended to operate and how the operation of the system can be influenced and changed.

It is obvious that most black candidates for local public office lack the self-confidence that springs from knowledge in those fields that touch intimately upon the lives of all-municipal and county governments.

The City of Charlotte is in great need of sound leadership which is supported by large numbers of well organized Black people.

Inflation's Running Wild

You can stop wondering why inflation is running wild and the cost of living is threatening to exceed your income. One glance at the Federal budget for the next fiscal year ought to clear up any questions you had. The budget will spend some nine billion more ... that's right ... nine billion dollars more than the Government will take in during the fiscal year 1974-75. That bothers us. We have always advocated a balanced budget.

The budget includes a seven and one half percent pay increase for members of Congress, Supreme Court justices, and high government officials. That's not all. Every year for three years that same raise is automatic. You see, it's all part of the President's budget. That way, congressmen don't have to go on record as having voted themselves a raise that nobody wanted them to have. But Congress can choose to turn down its automatic raise and try to live on the pay they are receiving. It might not keep them in the style they desire, but it would certainly endear them to the hearts of those who keep them in office.

Washington Report

CONGRESSMAN JIM MARTIN



Most of us, at one time or another, have known or heard of a family being wiped out financially because of a major prolonged illness or medical calamity to befall one of the members of the family. We read of such cases in some newspapers every day. Many people carry medical insurance where they work or have coverage on an individual basis. It's a sad fact though, that many families do not have enough protection if a catastrophic illness occurs. For other families there is no coverage because their employer does not provide the fringe benefits, or they can't afford premiums for a health policy, or they are uninsurable. Millions of Americans fall into this situation, from the poor and elderly, to middle and upper income wage earners.

The public is going to be hearing a great deal about the health insurance issue in the coming months, as Congress begins considering a wide range of proposals to provide protection for all Americans. There is one plan providing coverage only in cases where a catastrophic or long term illness would be require hospitalization and treatment. where the financial resources of a family would be depleted. This is a proposal by Senator Russell Long of Louisiana, which I support.

Another plan would offer protection by requiring employers to offer a com-

prehensive insurance program to all full time employees, with the employers paying a share of the costs and the federal government covering premiums for the unemployed. The role of the private health insurance companies would be expanded under this plan.

One health insurance plan would be entirely federal-funded at a cost of 80 billion dollars, and would be run through the Social Security Administration. This cradle-to-the grave approach would pay all bills for all illnesses. The measure, introduced by Senator Edward Kennedy of Massachusetts, has the backing of the AFL-CIO.

The Kennedy plan carries health insurance for all Americans to the extreme. I am against the bill because it would set up another federal bureaucracy and the cost would be on the order of magnitude of the defense budget and would be prohibitive. It suffers further from what appears to be a slight flaw, but it is one that would be disastrous. The measure does not provide for any type of "deductible" clause. Most insurance policies include a deductible clause which dissuades people from taking advantage of the companies involved with providing protection. A deductible clause discourages people

from using a doctors office as a day care center for adults. If insurance policies lacked deductible clauses, some people might waste doctors time with trivial medical matters. A deductible provision is a must in any health care proposal. If a medical situation is something more than trivial, a person needing treatment should be more than willing to pay the amount deductible, or pay the first part of the costs. The Kennedy bill is the nearest thing to complete takeover of medical care by the government that has been proposed. I don't think the results of similar nationalization of medical care in other countries should be an encouragement for us to make the same mistake.

I do encourage the catastrophic illness protection that has been proposed by Senator Long of Louisiana which would be subsidized through private companies. Under an insurance plan devised by the Administration, families would not have to spend more than 16-hundred dollars per year on medical expenses. This is where catastrophic provisions of the plan would begin to apply. Doctors and hospital bills, some drug costs and other medical expenses would be covered by the insurance plan without requiring additional taxes to cover the proposal.

To Be Equal

Health Insurance Plan Falls Short

By VERNON E. JORDAN JR.

The Administration's Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan goes a long way toward improving the chaotic mess in American health care, yet it falls short of providing the kind of federally financed, federally administered health system that will assure each and every citizen access to high quality medical attention.

But perhaps more important than the failings of the plan is the fact of its existence. It is much better than the weak proposals offered some years back. And by putting the issue of national health care to the Congress and the country, the Administration has helped move the issue off center. Because of this, it is likely that the nation will finally get some kind of comprehensive national health program this year.

The big question is, what kind of program? Will it be the Administration plan, with all its failings; a weaker version of that plan, or a truly com-

prehensive all inclusive health program.

The Administration plan would be financed by employer-employee con-

tributions to private health insurance plans that meet government specifications. Families with health costs would be reimbursed for part of their expenses until they had paid \$1,500 in costs, then the insurance would cover everything over that.

Here are a few of the faults I see in this program:

-Because it operates through insurers rather than through a Social Security-type trust fund, and since it preserves the old fee-for-service medical billing practices, it is bound to result in continuing inflation in health costs.

-Because families will have to pay part of their medical costs in addition to contributing to insurance premiums, serious illness could cost a family \$1,500 a

year. That may be a financial disaster for some of the people who think the bill provides protection against catastrophic illness, but its enough to wipe out a working man's savings and bury him in debt. Only about one out of four people would collect benefits in any given year, because of the high deductibles.

-There are really three plans-one for working people whose employers contribute too, another for the poor and marginally employed whose premiums are paid by the government, and the elderly, covered by Medicare.

This kind of tracking system, based on income and work situations, can easily lead to abuses with two standards for health care, one for the paying worker, and the other for the poor. A truly comprehensive system would insure the same treatment for all.

-There's nothing in the program to end the doctor

All around the room the too-real atmosphere of the film settled around each viewer, imprisoning them so completely that it is difficult to shake the feeling off and come again into the real world.

This difficulty is mostly -- not entirely -- because the picture is not a fantasy, but history, so fresh, at least in its latter parts, as to form unforgettable episodes in the lives of all but the youngsters in the audience. The marvelous new film is "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman," which was sponsored by the Xerox Corporation in a nationwide television showing.



The picture (the lead role played by the brilliant

young actress, Cicely Tyson) is a history of black Americans such as has never been unraveled before. There have been stage plays and films that have told some part of black history. We know of the brief heroism of Denmark Vesey and the other insurrectionists. We know of the speeches of Frederick Douglass and of the bits and pieces of a people struggling to be free.

But never in the past has any book, no matter how eloquent, spread the panorama that this film does. The director and writers have been honest. Miss Tyson has cast her spell and has included her whole race in her seemingly simple tale of 110 years of life on this earth.

Not once has she indulged in propaganda, but what comes out of her experiences are powerful arguments (not pleas) for the freedom of her people, and for all who are on the bottom of society, exploited and despised.

The story spans the years just before the war, and the protest marches and demonstrations of the 1960s. They cover the era when the Negro did not own his body to the years when he crashed through to at least an admission of racial inequality.

Maybe the scenes of personal persecution will be the cement to convince the black youngsters of today that all their progenitors were not Uncle Toms. There is a strong feeling, after the picture, that nearly every black person helped.

What does one say after the gunfire raid on the escaping slaves, with fighting to the death so that some could survive and carry on? What does one say after a slave, having worked the required number of years for his freedom, is told that he must work still longer?

When Miss Jane lives long enough to see, with a gleam in her eyes, the protests of her people in the 60s, she proves by her curiosity that she is a bridge between the years gone by and the years ahead. When she actually takes part in a protest, staged amidst the hostility of the whites and the timorousness of the blacks, one could hear a pin drop in the theatre.

White Americans, regardless of the spectacular crimes charged to blacks, must remember that even if 2 million are so charged, this is but one-tenth. How shall the other nine-tenths be treated? "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" makes plain that white Americans ought to be proud that out of slavery have come the blacks, who are the real stuff of America, of the vindication of its dream of free men.

The film makes plain to blacks that unity is judged not by rhetoric, but by the seamless web of deeds in support of goals common to all mankind. There are no shortcuts to solidity. Miss Jane never wavered. It took a steady march of 110 years, but she saw, finally, the light that she and thousands like her had envisioned not as far as before, but still far down the tunnel.

shortage, make doctors available to urban and rural poverty belts, encourage doctors to practice family medicine, or to insure consumer participation in health decisions.

There are other faults in the program too, and I think the basic difficulty is that the plan is designed to leave the basic structure of the medical industry intact and to provide some help in solving the financial problems in paying for high-cost health care.

It's a program that private insurers can back; one that has definite at-

traction for many families, but one that doesn't deal with the essence of the health problems the country faces.

Despite the Administration's High praise for the present state of America medicine, it is clear that we are nowhere near "number one" in health. In key indicators like infant mortality and life expectancy, the U.S.

ranks pretty far down on the list of developed countries. And I fear that the proposed reform won't change that situation to the degree that it could.

The Administration plan welcome as a big improvement over the present mess, ought to go a lot farther. Next week, I'll outline some of the points a truly adequate national health program ought to include.

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Bill Johnson Manager - Editor
JoAnne Moore Society Writer
Allen Roundtree Staff Writer
James Peeler Photographer, Feature Writer

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TELEPHONES - (704) 392-1306 & 392-1307