

Congressional Black Caucus Presses Clinton

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON - Upset by his decision to drop his chief civil rights nominee and other concessions to conservatives, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) began a pressure campaign against President Clinton recently. The effort to force the president to stick to more liberal policies began when the CBC rejected a Clinton request for the group to meet with him. CBC head Rep. Kweisi Mfume of Maryland said of Clinton's recent political maneuvering, "We are concerned and to some extent disillusioned." What has black lawmakers and other liberal Congress members angry has been several concessions to conservative lawmakers. The caucus and most civil right groups were

particularly outraged at the decision to drop the nomination of Lani Guinier to the chief rights post in the Justice Department after conservatives mounted a campaign against the black nominee. The caucus also wants Clinton to hold fast to promises to invest in the inner-cities and create jobs for the poor.



AROUND THE WORLD

Black Positioned To Become Next Pope

VATICAN CITY - A West African cardinal was placed in a post earlier this month which makes him "first among equals" to become the next Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. Pope John Paul II approved the nomi-

nation of Cardinal Bernardine Gantin to head the College of Cardinals. That is the body which will elect the next Pope. Gantin is from Benin. But Gantin objects to speculation about him becoming Pope. Instead, he praises Pope John Paul II, saying, "I hope he adds many more years to his pontificate." John Paul has been Pope for 15 years. The nomination of Gantin also reflects the growing influence of Africa and Latin America in the Catholic Church.

Mandela To Begin 18-Day U.S. Tour

JOHANNESBURG, S. Africa - Nelson Mandela, the leader of the African National Con-

gress and the likely first black president of South Africa, began an 18-day tour of the United States Wednesday. His travel plans are still being initialized, but it is expected that he will visit Atlanta, Washington, D.C., New York and Philadelphia. In Philadelphia, he and the current white president of South Africa, F.W. de Klerk, will be

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Scarborough Takes A Chance

There Are Hazards In Running In At-Large Council Race

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in the mirror. We need to have people to get out there and take some risks."

Leeper and other political analysts said there are some unique factors which may work in Scarborough's favor, giving her the edge to win.

Leeper noted the 1992 election of Democrats Bill Clinton to the presidency and Jim Hunt as N.C.'s governor indicates a shift in the electorate.

"It seems at least that the tide is turning partisan-wise...from very conservative the last 10 or so years. It now seems to be shifting, with advent of Jim Hunt and President Clinton, on the state and national levels, and the election of a Democrat as chairman of (Mecklenburg) County Commissioners. That is an encouraging sign.

"(But) that does not always hold true for African-Americans," Leeper added. "If voters swing from Republican to Democrat, they are not always willing to vote for an African-American."

Harvey Gantt said Charlotte's voting history is a clear indicator of the challenge Scarborough faces.

"Very few of them are a shoo-in in a town like Charlotte, where people aren't accustomed to voting for black citizens," he said. "Black candidates have to work that much harder. It's going to take a tremendous effort. She understands she has her work cut out for her."

Mecklenburg Elections Supervisor Bill Culp, who keeps a finger on the city's electoral statistics, acknowledged the difficulty African-Americans have had getting elected at-large, but said the women's vote could be the key factor in the upcoming race.

He noted that Cyndee Patterson and Ann Hammond, two white females, are not running again. "That increases (Scarborough's) chances," Culp said. "She could be the only woman running at-large. That may be enough for her to win."

"On balance she has been a very effective council member," Culp said of Scarborough. "It is very interesting, the growing success female politicians are having."

But Culp added some discouraging factors. He suggested Scarborough will actually have a more difficult race than Leeper, simply because the Democrats will probably field its weakest ticket in some time.

Culp noted that no strong Democratic mayoral candidate has emerged, while Mayor Richard Vinroot will head the Republican slate.

"Without a strong mayoral candidate, the Democrats are going to have a hard time running at-large," he said. "The Republicans are going to have the strongest slate they have had in a long time. The Democrats have the weakest in a long time."

So far, Culp said, the Democratic at-large ticket will probably include, in addition to Scarborough, Lecil Henderson, who lost a bid in 1991, former mayoral candidate Craig Madans, and possibly Sydnor Thompson, a former chairman of the local Democratic Party.

The Republican candidates expected to be in the at-large race are incumbents Pat McCrory and Don Reid, and Joe Miller and Charles Baker, Culp said.

The Charlotte electorate includes 59,983 African Americans and 182,703 whites, meaning African Americans are just 24 percent of the total. Voter turnout is always considerable less than the total, particularly in off-year elections.

Leeper said he and Gantt figured they needed between 36-37 percent of the white vote and 95 percent of the African-American vote to win their citywide bids. Leeper got just 8,104 votes in the 1987 Democratic primary, according to the Elections Board.

"Ella is going to have to get 95 percent of the black vote and 36 percent of the white vote. That's an interesting question to ask in 1993. Whether a black person can get 36 percent of the white vote," Leeper said.

Leeper noted that Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board members George Battle and Arthur Griffin have managed to get elected in countywide elections, but the school board race was not divided by districts. A district system is being considered now.

Before districts were set up in the city elections, blacks managed to get elected at-large, Leeper said, including Gantt's first election to the council.

"If there was a good time to run, this is a good time to at least try," Leeper said. "This will either reinforce the fact that it is extremely difficult for African Americans to win an at-large seat, or it will be a good time for an African American to learn he or she can be elected at-large."



Leeper



Gantt

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