

Poll: Jobs, education top black concerns

By Hazel Trice Edney
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WASHINGTON - Jobs, educational equity and quality health care top the list of issues that black voters say they must hear about from presidential candidates before making their decisions for the 2004 election, according to a new survey.

"Consistent with the selection of the most critical issues facing their community and those that have 'gotten worse,' in their communities, the top three issues they want the presidential candidates to address are jobs, educational equity and health services," concludes a study conducted by New Orleans pollster Silas Lee and Associates. "These data reflect the deterioration in

the essential quality of life indicators for African Americans and the further erosion of the potential for upward mobility for many African American citizens."

According to the survey results, taken from interviews with 570 African Americans who attended the Congressional Black Caucus Annual Legislative Weekend last September, 70 percent of those surveyed said joblessness had gotten worse, 67 percent said the quality of public education had taken a similar turn and 67 percent said the availability of quality health care has also worsened. Close behind, 61 percent said the availability of affordable housing had gotten worse, and 59 percent said there was an erosion of civil liberties.

In that exact order, those

are the issues that voters said are the most critical in the black community and the ones they wanted addressed by presidential candidates.

The survey was conducted for the National Coalition for Black Civic Participation, a non-profit working to improve black voter turnout removing all remaining barriers to civic participation. The coalition of 130 organizations announced on Tuesday that it is leading a Unity '04 Civic Engagement and Voter Empowerment Campaign, a non-partisan initiative leveraging the resources of all of its members to get out the Black vote in the November election.

"For us, this is about having a better framework on the kind of voter education activities and the types of

messages we need to utilize to motivate people to get involved because the political process affects their lives," says Melanie Campbell, NCBCP executive director and CEO. "We share the information with the public, both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party, and members of our organization. We share that information with our members so the people will understand the kinds of concerns and the issues that are important to our community."

The black vote, 90 percent of which supported the Democratic Party in the 2000 presidential race, will be key in the 2004 election. Trying to capitalizing on recurring complaints that Democrats take the black vote for granted, GOP Chairman Ed Gillespie has said his party's outreach to

black voters is a top priority for 2004, especially among college students and younger voters age 18-35, who may not identify with either major political party.

Leslie B. McLemore, professor of political science at Jackson State University in

Please see **JOBS/7A**

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Continued from page 1A

the request form is completed, a personalized application will be mailed to them. Request forms must be completed by Wednesday in order to receive an application by the Jan. 30 deadline.

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Former schools chair takes new job

By Herbert L. White
herb.white@thecharlottepost.com

Former Charlotte-Mecklenburg School Board member Arthur Griffin has a new job in education.



Griffin

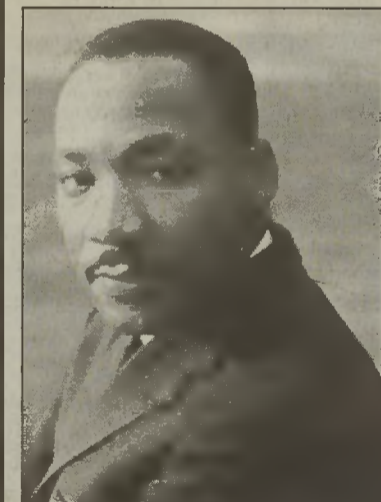
McGraw-Hill Education has appointed Griffin vice president of national urban markets. His job will be to help improve large school districts improve student performance through instruction, curriculum and assessment.

"With over 17 years experience in improving education at local and national levels, Arthur brings critical understanding and perspective to his new position. Working with all McGraw-Hill Education divisions, he ... will enhance our ability to help districts identify solutions that

improve student achievement," said Henry Hirschberg, president of McGraw-Hill Education president Henry Hirschberg said in a statement.

Griffin did not return a phone call for comment and McGraw Hill didn't indicate whether he would remain in Charlotte or move to its New York headquarters.

Griffin was a member of Charlotte-Mecklenburg's school board from 1985-2003 and served as its chair from 1997-2002. He has also served as: a member of the Executive Committee of the Council of The Great City Schools and chairman of its Professional Development Task Force; and a member of the Steering Committee of the National Council of Urban Boards of Education. Mr. Griffin was previously a senior litigation paralegal at Cox, Gage and Sasser, a Charlotte law firm.



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