

The Charlotte Post

The Voice of the Black Community

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OUR VIEW

City Council district and at-large campaigns

We recommend Turner and Eaves in Districts 3 and 4

Election season is well on the way and normally we do not do endorsements for primary elections. However, this primary season has some very interesting races.

District 4 City Council

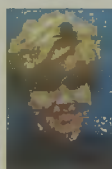
Malcolm Graham's departure from city politics to become a state senator left District 4 open for the taking. Several very good candidates are dueling for that seat. We feel Maxine Eaves' experience as a bridesmaid of politics but never a bride has earned her a place at the table.

She has been politically active for years including formidable roles with the League of Women Voters. We feel she will do well representing this district, which is wrestling with issues surrounding explosive growth around University City as well as how to best strengthen fragile inner city neighborhoods like the Hidden Valley community.

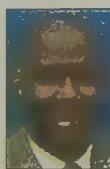
District 4 is fortunate to have several community-oriented candidates interested in serving, as evidenced by the number of people who expressed interest in being appointed to the seat when Mr. Graham resigned last year. Among those running for a place at the council table, we heartily endorse Mrs. Eaves, who has an intimate knowledge of the district as well as Charlotte government.

District 3 City Council

Warren Turner has had his moments of controversy on



Burgess



Turner

council (such as the Confederate flag over Elmwood Cemetery, which isn't in his district), but as it relates to District 3, he has been effective helping to oversee a rapidly changing area that covers south and west Charlotte.

We have seen Mr. Turner exhibit growth in his first term on the council and as a longtime district resident, has exhibited a clear grasp of issues affecting District 3 as well as the city as a whole. While Joel Ford is an articulate and worthy candidate with the potential to be an outstanding city leader, we feel District 3 can best be served by Mr. Turner, who has proven to be a quick study to the intricacies of city government and has proven to be an honest steward of his district's interests.

City Council at-large

Only four Republicans are running in the at-large campaign, leaving five Democrats to compete for four seats. Our recommendation is Anthony Foxx, David Erdman, Susan Burgess and Darrell Bonapart. Mrs. Burgess is an incumbent and Mr. Erdman served on council briefly in the late 1990s to fill an unexpired term.

LETTERS

Low-income have right to counsel before courts

In 1963, the U.S. Supreme Court issued its landmark ruling in Gideon vs Wainwright, establishing a constitutional right to counsel in criminal cases. The right to counsel deserves to be broadened to include civil cases involving fundamental rights and basic human needs. In Gideon vs Wainwright, the court believed that counsel was required when an individual was placed in danger of losing their own liberty.

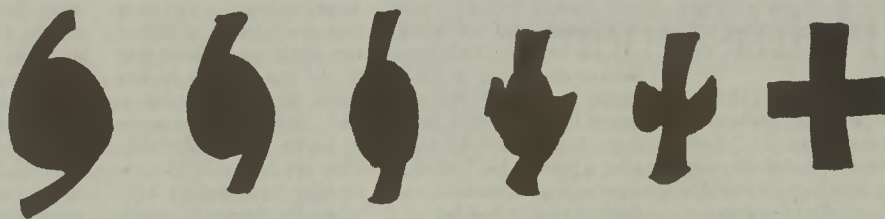
Yet there are other scenarios which are just as egregious and must be addressed, such as a parent's loss of custody and control of their own children, loss of income, or denial to proper health care. The 107th Congress found there is a need to encourage the provision of high quality legal assistance for persons who would otherwise be unable to afford legal counsel, and for years federal resources available to the local Legal Services Corporation have eroded.

Gene Nichol, Dean of the University of North Carolina School of Law reported we have one lawyer for every 380 people generally, and one Legal Services lawyer for every 4,300 persons living in poverty. Equal justice under the law doesn't approximate the way the system operates in practice, and ordinary citizens are priced out of the system.

Our basic fundamental rights do not lie just in criminal statutes, but within the basic rights to family, health, employment, education, and other rights needed to live and prosper. We're not asking for handouts, but assurance that our government will be there for citizens neglected and not protected under the laws. The state of North Carolina has an opportunity of becoming the first state in American history by amending the state constitution giving indigent people the right to equal access to justice.

Howard J McClure Jr
Charlotte

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MATTERS OF OPINION

President Bush is no LBJ in deeds

GEORGE E. CURRY



After stumbling miserably out of the gate, George W. Bush has finally caught up with the American public and now realizes that there is widespread support for rebuilding New Orleans.

He has finally struck the right rhetorical chords, pledging to "renew our promise as a land of equality and decency." He went on to say, "As we clear away the debris of a hurricane, let us also clear away the legacy of inequality."

With Bush, it is always better to ignore the language and examine his record. He has made some sweeping endorsements of diversity that would have made even Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. proud. But he used Dr. King's birthday to announce his opposition to a pair of University of Michigan affirmative action cases that went before the Supreme Court. Over Bush's objection, the conservative court upheld Michigan's law school admissions program while invalidating a more numbers-oriented undergraduate plan.

There are already troubling signs that the Bush administration plans to use this nat-

ural disaster to recycle some old Bush plans that were previously rejected. All of the water hadn't been drained from Canal Street in New Orleans before Bush proposed \$5,000 "Worker Recovery Accounts" to assist victims of Hurricane Katrina and the subsequent flooding. Under the plan, those left unemployed by Katrina can use the one-time grant for job training, day care, transportation, education or anything else that will help them land a job.

The administration proposed a similar program two years ago, but Congress rejected the \$3.6 billion plan. If a person found a job within 13 weeks, under the plan he or she could keep up to \$1,000 left in the account. Liberals opposed the plan because they thought it would be the first step in replacing unemployment insurance. Conservatives, on the other hand, objected because they did not want to create another layer of bureaucracy.

Even more disturbing is Bush's determination to use public funds to subsidize private education.

The Department of Education announced a proposal that would provide nearly \$500 million in federal funding to help students enrolled in private schools in the disaster area relocate to private schools elsewhere. This is a variation of Bush's

voucher plan and would use limited public funds to subsidize private education. The flawed plan calls for each student receiving up to \$7,500.

Some conservatives, fearing growing deficits and an uncomfortable federal role in the relief efforts, are calling for across-the-board cuts in order to fund the recovery and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Others are challenging Congress to remove pork projects from recently enacted legislation.

Bush says he has no plans to raise taxes or do away with previously enacted tax cuts that mostly benefit the wealthy.

Former President Bill Clinton, in an interview on the Today Show, said it would be "crazy" to maintain those tax cuts in view of the unexpected new expenses. Clinton and former president George H.W. Bush are heading up private relief efforts to help the victims of Katrina.

Expenses associated with recovering from Hurricane Katrina, estimated to be \$150 to \$200 billion, should not be used to distort the serious deficit problems the nation was facing before the disaster. The Congressional Budget Office had projected that the federal deficit would exceed \$300 billion a year for the next decade, totaling nearly \$4.5 trillion by 2015. And that was long before Katrina came ashore.

An analysis by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities shows that the repeal of some of the previously enacted tax cuts would more than offset expenses associated with Hurricane Katrina.

"The tax cuts enacted in 2001 and 2003 cost more each year than the total amount likely to be spent on Katrina," the center said. "The cost of tax cuts enacted in 2001 and 2003 is \$225 billion this year alone and will climb to higher levels each year in the future, as more of the tax cuts enacted in 2001 take full effect...The cost of the tax cuts in a single year exceeds the total anticipated costs of all expenses related to the hurricane over the years to come."

Rather than making the "bold" decision that he promised by repealing at least one of the tax cuts, George W. Bush will inflict even more cuts in programs designed to help the very people displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Bush's words may sound like fellow Texan Lyndon B. Johnson's Great Society Programs, but they are not matched by similar action.

GEORGE E. CURRY is editor-in-chief of the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service. He appears on National Public Radio as part of "News and Notes with Ed Gordon."

Anti-war movement is alive and well

And it's more likely to gain strength and influence as Iraq takes a heavier toll on U.S.

States of America feel that it was necessary to set the right moral [there is that word again...] tone.

What makes this entire situation nothing short of amazing is that public disenchantment with the war continues to grow, despite the pro-Bush attacks on the anti-war movement. It has also been made amazing how the media wishes to dismiss popular criticisms and growing frustration about the war. This is what raises the importance of the anti-war demonstrations, scheduled for Sept. 24 in Washington, D.C.

Convened by United For Peace & Justice and the A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition, it is projected that the march and rally will tap into this growing anguish and anger over the convoluted policies of this administration that show no end in sight to a war and occupation that the U.S. media refuses to acknowledge as having been and continuing to be, illegal.

I think that it is worth emphasizing this point so that we do not fall prey to the right-wing slander that claim that those of us who oppose the war and occupation are not supporting the troops. It is now firmly established that the people of the USA were lied to about the situation in Iraq. There were no weapons of mass destruction and the intelligence about Iraq was manipulated in order to manipulate us. There was no threat from Iraq and the only terrorist presence in Iraq was in a region controlled by the Kurds, that is, by allies of the USA.

Since there was no justification for this war, and as such it was a clear violation of international law, there can therefore be no question of "...staying the course..." Think about it for a second. Let's just suppose that the police broke into your house and destroyed your property based on a "tip" that you were trafficking in narcotics. Let's further suppose that it turns out that the tip was orchestrated by someone who simply did not like you.

Can the police stay in your

house and take over your affairs? Can they start changing your bank account, put your children into different schools, or rebuilding your house to conform to their idea of how you should live?

The answer is obvious: No! Instead, you would be owed compensation for the destruction of your property and the chaos into which your life had been thrown. So, too, it is with Iraq. There is no "...staying the course..." because the course was charted by people whose intentions were not to protect us from terror, but instead to remake the Middle East in a manner that served their interests rather than the interests of the people of the Middle East.

The anti-war movement is far from dead. In fact, it grows each day as one individual after another asks himself/herself the same question that Cindy Sheehan has asked: why did anyone have to die for a lie?

BILL FLETCHER is president of TransAfrica Forum, a Washington, D.C.-based non-profit educational and organizing center formed to raise awareness in the United States about issues facing the nations and peoples of Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America. He also is co-chair of the anti-war coalition, United for Peace and Justice. He can be reached at bletcher@transafricaforum.org.