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## Gov. Perdue's Statement on Swine Flu Contagion

I am monitoring the world health situation closely. I am confident that North Carolina is prepared to respond to any suspected cases of swine flu. North Carolina is equipped with a full supply of antiviral medications and personal protective supplies such as face masks. We have public health teams ready to deploy to any community in our state that needs assistance.

At this time it is important that North Carolinians continue to be vigilant and to take precautions. The steps you can take to protect yourself are simple:

- Wash your hands frequently
- Cover your mouth and nose when sneezing or coughing
- Stay at home from school or work if you are sick



Durham native and artist Ernie Barnes dies Monday, April 27. See story on page 8.

## Racial disparities persist in higher-paying jobs

By Hope Yen

WASHINGTON (AP) - Blacks and Hispanics lag behind whites for higher-paying jobs at the largest rates in a decade as employment opportunities dwindled during the nation's economic woes and housing slump.

Census data released April 27 show an increasingly educated U.S. work force whose earnings didn't always seem to match up with its potential.

"The lesson of most economic downturns is minorities are the last hired, first fired. They lose jobs more quickly, and they will be the last to recover," said Roderick Harrison, a demographer at the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, a think tank that studies minority issues.

Among those 25 and older last year, 86.6 percent had graduated from high school, up from 85.7 percent the previous year. It was the biggest increase since 1992, with record percentages of people earning diplomas across all racial and Hispanic categories.

The share of people with at least a bachelor's degree from college also increased, from 28.7 percent to 29.4 percent, continuing a decades-long rise.

Blacks overall slightly narrowed the gap in 2007 with whites in average salary, but the pay disparity widened for blacks with college degrees. Blacks who had a four-year bachelor's degree earned \$46,502, or about 78 percent of the salary for comparably educated whites.

It was the biggest disparity between professional blacks and whites since the 77 percent rate in 2001, when the U.S. fell into a recession due to the collapse of the tech bubble and the Sept. 11 terror attacks. College-educated blacks had previously earned as much as 83 percent of the average salary of whites in 2005.

Hispanics saw similar trends. Those with high school diplomas earned about 83 cents for whites' every dollar, largely unchanged from a decade ago. But Hispanics with bachelor's degrees had an average salary of \$44,696, amounting to roughly 75 cents for every dollar made by whites with bachelor's degrees - the lowest ratio in more than a decade - after hitting a peak of 87 cents to every dollar in 2000.

The numbers highlight some of the barriers for minorities, said Mark Mather, a demographer for the Population Reference Bureau. He said the pay disparities could widen further since blacks and Hispanics tend to be relative latecomers to the professional world and thus more vulnerable to layoffs in the current recession.

In 2008, a record number of workers filed federal job discrimination complaints, with allegations of race discrimination making up the greatest portion at more than one-third of the 95,000 total claims.

"It's clear education alone is not the full reason for the pay gaps," said Sarah Crissey, a housing and economic statistician for the Census Bureau.

Other findings:  
-For the second year in a row, the number of women with bachelor's degrees exceeded that of men. The share of women with the degrees - 29 percent - was also nearly equal to men. Still, women with at least a bachelor's degree earned an average salary of \$43,127, about 60 percent of the amount earned by comparably educated men.

-About 92 percent of white adults had at least a high school diploma, compared with 89 percent for Asians, 83 percent for blacks and 62 percent for Hispanics.

-Black adults in recent years narrowed the gap with white adults in earning high school diplomas, but the gap has generally widened for college degrees. About 33 percent of white adults had at least a bachelor's degree in 2008, compared with 20 percent for blacks and 13 percent for Hispanics.

-More than half, or 53 percent, of Asian adults had at least a bachelor's degree.

-Workers with a high-school degree earned an average of \$31,286 in 2007, while those with a bachelor's degree earned an average of \$57,181.

-Foreign-born U.S. residents, which include illegal immigrants, were three times more likely than native-born to lack a high school diploma.

The census data came from the Current Population Survey as of April 2008. The figures for "white" refer to those who are not of Hispanic ethnicity. Since the government considers "Hispanic" an ethnicity and not a race, people of Hispanic descent can be of any race.

On the Net:  
Census Bureau: [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)

## N.C. Black Press Wants Stimulus Inclusion

By Cash Michaels

THE CAROLINIAN

NC black newspaper publishers of the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) are concerned that there is nothing "designed" in President Barack Obama's \$787 billion stimulus package to help struggling African-American papers in the state and nation's flailing economy.

"Any tangible economic stimulus to African-American communities across our nation should begin with the institution that has carried the torch for these communities throughout our nation's history," Paul R. Jervay, Jr. publisher of The Carolinian Newspaper in Raleigh, an NNPA member, said.

The NNPA, also known as the Black Press of America, is a 67-year-old federation of more than 200 black community newspapers across the United States.

Many of those papers are fighting for their very lives amid massive bankruptcies and closings overall in the newspaper industry. Though the White House has pointedly indicated that funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is designed to help low-wealth communities of color, black publishers are bewildered that their businesses, which stand ready to help further educate the African-American community about stimulus package opportunities for employment and business, have been overlooked.

"While we publishers wholeheartedly applaud the president's efforts of making certain economically devastated communities of color are able to benefit from the billions of dollars within the stimulus package, it is unclear whether any of the money has been earmarked to otherwise help educate the very communities serviced by the black media, as well as how they are to access the myriad of opportunities," NNPA Board Chairman John B. Smith, Sr. wrote in an April 23 letter to White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emmanuel; President Obama Special Advisor Valerie Jarrett, and US Rep. Barbara Lee (D-CA), chairperson of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Chairman Smith, the publisher of the Atlanta Inquirer, added that the omission of the Black Press from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was "most disheartening and perplexing." He made reference to remarks made at a recent White House Black Press teleconference with Van Jones, special advisor to the president on green jobs.

Jones told black reporters that officials with the US Commerce Dept. were "very enthusiastic and excited" about using "their existing mechanisms to make sure that there is outreach to those parts of the country that may need more information" about the American Recovery and Investment Act.

But he also made clear that for now that doesn't include advertising in African-American newspapers.

"There is nothing in the recovery package as designed to accomplish advertising [in black media]," Jones replied when asked by a journalist.

That's not sitting well with NNPA publishers, all of whom, during an NNPA Region 2 meeting hosted by the NC Black Publishers Association in Raleigh April 17, echoed Chairman Smith's concerns that none of those stimulus dollars are earmarked to help educate economically devastated communities of color through their media about how to access those opportunities.

"Our collective plight remains on floundering terrain, in general, without the leverage available to compete equally for federal dollars toward various recovery availabilities nationwide to benefit our community as a whole beyond reporting," Chairman Smith stated.

At that meeting, NNPA black publishers from Alabama, Virginia, Georgia and South Carolina, led by both Chairman Smith and Dorothy R. Leavell, chairwoman of the NNPA Foundation and publisher of the Crusader Newspapers in Chicago, Illinois and Gary, Indiana; joined publishers from The Carolina Peacemaker in Greensboro, The County News in Statesville, Greater Diversity News and The Wilmington Journal in Wilmington, and The Carolinian of Raleigh, in agreement that their dire concerns about the economic future of the Black Press must be made clear to both the Obama Administration and the Congressional Black Caucus.

"It is unclear in the Black community where to go and what is available to help Black families and Black businesses, the very communities that we serve," Ms. Leavell said. "The Black Press has participated in teleconferences and sought information locally, yet there are no clear answers."

"Saving the Black Press is paramount to all communities we serve," Fran Farrar, publisher of The County News in Statesville, added.

Newspapers everywhere are in such dire crisis that both Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Congressman John Conyers (D-Mich.) are conducting congressional hearings next week to "address the economic recession's impact on media and discuss the future of journalism."

"An independent news media is vital to our democracy," Sen. Kerry, who spent \$2 million with Black newspapers, radio and Black Entertainment Television during his 2004 presidential campaign, said in the statement. "It holds power accountable while giving voice to the people and interests who might otherwise never be heard."

Given the critical role Black newspapers are playing in monitoring how, where and when stimulus reaches their respective communities, NNPA publishers say black leadership must also advocate for that same fairness to be extended to the Black Press.

In North Carolina, for example, the NC NAACP has already begun advocating for black newspapers in talks with top state officials concerning the stimulus package.

During a civil rights roundtable session with NC Gov. Beverly Perdue April 20, NC NAACP Pres. Rev. William Barber presented the governor with a 14-point stimulus agenda for the African-American community to assure not only fair and equal access, but state enforcement of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act to protect applicants.

On that NC NAACP stimulus agenda was the recommendation that the state engage African-American and other newspapers of color "in outreach for contract and job notices to facilitate awareness, answers, access, and action in all communities."

Translation - not every one in the black community can access a state or federal Recovery Act website for timely information, so government must proactively purchase inserts or spot advertising in Black newspapers to ensure that disadvantaged communities of color are fully informed. Such advertising efforts can be modeled after the digital TV conversion campaign which is ongoing in print and electronic media.

"That is why it is paramount that sustainable stimulus begin in the African American community with the Black newspaper," says Carolinian Publisher Paul Jervay.

Ironically, the fact that the Recovery Act omits African-American newspapers seems to violate a campaign commitment that President Obama made directly to the Black Press exactly one year ago this week in North Carolina.

It was April 29, 2008 during the hot Democratic primary race for the presidency when then front-runner Sen. Barack Obama, during an exclusive NC Black Press Presidential Roundtable in Winston-Salem, assured black newspaper publishers that he was well aware of the struggles of African-American newspapers, and if elected, would do what he could to assure more access to federal contracts and advertising.

"One thing specifically we can do in terms of federal procurement is just to break up some of these contracts. They are just too large," a video of the session shows Obama telling black publishers, noting that when it came to legal advertising, the federal government traditionally does business with large newspaper chains, but not small independent enterprises.

"When it comes to legal advertising - legal notices many [black newspapers] would be interested in. I do not think it's saving a whole lot of money to simply do it with one big [newspaper] chain, as opposed to break up some of that work and make sure that everybody is able to access it," the future president said.

If Obama needed any assurance that the White House has historically worked to help sustain the struggling Black Press, his Democratic opponent, Sen. Hillary Clinton, would have obliged.

The day before in Greensboro, Sen. Clinton told members of the NC Black Press Association that her husband, former President Bill Clinton, made sure that the Black Press was an essential part of his outreach to African-Americans.

"I would push very hard to get back to women and minority-owned businesses getting more set-asides and more business from the federal government," Obama's future secretary of State told black publishers and reporters on April 28, 2008.

"When Bill was president, he had an Executive Order [to] actually advertise in black newspapers, because how are you going to get to the population that you want if you ignore the vehicles that actually communicate with people?" Sen. Clinton, during the videotaped session, is seen saying.

Indeed, during his eight years in office, President Bill Clinton issued at least three Executive Orders instructing various federal agencies to - assist SDBs (socially disadvantaged businesses), HBCUs (historically black colleges and universities), and MIs (minority institutions), as applicable, to develop viable, self-sustaining businesses capable of competing on an equal basis in the mainstream of the American economy."

Black-owned newspapers qualify not only as "minority institutions," but "socially disadvantaged businesses" as well.

"Since 1827, the Black Press has shared the plight of the African American community that has been left out and distorted by majority owned dailies, or minimized at best," said Fran Farrar, publisher of The County News in Statesville. "Informing communities of businesses and corporations that [overtly and covertly] demean the worth of citizens of African decent has rested on the shoulders of the Black Press."

Based on the Clinton Administration history, black publishers say, the question now is whether President Obama will at least meet that standard through the stimulus package when it comes to the Black Press.

In a March 6 White House teleconference with black reporters, Valerie Jarrett, Obama's Senior Advisor on Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Liaison, inadvertently made the case for the Black Press to expect more.

"[Pres. Obama's] base within the African-American community came out wholeheartedly [during the 2008 presidential election], and the agenda that he's set forth is one which will benefit the population as a whole, but also, because all of these [economic] problems, as I've said from the onset, have a disparate affect on the African-American community," Jarrett said.