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## CBC Members Rebuke White House on Unemployment

By Chris Levister  
Special to the NNPA from Black Voice News

(NNPA) - In what is being portrayed as a direct rebuke of the White House's lack of response to the deepening unemployment meltdown, Rep. Maxine Waters D-California, ranking CBC member on the powerful Financial Services Committee killed a scheduled November 19 vote on President Barack Obama's financial regulation reform bill.

Instead, the congresswoman from Los Angeles called on the administration to do more to put the nation's most vulnerable workers back to work. "The recession has created a unique systemic risk that threatens all parts of the African-American community, including the poor and the middle class," said Waters in a statement after shutting down the vote. "I have always been committed to addressing that risk and I will continue to do so. This is a critical issue."

Waters led a bloc of African-American House Democrats angry and frustrated that the Obama administration is mired in heated partisan battles over healthcare reform, war troop levels and fixing Wall Street and is not doing enough to address the plight of Blacks and Browns on Main Street. The groups have been hit much harder than any other by unemployment.

The Black unemployment rate is officially 15.7 percent nationwide compared to 9.5 percent for whites. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus are troubled by what they believe is the lack of response to the economic situation that is confronting them on the part of the administration and therefore do not feel that they could in deference to the various constituencies that they represent - vote for passage of Mr. Obama's financial reforms. "This is an affront to the people we serve," said one member.

"When it comes to addressing joblessness in our poorest neighborhoods, there are a lot of heads in the sand," said another member. Joblessness for 16-to-24-year old Black men has reached Great Depression proportions -- 34.5 percent in October, more than three times the rate for the general U.S. population according to the Center for Labor Market Studies.

The CBC met before Thanksgiving with Treasury Secretary Geithner and expressed dissatisfaction with the administration's response to the unemployment situation particularly in Black and Brown communities. House Financial Services Committee Chairman Barney Frank, D-Mass., said the full House will not vote on financial overhaul legislation until the second week of December at the earliest.

Frank originally wanted the House to vote on the bill when it reconvened after the Thanksgiving recess. The legislation is expected to focus on regulating systemic risk, winding down failing financial firms and creating a federal insurance office.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, construction, manufacturing and retail experienced the most severe job losses in this down economy, losses that are disproportionately affecting men and young people who populated those sectors.

Traditionally the last hired in general and first fired, young Black workers have taken the brunt of the difficult economy, with cost-conscious employers eliminating the apprenticeship, internship and on the job training programs that gave thousands of minorities a nurturing environment and level playing field in the workplace.

Unemployment continued to climb in Inland Southern California last month, but some employers in Riverside and San Bernardino counties - and across the state - were hiring in October, according to a U.S.



The Union Independent School, a state-of-the-art, 49,000-square-foot facility, opened across from Union Baptist Church during the summer. A formal ribbon-cutting ceremony was held Dec. 6 at the school. The school opened with 75-80 students in kindergarten through second grade and operate on a year-round calendar. The school will add a new kindergarten class each year until it becomes a K-8 school. From left to right are: Dr. James H. Johnson, Jr. chairman of the Board; Rev. Kenneth Hammond, pastor, Union Baptist Church and inspiration for the school; Mrs. Hammond, and Charles H. Stanback, Jr. (Photo By Lawson) Related photos on page 3.

## Economy 101: Long-term unemployment worsens

By Christopher S. Rugaber

WASHINGTON (AP) - Within the vast pool of 15.4 million unemployed workers, a split is emerging: The number of long-term jobless - those out of work six months or longer - is growing, while the number of short-term unemployed is declining.

The trend highlights a considerable challenge for the economy and policymakers: finding a way for the millions of Americans laid off last fall and early this year to get back to work.

The data, buried in Dec. 4's unemployment report, are stark: The number of Americans out of work for 27 weeks or more reached 5.9 million last month, the most on records dating from 1948. That's 18 percent more than just three months ago, when the total was just below 5 million.

The tally of those out of work for 14 weeks or less, however, has dropped to 6.3 million from 7.1 million in August, a decline of about 11 percent.

Looking at it another way, the long-term jobless now make up 38.3 percent of the unemployed population, not that far from the 41.1 percent accounted for by those out of work for 14 weeks or less. (The rest are in the 15-to-26 weeks bracket.)

That's a sharp change from August, when the short-term unemployed made up nearly half the total, while the longer-term jobless were only a third.

In some ways, the dichotomy is good news, in that it reflects a slow-down in layoffs. The Labor Department said Dec. 4 that employers cut a net total of 11,000 jobs in November, down from 111,000 the previous month. The unemployment rate dropped to 10 percent from 10.2 percent in October, the first decline since July.

That gives analysts hope the economy could begin generating jobs in the next few months, after shedding 7.2 million in the past two years.

Still, "new hiring may not be picking up all that much," said Lawrence Mishel, president of the Economic Policy Institute, a liberal think tank. "So what you're seeing is less people thrown into unemployment."

And without more jobs, the long-term unemployment problem is likely to linger. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke has expressed concern that people caught in long spells of unemployment could see their skills atrophy.

"It really is the most difficult challenge facing us," he said in testimony to a Senate panel Thursday.

Here, by the numbers, are some more details you can find deep in the employment report.

### LESS THAN ZERO, BUT GETTING CLOSER

11,000: The net total of jobs lost in November  
111,000: Jobs lost in October  
139,000: Jobs lost in September  
691,000: Average monthly loss in first three months of this year  
7.2 million: Total decline in U.S. payrolls since recession began in December 2007

### UNEMPLOYMENT STILL HIGH

10 percent: November's unemployment rate, in double digits for only the second time in 26 years  
10.2 percent: October's jobless rate, the highest since April 1983  
10.8 percent: Unemployment rate in December 1982, the highest since

### WHERE THE JOBS ARE

52,400: The number of temporary jobs added in November, the biggest increase in five years

11,100: Jobs added in education

21,000: Jobs added in hospitals, nursing and other health care sectors

1,000: Jobs added in computer services

5,600: Jobs added in management and technical consulting

7,500: Jobs added in department stores

### UNDEREMPLOYED

9.2 million: Number of part-time workers who would have preferred full-time work last month

2.3 million: People without jobs who want to work but have stopped looking

17.2 percent: "Underemployment" rate in November if you include the above two categories

17.5 percent: Underemployment rate in October, the highest in records dating to 1994

### THE "HE-CESSION"

10.5 percent: Unemployment rate for adult men

7.9 percent: Unemployment rate for adult women

### NOVEMBER UNEMPLOYMENT RATE BY GROUP

11.4 percent: Female heads of households

7.3 percent: Asians

9.3 percent: Whites

12.7 percent: Hispanics

15.6 percent: Blacks

26.7 percent: Teenagers

## Ex-GOP Chair says party can ease immigration tone

By Andrew DeMillo

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) - New immigration reform efforts will offer the Republican Party a chance to soften its tone on the issue and possibly attract more Hispanic voters, the former chairman of the Republican National Committee said Tuesday.

Without naming names, Ed Gillespie said in a speech at the University of Arkansas Clinton School of Public Service that he believes some Republicans came off as anti-immigrant the last time Congress debated efforts to reform the nation's immigration system. He said future immigration debates could give the party a chance to redeem itself with Hispanic voters.

"I think there's an opportunity there for Republicans to get the tone right in this debate and not come across as anti-immigration, but pro-legal immigration," Gillespie said. "As a whole, I think our party was poorly positioned on the immigration debate."

President Barack Obama has promised to push for immigration legislation, including an eventual path to citizenship for some 12 million people in the country illegally. Gillespie did not say whether Republicans should specifically oppose offering such a path, and said what he called "a rare opportunity for a do-over" was more about the tone of the debate.

Gillespie, who also served as a counselor to former President George W. Bush, declined to say who in his party he considered as coming across harshly when immigration reform efforts failed in 2007.

He said Republicans also have to do a better job of connecting with minority voters if they want to succeed in future elections.

"We have to do a better job of reaching out to African-American voters, Hispanic voters, Asian-American voters, minority voters of all kinds," Gillespie said. "We're the party of Lincoln and we have the right to compete for the African-American vote, and we should."

## ACORN prober finds no illegal pattern on videos

By Pete Yost

WASHINGTON (AP) - An internal investigation of the community-organizing group ACORN found no pattern of intentional, illegal conduct by ACORN staffers on undercover videos shot by conservative critics of the group.

In a 47-page assessment that former Massachusetts Attorney General Scott Harshbarger was commissioned by the organization to do, he criticized ACORN's management as not moving fast enough to institute reforms after an alleged eight-year coverup by ACORN founder Wade Rathke of an embezzlement by his brother.

ACORN's leaders are "now reaping what Rathke sowed," wrote Harshbarger, who was brought in to investigate.

The organization's leadership has made reforms in finances and governance a priority, the Harshbarger report stated. However, it added, this focus has not yet been matched by similar attention to delivering services to ACORN's clients.

The videos of ACORN staffers offering advice to a woman and a man posing as a prostitute and her boyfriend triggered a firestorm of criticism this fall, with some ACORN employees appearing willing to support illegal schemes involving tax advice, misuse of public funds and illegal trafficking in children.

The videos "feed the impression that ACORN believes it is above the law," stated the Harshbarger report, intended as an independent examination of the issues.

"We did not find a pattern of intentional, illegal conduct by ACORN staff involved; in fact, no action, illegal or otherwise, was ever taken by any ACORN employee on behalf of the videographers," Harshbarger said in a statement. "Instead, the videos represent the byproduct of ACORN's longstanding management weaknesses, including a lack of training, a lack of procedures and a lack of on-site supervision."

Harshbarger's report says ACORN, which stands for the Association of Community Organizers for Reform Now, should return to its roots, focusing on community organizing and should hire an independent ethics officer to oversee an internal governance program that is already under way.

ACORN CEO Bertha Lewis called the report "part vindication, part constructive criticism and complete roadmap for the future" on behalf of "the interests of the communities we represent - low- and moderate-income, African-American and Latino families."