

The Carolina Times

THE TRUTH UNBRIDED

VOLUME 91 - NUMBER 10

DURHAM, NORTH CAROLINA - SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2012

TELEPHONE (919) 682-2913 PRICE: 30

Liberal, civil rights groups meet for big North Carolina rally

By Emery P. Dalesio
RALEIGH (AP) - Thousands attending the largest annual gathering of left-leaning and civil rights groups in North Carolina on Feb. 11 heard NAACP leaders urge unity ahead of big elections this year,

citing the early American motto that out of many, the country became one. Buoyed by the Occupy Wall Street zeitgeist that the interests of most Americans are not being served by the comfortable who control important

institutions, National NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous and North Carolina's NAACP leader, the Rev. William Barber, said division benefits the few at the expense of the majority. "All of us in this one

beautiful human rights movement in this country, we believe that you don't breed hatred through division if you are an American. You spread love through multiplication," Jealous said from a stage yards away from the doors of the state Legislative Building on downtown Raleigh's Jones Street.

He said most North Carolinians didn't want and didn't support moves by the new, Republican-led General Assembly: cutting funding for education, ignoring jobs programs, limiting the voting power of youths and minorities by requiring photo IDs at the ballot box, and advancing a constitutional amendment for voters to ban gay marriage, Jealous said.

"Let us remind them that our nation already has a formula for success. It's life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It's justice. It's one nation under God, with liberty and justice for all," he said.

Rather than dividing the state, Republicans who took control of the General Assembly in 2011 for the first time in more than a century were voted into office because of the financial mess confronting the state when the recession hit, state GOP spokesman Robert Lockwood said.

"The Democrats' failings put us in our current situation, and the Republican majority is putting us back on the path to fiscal sanity," Lockwood said.

Republicans back a voter ID law to prevent fraud from tainting elections, he said.

"If you look at it rationally, why do you need a form of identification to get onto an airplane, into a movie theater, or into a bar - but not into a voting booth?" Lockwood said.

Diverse interests marked the crowd. Raleigh Police Capt. David Linthicum estimated to number around 3,000 to 5,000.

NAACP supporters from High Point to Halifax County made up the majority, with others carrying signs and wearing T-shirts supporting unions, farm workers, and increased education funding. Many carried tiny flags, either with the American stars and stripes or the rainbow banner supporting gay rights.

South Carolina NAACP President Lonnie Randolph said he hoped that pressure from North Carolina voters could stop Republican lawmakers from joining others who want to require drug tests from those who apply for unemployment benefits. (Continued On Page 15)



Ms. Virginia Williams, member of the Royal Seven, speaks at a Friends of the James E. Shepard Memorial Library panel discussion and rededication of the "Durham's Woolworth's Lunch County" as part of a Black History Month program Feb. 5 in the Shepard Memorial Library. See photos on page 3 (Photo by Lawson)

UNC board of governors approves tuition increases

By Emery P. Dalesio
CHAPEL HILL (AP) - As scores of angry students held a raucous protest, the University of North Carolina Board of Governors voted Friday to increase tuition across the system of 16 university campuses by an average of nearly 9 percent, or over \$400.

About eight students read statements before the vote in the call-and-response "mic check" style adopted from the Occupy Wall Street protests, while dozens more chanted and drummed outside the meeting room. The students scolded the board after the vote in the same call-and-response style.

"This is a sad day ... for public education ... and for democracy. We the students ... wish the board of governors ... had acted with courage ... and upheld the North Carolina Constitution," they said. The state constitution says attending a UNC school should be free "as far as practicable."

A former university student demonstrating outside the meeting room was arrested. Robert Payne, 33, of Raleigh was charged with resisting and obstructing police and second-degree trespass, university police spokesman Randy Young said.

"They didn't think about the feelings and the cost to the students and how that's going to reflect on us," said Lewis Dandridge, 24, a senior majoring in education at Elizabeth City State University. He said he drove the three hours to Chapel Hill before dawn to demonstrate against cuts that would hurt his younger brother.

The protesters' outpouring of anger was the most significant involvement of students in nearly a decade, UNC Board of Governors Chairwoman Hannah Gage said.

The protest tapped an Occupy movement theme, that comfortable Americans who control important institutions too often make decisions that worsen the economic prospects of people who earn less. Tuition has been increased for four straight years and there's no guarantee there won't be more hikes, Gage said.

UNC System President Tom Ross recommended the cost increases as a stop-gap measure to lessen the impact of layoffs and class reductions forced by state budget cuts of \$414 million last year. The cost increases will make up just 17 percent of the cut by state legislators, the public university system's president said.

Gage said the tuition increase doesn't fill the budget hole, but "does build a short bridge over troubled waters."

"It's never going to be a popular vote, but I think we have done our work and I think we have made an informed decision," she added.

About 70 demonstrators blocked traffic as they marched the mile between the center of the UNC-Chapel Hill campus and the university system's administration office. They carried signs proclaiming "education is a right" and "student power."

Appalachian State University student Justin Hall, 26, of Eden said more increases will deny higher education to many students. While many of his costs are covered from serving in the Air Force for six years, his younger sister is struggling to stay in school, he said.

"I don't think anyone should have to join the military to afford a free education. My sister right now is working a job, slaving away just to make ends meet. It shouldn't be like that," said Hall, a senior studying sustainable development.

But Ross said the increases are well below what campus leaders earlier said they needed. The reduced state funding forced the 16 university campuses and the School of Science and Math in Durham to drop more than 3,000 positions, and to cut library hours and course offerings.

The increases sought to balance higher costs for students and their parents against the threat that the deteriorating quality of a UNC education would harm not just the institutions, but the economic value of a diploma and the state's competitiveness, Ross said.

"The key is to intervene and stop a decline from happening," Ross said. "We want that diploma to have meaning and value when they go and seek a job."

The undergraduate North Carolina resident student currently pays an average tuition and fees of \$5,294 a year, not including books and living expenses. It is higher at the system's two flagship schools, with UNC-Chapel Hill students paying \$6,823 and North (Continued On Page 15)



Rep. G.K. Butterfield kicked off his re-election campaign in Durham Feb. 10. Rep. Butterfield, left, speaks with Judge William A Marsh, II, his children and his wife, far right. See related photos on page 2. (Photo by Lawson)

Death penalty, race divide NC House panel members

By Gary D. Robertson
RALEIGH (AP) - Sharp partisan differences surfaced once again as lawmakers considering changes to North Carolina's Racial Justice Act held their first meeting Feb. 10.

The House Select Committee on Racial Discrimination in Capital Cases met one month after Republicans fell a few votes short of overriding Democratic Gov. Beverly Perdue's veto of a bill that would have essentially repealed the 2009 law. House leaders sent the bill to the new committee to see if changes could be worked out to avoid another veto or sway enough Democrats to secure an override.

Rep. Tim Moore, who chairs the panel, said he'll seek a consensus to address concerns by prosecutors and others about how the law is applied. The law creates a new legal process by which a judge must reduce a death sentence to life in prison without parole if the judge determines race was a significant factor in the sentencing. Defendants can use statistics to make their case - a big hang-up for the law's opponents.

"Since the majority of both chambers passed this bill and it was kept from going into law by the executive branch, the thought is to ... give it another try and to hear from the folks who are actually having to deal with the application of this law," said Moore, R-Cleveland. The committee aims to have recommendations by May, when the next extended General Assembly work session is scheduled.

Democrats on the committee questioned why the law should be altered when the first such case involving a death-row inmate is just beginning to make its way through the courts. The

first evidentiary hearing under the law continued Friday in Fayetteville involving convicted killer Marcus Robinson.

House Minority Leader Joe Hackney, D-Orange, told Moore the Racial Justice Act shouldn't be interfered with until at least after Robinson's case is resolved, if it all, because there are no known unintended consequences. A death penalty

litigation lawyer estimated it would take a year for Robinson's case to be completed given like-ly appeals.

"We have an active application of the act in court as we speak," Hackney said.

But Rep. Sarah Stevens, R-Surry, said there were already unintended consequences. Nearly all of the 158 (Continued On Page 15)

Obama bemoans wife being dragged into politics

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Barack Obama says one of the toughest parts about being president is that his wife has been dragged into the "political realm."

Obama was responding to a question about how he felt when Michelle Obama said she has been inaccurately portrayed as an "angry black woman." While the president did not address that comment specifically, he says his wife is as good a first lady as anyone could imagine, and says he believes Americans have a positive impression of her.

Obama also says the first lady is ready for another four years in the White House, despite her initial reservations about coming to Washington.

The president spoke in an interview with NBC.

New state voting laws focus of Selma, Ala. march

By Suzanne Gamboa
WASHINGTON (AP) - Civil rights, labor and immigration activists say they are returning to Selma, Ala. next month to protest state laws they say will largely prevent black and Latino voters, the poor, students and the elderly from voting.

The protest will begin March 4 with a five-day march at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, where civil rights marchers were gassed and beaten by state troopers in 1965. The day became known as Bloody Sunday. This year's march will end with a rally at the Montgomery, Ala., courthouse.

The Rev. Al Sharpton says the march is a way to bring drama and national attention to the voting rights debate. Marchers also will protest Alabama's immigration law. Another rally is planned March 27 at the Supreme Court to support health care reforms. (Continued On Page 15)