

Civil Rights Leaders Submit Agenda to President

(Continued From Front)

"The criminal justice reforms highlighted in the 21st Century Agenda for Jobs and Freedom have long been a concern to the civil and human rights community," said Wade Henderson, president and CEO of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. "Our community has raised these issues repeatedly and loudly, and we've refused to be ignored. What we're seeing now - after many years of activism - is a harmonic convergence of economic, political and moral interests coming together to increase momentum in support of common sense reforms to make our criminal justice system more fair, humane, and just."

Morial called for the black community to discuss, comment, praise, criticize, add to the "21 Century Agenda" in meaningful ways.

"We are firmly convinced the president will fight for jobs, training, minimum wage and voting rights as well as explore the other areas of concern," said Sharpton. "We are determined to build this country and make it work for everyone equally and fairly."

No 'Carolina Comeback' Just a 'Carolina Setback' for too many jobless workers

(Continued From Front)

Without unemployment insurance dollars circulating in the economy and without the state's labor force growing as the population grows, North Carolina is losing economic activity at a critical time.

Clearly, there is nothing to celebrate in the harm that the unemployment insurance changes have caused for jobless workers and their families. The reality for too many North Carolinians is that what little job creation is happening isn't enough to meet their desire to work and to give the state's economy the boost it so desperately needs.

Sadly, cuts to unemployment insurance are just magnifying the misery.

Alexandra Sirota is the Director of the North Carolina Budget and Tax Center.

Mt. Level Missionary Baptist

Mt Level Missionary Baptist Church will have our annual Women's Day Celebration on Sunday, March 16, 2014. The theme is "God's Word: Healing Women's Brokenness through the Generations". Our biblical reference is Jeremiah 18:4 and Psalms 34. The speaker for 7:55am worship service is Rev. Chalice Overy and 10:45am is Rev. Hazel A. Wilson, Pastor of Mount Pelier Presbyterian Church, Rowland NC.

On Saturday, March 15, 2014 at 10:30am there will be a panel discussion on "Helping Women Heal from their Brokenness". Lunch will be served. These events are free and open to the public. Mt. Level is located at 316 Hebron Rd, Durham, NC (919)477-3893. www.mtlevelmbc.org Dr. William C. Tuttle, Jr., Pastor. Come celebrate with us and bring a friend.

Student Overdose Awareness Events to be Held March 2014

On Tuesday, March 4th and Wednesday, March 5th, the North Carolina Harm Reduction Coalition (NCHRC) will be holding Student Overdose Awareness Day events on college campuses across the state. Students, faculty, officers, counselors, and advocates will gather to learn more about overdose prevention and receive naloxone rescue kits free of charge from NCHRC, a grassroots public health non-profit.

In an effort to reduce drug overdose fatalities in North Carolina, the state legislature passed Senate Bill 20 (SB20) call the "911 Good Samaritan Access to Naloxone" bill. SB20 protects witnesses and victims of overdose from prosecution for small amounts of most drugs and paraphernalia that may be found as a result of seeking help for an overdose. The immunity also applies to underage drinkers who seek help for alcohol poisoning. SB20 also allows for a standing order distribution, meaning that medical practitioners can grant permission to agencies like NCHRC to dispense naloxone without a medical provider present. Student Overdose Awareness Day will draw attention to the overdose epidemic, provide links to community resources for those considering recovery, and empower collegiate communities to save lives.

If you or someone you know is at risk of experiencing or witnessing a drug overdose, call NCHRC Overdose Prevention Coordinator at (610) 420-1230 to reserve an overdose rescue kit. If you would like more information about free, in-house overdose prevention training or are interested in volunteering with NCHRC, please visit www.nchrc.org.

WHAT: Student Overdose Awareness Event

WHEN: March 4th-5th, 2014

LOCATIONS:

North Carolina State University
Brickyard (University Plaza), North Campus
10:00am -- 12:00pm
Tuesday, March 4th

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
The Pit
10:00am -- 2:00pm
Wednesday, March 5th

Warren Wilson College
By Gladfelter Dining Hall
10:00am--12:00pm
Tuesday, March 4th

For

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Minimum Wage Jump Good For Low-Income Blacks

By Freddie Allen
NNPA Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 by 2016 would lift nearly 1 million low-wage workers out of poverty, according to a recent report by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO).

Although a majority of low-wage workers are white, people of color would be disproportionately affected by increase in the minimum wage. Blacks work in low-wage jobs at higher rates than whites, according to federal statistics. Blacks account for 11 percent of the workforce, but 16 percent of workers that would see their wages increase.

"When you look at the CBO report, part of what stands out is that the CBO confirms that many millions of workers with low or modest incomes would get significant income gains," said Robert Greenstein, president of the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities, after even after factoring in the CBO's estimates on the employment effects, there are very substantial income gains for the bottom and the middle of the population and these income gains are achieved for virtually no budgetary cost."

Even though the CBO predicted that 500,000 low-wage workers might lose their jobs, 16.5 million workers directly benefit from seeing an increase in the minimum wage. Economists estimate that another 8 to 10 million workers would see their wages increase as a result of a "spillover effect."

Families living below the poverty line will get a \$5 billion bump in their income, about 20 percent of the estimated \$31 billion. Roughly a third would go to families making three times above the poverty line.

According to the Census Bureau, more than 27 percent of blacks live in poverty compared to less than 10 percent of whites. Nearly 40 percent of black children live in poverty.

According to the CBO report, raising the minimum wage would affect low-wage workers in two ways.

"Most of them would receive higher pay that would increase their family's income, and some of those families would see their income rise above the federal poverty threshold," stated the report.

The CBO report continued: "But some jobs for low-wage workers would probably be eliminated, the income of most workers who became jobless would fall substantially, and the share of low-wage workers who were employed would probably fall slightly."

Although the CBO report suggested that up to a million jobs could be lost, if the minimum wage were raised to \$10.10 per hour, many economists agree that the effect of wage increase would be minimal.

"In a review of over 60 studies that look for statistical linkages between minimum-wage increases and job loss, economist John Schmitt reports that the most accurately measured results cluster around zero: some studies find raising the minimum wage has a small negative effect on employment, a smaller number find that it has a small positive effect, and most find no significant effect," stated a report by the Center for Budget and Policy Priorities.

In January, the Economic Policy Institute advocated for increasing the minimum wage to \$10.10 in a letter to President Obama and Congress. More than 600 economists, including seven Nobel Prize winners signed the letter according to EPI.

Keeping his promise to use his pen or phone in a year of action to help American families, last week President Obama signed an executive order to raise the minimum wage of federal contract workers.

In a policy brief detailing President Obama's executive order raising the minimum wage for federal contract workers, White House officials cited a study that showed when Maryland passed a similar law for state contract employment, competition between companies increased, driving a higher quality of service.

Contrary to common stereotypes most low-income workers are not teenagers working for extra pocket change on clothes and fast food on the weekends.

According to a report by the Center for Economic and Policy Research, titled "Low-wage Workers Are Older, Better Educated than Ever," the average age of low-workers is about 35 and only about 12 percent were teenagers in 2011. A majority (60 percent) of low-wage workers are 25-64 years old. More than 30 percent of low-wage workers have some college education and roughly 10 percent have a four-year college degree.

The CBO also found that employment prospects for high school dropouts and blacks in their 20s would be least affected by changes in the minimum wage.

Lawrence Katz, an economist at Harvard University, said that raising the minimum wage would have significant benefits for low-skill workers, especially African Americans.

"Our best estimates suggest essentially no impact on employment and a large improvement in wages for disadvantaged workers," said Katz.

Katz added: "Overall, it's a substantial win for minority workers."

Black Institute Urges CBC to Speak Out on Immigration Reform

By Tony Best
Special to the NNPA from the
New York Carib News

As immigration reform remains stalled on Capitol Hill, New York's Black Backers of reform may head to Washington next month to push their case.

Fed up with Capitol Hill's stalling on immigration reform, advocates for change in the nation's laws will take their case to the public and influential groups in Washington next month to jolt lawmakers into action.

And the pressure may be applied to members of the Congressional Black Caucus who some New Yorkers complain are remaining "remarkably silent" on the immigration issue as the comprehensive reform measure remains stymied by Republican majority in the chamber.

"We want to do a very big forum in Washington to highlight this very issue of inaction on immigration to House members," said Bertha Lewis, founder and chief executive of the Black Institute in New York. "We want to do it in Washington D.C. towards the end of March. We are going back to the nation's capital. We are joining with other folks and organizations to highlight how African-American and other black voters are about this struggle. Republicans who have districts with more than 15 per cent black registrations are going to have a very hard time. We have to take it to the voting booth."

The Black Institute which has become a major immigration advocate in New York, focusing attention on the needs of black immigrants, be they from Jamaica, Haiti, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago and the rest of the Caribbean or from Africa, Latin America and elsewhere.

For her part, Lewis remains perplexed by the failure of the Republican leadership to bring the reform to a vote and by what appears to be an apparent lukewarm response by some Democrats to the stalling tactics of the GOP majority.

"Delay of immigration of reform is just silly," Lewis charged. "People have been waiting for years for reform to become the law of the land. To make them wait more is an insult. Either you do it or you don't. This whole situation has a racist element to it and there is not even a debate. We know that economically the country needs reform and yet they (House) keep delaying it. If you can't pass it this year they will never pass it. We should just face up to it that they are in fact not passing it because of race."

"I think the Congressional Black Caucus has got to become far more vocal on immigration reform and come far more engaged and visible on this issue," Lewis added. "The Caucus should make it an issue in the 2014 election which is why we are trying to do everything that we can as the Black Institute to say to black voters not to support the folks who refuse to do anything about immigration. We have just got to take that level because we have nothing to lose."

"I don't know why the Caucus isn't more active on immigration reform. It may be that the House Democratic leadership has something to do with that," Lewis went on. "I just don't know. Maybe they don't want anything to lose to get into the debate. They must call it as they see it but for people to just throw up their hands and say 'oh well we can't get it done this year' is unacceptable. We have to fight back."

She said that pro-immigration reform supporters were turning to the streets in and out of Washington, New York to get something done, "fasting, doing everything, engaging in demonstrations. We don't see anybody fighting for this. It is really disheartening. It also makes you mad to know that nobody is going to do it for you."

On Monday, anti-deportation demonstrators, including undocumented immigrants were arrested outside of the White House in Washington as they protested against President Barack Obama's policies which resulted in almost two million people being kicked out of the country in the past few years, more than any other president.

The activists were demanding that the Administration suspend deportations while expanding the deportation policy called "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals."