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Schools 'Separate and Unequal' 60 years after Brown

By Freddie Allen
NNPA Washington
Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - As the 60th anniversary of the United States Supreme Court ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* approaches, a new report by the Economic Policy Institute found that schools are more segregated now than they were in 1980.

The U.S. Supreme Court's May 17, 1954 landmark decision effectively banned racial segregation in schools in Southern states where racially separate schools were far from equal. The report outlines the myriad differences that existed between black schools and white schools leading up to the 1954 decision.

"Black students were not only segregated but wholly denied meaningful educational opportunity," the report stated. "Schools 60 years ago were separate but not equal. In Clarendon, South Carolina, the school system at the heart of the *Brown* collection of cases, per pupil spending in schools for whites was more than four times the rate in schools for blacks. The capital value of schools for whites was nine times the value of schools for blacks. The pupil-teacher ratio in schools attended by whites was 28-to-1, for those attended by blacks it was 47-to-1."

The report continued: "There were flush toilets in schools for whites and outhouses at schools for blacks; buses transported white students to school while black students walked; schools for whites had janitors while schools for blacks were cleaned by teachers and students themselves."

"The typical black student now attends a school where only 29 percent of his or her fellow students are white, down from 36 percent in 1980," stated the report.

The report also described how family background can impact educational achievement.

"When a few children in a classroom come from homes with less literacy, and without the benefit of high-quality early childhood care, a skilled teacher can give those children special attention," stated the report. "But when most children in that classroom have these disadvantages, the average instructional level must decline. The most skilled teachers must devote more time to remediation, less to new instruction."

The report offered a number of recommendations including, "adjusting attendance zones, establishing magnet schools, or implementing controlled choice programs."

But in order to fully integrate schools, the report said, neighborhoods that feed those schools must also be integrated and that remains an uphill battle even with rental voucher programs.

"Low-income working families are eligible for vouchers to supplement their rental payments up to market rates, even in middle-class communities, but the voucher program is barely funded, and (Continued On Page 2)



Central High in Tuscaloosa, Ala., like others schools, has grown increasingly segregated.

Clergy Release Open Letter during Passover to Governor McCrory and NC General Assembly Leadership on Be- half of the Forward Together Moral Movement

A group of clergy members from the Christian, Jewish and Muslim faiths, including Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, II, released a letter last week to Governor McCrory, Senate Leader Berger, and Speaker Tillis on behalf of the Forward Together Moral Movement. The letter requested a meeting with the North Carolina General Assembly leadership before the opening of the 2014 short session on May 14th. The letter is provided below.

The letter emphasized the constitutionally inconsistent, morally indefensible and economically insane nature of the public policy agenda pushed in the 2013 session and urged a new and moral direction to be forged in the upcoming months.

April 18, 2014
Governor Patrick McCrory
State of North Carolina
1 E. Edenton Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Senator Philip E. Berger
President Pro Tempore
North Carolina State Senate
2007 Legislative Building
Raleigh, NC 27601

Representative Thom Tillis
Speaker of the House
North Carolina House of Representatives
16 W. Jones Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

"We believe it is time to move in a different direction, a new direction, a moral direction. We are in the middle of Passover, a holiday that commemorates God's work to ensure justice for God's people."

Dear Governor McCrory, President Pro Tempore Berger and Speaker Tillis:

In this holy season we write to you with a sense of urgency, prayer and call of faith to speak truth and love. The business of governance is complicated and often requires making unpopular policy decisions that alienate even the most beloved elected officials from their bases. Over the course of the last year, you and your colleagues made several unpopular policy decisions. These decisions cut resources from an already overstretched K-12 budget; they rejected health insurance (Continued On Page 2)

OPENING 2014 CROP WALK - Some of dignitaries on hand for the 2014 CROP Walk to Fight Hunger from left to right are: NCCU Chancellor Debra Saunders-White; City Councilwoman and Mayor Pro Tem Cora Cole-McFadden and in back Chuck Davis of the African American Dance Ensemble. See photos on page 6.

NC judge considers if districts can sue on tenure

GREENSBORO (AP) - A judge in Greensboro is considering whether two school districts can sue the state over North Carolina's teacher tenure law.

Special Superior Court Judge Richard Doughton said April 16 he wants more information on whether the school districts have legal standing to sue, the News & Record of Greensboro reported.

Doughton said he expects to make a decision next week on whether Guilford and Durham school district leaders should temporarily be freed from certain provisions of the law.

The Durham Board of Education and the Guilford County Board of Education and Guilford Superintendent Maurice Green are suing the state over new requirements on revoking tenure from vested teachers. They say the new law is too vague and could leave them vulnerable to lawsuits.

They say revoking tenure from vested teachers would violate the state and U.S. constitutions.

School districts have until June 30 to award new contracts to certain teachers who agree to waive the extra layer of job protection.

North Carolina's lawyers say school districts cannot sue the state.

Lawyers have until Monday to provide the additional information Doughton wants.

Gov. Pat McCrory and other state leaders want to eliminate tenure for all teachers by 2018.

States' refusal to expand Medicaid is deadly attack on poor Americans

By Jesse Jackson

We pledge allegiance to "One nation, under God." When terrorists attack us, we unite as one to defend our nation and our countrymen and women. Yet, we allow the doctrine of the Confederacy — states' rights — to divide us, even to the point of costing Americans their lives.

Charlene Dill, a resident of Florida, was a 32-year-old mother of three. She worked three jobs to try to support those children, despite having a serious heart condition. She earned too much — \$11,000 a year — to be eligible for Medicaid under Florida law. She would have been able to get expanded Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, known as Obamacare.

An Analysis

But the conservative justices on the Supreme Court ruled that states have the right to refuse to expand Medicaid, even though the federal government will pay 100 percent of the costs for the first three years, and 90 percent thereafter. This states' rights decision would cost Charlene Dill her life.

Every member of the Florida state legislature has health insurance. Yet, as zealous opponents of Obamacare, they voted not to expand Medicaid, turning their noses up on billions in federal support. That decision cost Charlene Dill her life.

According to a Harvard study, an estimated 8 million Americans will remain uninsured because of the decision of 25 states to refuse to expand Medicaid. They estimate that will result in about 7,000 deaths per year, or 19 a day. The victims are working people, who earn too much to get Medicaid and too little to afford health insurance. Conservatives, one would think, would want to help those who get the early bus, who clean our streets, take care of our children, work the midnight shift. But they hate Obama far more than they care for low-wage workers. They choose partisan politics over the common good.

Not surprisingly, the states that have refused to expand Medicaid include almost the entire South, the states of the former Confederacy, as well as the Republican bastions in the Midwest and West (from

Kansas to Idaho). These are among the poorest states in the union, with the most residents who have no health insurance, and the worst health care indices.

Texas Senator Ted Cruz spent 20 hours in a fake filibuster against Obamacare, while his state ranks among the worst in the country with more than one in five of its residents without health insurance. Georgia State Insurance Commissioner Ralph Hudgens brags that the state is doing "everything in its power to be an obstructionist," while 18.4 percent of Georgians go without health insurance.

Mississippi residents, not surprisingly, are most likely to lack access to basic necessities. One fourth report that they didn't have money for food at some point in the last 12 months. Mississippi residents have the lowest life expectancy, the highest obesity rates (over 35 percent), the lowest household income, and nearly one in four reports they lack the money to purchase health care. Yet the governor of Mississippi refuses millions in federal aid to expand Medicaid.

People of color — primarily African Americans in Mississippi and the former confederate states, Latinos in Texas and elsewhere — are disproportionately the victims of this cruelty.

That should not surprise. From John C. Calhoun's South Carolina Ordinance of Nullification to secession, the Civil War to segregation, states' rights has always been a doctrine wielded to oppress minorities, even at the cost of depriving poor working people of all races.

These governors and legislators assume that poor people do not register and do not vote (and they are passing laws to make it harder for them to do so). They assume that most Americans won't care if thousands die needlessly. They assume that states' rights can allow America to move from one nation to two nations, separate and unequal.

Charlene Dill is neither the first nor the last to be lost to this callous calculation. But I believe we are a better country than that. Working and poor people have an insult level that is being violated. People of conscience will not turn their eyes forever. This is a moral disgrace that cannot be simply ignored.

Rev. Jesse Jackson is president of Operation PUSH in Chicago, Ill.