

OPINION/LETTERS

Winston-Salem Chronicle

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Chief Justice Says Feds Help to Fight Discrimination

To the Editor:
 Tuesday, October 25th, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist of the United States Supreme Court spoke to an audience at Wake Forest University in celebration of 100 years of Wake Forest's Law School. While admittedly, I did not hear his entire remarks, I am none the less troubled by the tone and substance of those remarks he were reported in the Winston-Salem Journal on Wednesday, October 26th.

Chief Justice Rehnquist spoke about his misgivings about the step-by-step federalization by Congress of state power and responsibility.

He traced the history of the federal government's seizure of state power back to the formation of the Interstate Commerce Commission to regulate the railroads after the Civil War, through the enactment of federal labor and civil rights laws.

The federal government would not have had to intervene in state matters if the state themselves had been doing a better job of fighting discrimination against minorities, women, and the poor in matters of housing, education, the work place, and the criminal justice system.

Regulation of the railroads was not the only function of the Interstate Commerce Commission when it was founded after the civil war, it purpose was also to stem the tide of state's rights to return slaves who had escaped to the north from being brought back to southern states who had long prospered from the total inhumane treatment of a great black people.

Civil rights and voting rights law were enacted in part to do away with a system that allowed black people in large numbers to be denied the right to vote. Blacks were required to pass a literacy test to be able to vote or, they could be grandfathered if their fathers owned land which in the day was unheard of. Whites almost always qualified, thereby ensuring that they would always have legislators who passed laws solely for the benefit of one race of people.

Where else could or should we look for relief but the federal government, even though in a lot of

ways even it has proven to be slow to act.

Justice Rehnquist also alluded to the rise in violent crime in our urban areas and the role the federal government is being asked to play in our regaining a semblance of quality of life. The federal government has to do more to control the flow of drugs and guns into this

CHRONICLE MAILBAG Our Readers Speak Out

country in general, and into our neighborhoods in particular!

It is a sad commentary but true, that crack and guns are more prevalent in our communities that even a library card. We as a society cannot afford to go back to state's rights if we are to ever see the day when we are no longer held virtual hostages in our town communities.

Blacks, women, and working class people should always have the possibility of the federal government's intervention as a last remedy against the ineffectiveness of the state's to deal with problems within their own borders. The Rodney King case in California is a prime example. In twenty years we will no longer be the largest minority in the country and states will be less tolerant of our needs because while the number of people sitting down to the table will grow, the pie will remain the same size.

We have to vote and take a more aggressive posture in the political process where states will take us serious about our desire to improve our quality of life.

To know that the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States would suggest otherwise to a group of lawyers, who incidentally a large number of our people will almost certainly come in contact with, scares me to death, and it should you too.

I don't have all the answers to all of society's ills, but I doubt very seriously if many were to be found in Rehnquist's remarks.

Steven A. Floyd

Good Coverage

To the Editor:

The R.J. Reynolds High School administration, coaching staff, football players (J.V. & Varsity) and myself appreciate your efforts in covering J.V. Football this year. I feel Jerome Richard has done a

still heavily armed and dangerous. I am appealing to you most respectfully to use your good offices to once again create public awareness relative to the on-going Liberian conflict. It is most important that the black community in this area and across these United States, especially the Congressional Black Caucus, become more involved with

Republicrats Get Us Again

Forsyth County voters made a sharp right turn in Tuesday's election and African American voters were left holding a bag of air.

While African American democrats continued their pattern of voting along party lines, hordes of white democratic voters cast their ballots for republicans.

Even with meaningful support from whites for Nigel Alston in the at-large school board race, the republicans who make up only 37% of registered voters in the county, made a clean sweep in all the contested school board seats except in the predominately black district 1.

The unofficial election results makes three resounding statements for African American voters in Forsyth county. One, were it not for districting, we would probably have no representation in Washington, Raleigh or Forsyth County. Two, it appears that whomever is telling us to vote along party lines evidently is out to lunch or refuses to learn the lessons of past elections. Three, we need greater involvement within the republican party so that all of our votes cannot be discounted again as they were Tuesday.

We have said this before but it is worth repeating. African Americans represent 35% of the democratic vote. We have been so loyal for so long until the democrats take us for granted and the republicans simply write us off. Instead, the republican party focuses on white conservative democrats to make up the margin they need to defeat the democratic party. That, in a nutshell, is what they did here.

It is time for African Americans to disconnect their one-party neon sign. As a numerically minority in voting power, the only way we can leverage the strength of our voting block is to keep both major parties working hard for our vote. We should be the swing vote not conservative democrats or as we have called them "Republicrats."

It may even be time for us to form our own political party. At least it deserves some active and serious discussion.

Postal Service Lacking

Postal workers at North Station have been encountering what they claim to be racial discrimination by management. If their claims are true, there needs to be some redress from postal authorities. However, if local postal management's response to them is what it has been to us, we must sympathize with those postal workers at North Station.

We have placed several calls to local management, who are yet to respond to a reporter's calls. In fact, Congressman Mel Watt's office staff has been attempting to intervene in this matter, but as of yet they have not been able to get local management to sit down and discuss these issues. Rightly or wrongly, these postal employees deserve an opportunity to be heard and to be treated fairly, honestly and with a level of respect.

The U.S. Postal Service is a quasi-governmental agency and inasmuch is required by law to be fair and non-discriminatory. It may turn out that these workers' claim may in fact be false, however, that is not the point here. They deserve to be treated with respect. We encourage Postmaster Mark Maties to address this matter immediately and not to allow these complaints to fester, to grow and to continue killing the moral of people whose jobs are so important.

All business owners know that disgruntled employees can be extremely disruptive to a business. In the case of the local post office, disgruntled employees potentially affect all of us through poor mail service, which adversely affect postal rates.

We will continue to press for local management to address these serious grievances. We also encourage Congressman Watt's office to continue to press the local post office management to properly address these issues presented to them by these workers. Furthermore, we will ask Congressman Watt and the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service to put in place an outside, independent investigator to determine the facts in this matter.

Did You Know ...

That the nation's incarceration rate has more than doubled since 1984? In 1984, 187 of every 100,000 Americans were in state and federal prison. Today, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 373 of every 100,000 Americans are incarcerated. But those who believe that jailing people stops crime are in for a surprise. A new report from the National Crime Victimization Survey reveals that violent crime went up again last year — continuing a seven-year upward trend

"Preventing Crime — and Dreams Deferred"

It is often said that our community is facing its worse crisis since slavery.

Our streets are less safe, our children are being killed in record numbers, and day after day, in our neighborhoods, churches, and schools, we've seen the tragedies born of frustration, and too many of what Langston Hughes called "dreams deferred."

But, in our struggles against crime and violence, we've also seen the unsung heroes who line our streets — parents working hard to teach their children right from wrong, community organizations reaching out to steer the next generation along the right track, and young people who, with a little encouragement, and a lot of courage, are reaching up towards the stars — and beyond.

I'm talking about eighteen year-olds like Lawanda Jones of Texas. Lawanda grew up in the West Dallas Housing Projects with the burdens of poverty, illness and drug addiction tearing at the fabric of her family.

And when the pressures at home became too much to bear, she decided to drop out of high school just two months shy of graduation.

But her support system a school counselor and a mentor at her Boys and Girls Club wouldn't hear of it. They became a second family, helping her overcome obstacles and draw upon her personal strengths to build a better life.

Today Lawanda is a freshman at East Texas State University, with a full scholarship in English, ambitions to pursue a Law degree and an unlimited future at her fingertips.

Success stories like Lawanda's are being written all over the coun-

At the Department of Health and Human Services, we just announced a \$4.25 million grant to 16 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) to establish violence research and prevention programs on their campuses.

This means that we can better tap into the strength within our black colleges and universities, some of our community's most respected and cherished institutions, and use that power today to fuel the solutions of tomorrow.

It means that business majors will help families develop budgets, and stick to them; sociology majors will work with social services agencies to help match residents with job training programs; and education majors will work with children to help them finish their homework and succeed in school.

And it means that students and faculty members concerned with the violence they see going on right outside their gates will now be able to lock arms with the government and community organizations to heal our wounds and save our children's lives. It's the same way with the recently passed Crime Act.

We know that there's no single solution to the wave of senseless violence that has engulfed our country. It's a delicate balance and this bill strikes it just right.

It includes more police officers, additional prisons, tough new penalties for violent crimes, and a ban on military style semi-automatic assault weapons.

However these measures, by themselves, are not enough; we also need to break the vicious cycle of crime and violence before it starts.

That's why the Crime Act includes a major investment in prevention with support for:

Community centers to provide young people safe heavens in their neighborhoods where they can go for healthy activities and help with their problems after school, on the weekends and during the summer.

The Violence Against Women



ISSUES & ANSWERS

By WALTER BROADNAX

Act, which includes a national hotline, rape prevention education, and support for safe places that help battered women and children get out of harm's way.

Drug Courts that use the leverage of the court system to make sure that nonviolent drug offenders receive treatment, get off drugs, and stay out of trouble.

Community youth academics that give dropouts and troubled youths second chances at an education and a future.

And flexible funding for your community so that you can choose the best crime prevention strategies to meet your local needs.

Opponents of the Crime Bill called the prevention programs "pork," but I call them "smart." Smart because prevention is about making an investment in our children. It's about reweaving the fabric of our communities in troubled areas instead of giving up. And it's about providing every generation of young people with goals to aspire

toward and shoulders to stand on. I believe that the Crime Bill and the grant to our HBCUs represent substantial steps forward, but they are not cure-alls. The fact is, government alone will never solve our crime problem.

Crime prevention must be a

matter of personal responsibility. Because it's going to take every single one of us especially parents, teachers, clergy, businesses, the media, community leaders, health care professionals and institutions, both public and private joining hands to take back our streets; and child by child, adult by adult, and block by block, turn our communities around.

At his recent address before the joint session of Congress, Nelson Mandela told our nation: "The suffering of one shall...inflict pain upon the other...we are human, together or nothing at all."

We must strive to be human together, strive to break the grip of violence, and in Langston Hughes' words, become "free within ourselves."

That's critical for our country. And it's only going to happen when we crack down on crime and lift up the next generation. Lifting them up is much tougher than writing them off, but it's far more productive. Just ask Lawanda Jones.

(Walter Broadnax is Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services)

To the Editor:

As an independent cab driver I am deeply concerned about the lack of support from the black community for its only minority-owned cab company. The old Negro saying that blacks deliberately boycott their own business should be dismissed. Remember your support is our success.

Ali Shabazz

Gold Eagle Taxi Cab Service

About letters

The Chronicle welcomes letters as well as guest columns from its readers. Letters should be as concise as possible and should be typed or legibly printed. The letter must also include the name, address and telephone number of the writer to ensure the authenticity of the letter. Columns must follow the same guidelines and will be published if they are of interest to our general readership. The Chronicle will not publish any letters or columns that arrive without this information. We reserve the right to edit letters and columns for brevity and clarity. Submit letters and columns to: Chronicle Mailbag, P.O. Box 1636