

# News at a Glance

## Simmons focus of lobbying probe

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) - Hip-hop mogul Russell Simmons faces an Aug. 20 deadline to comply with a state subpoena into whether he violated lobbying laws while trying to reform the state's mandatory drug sentencing statutes, a state official said last week.

Simmons and former NAACP leader Benjamin Chavis had sought a temporary restraining order in federal court in Manhattan to put a hold on the state Lobbying Commission's investigation.

Lobbying Commission Executive Director David Grandeau said the case strikes at the heart of the state's ability to monitor people who seek to influence state government officials and the Legislature.

State law requires lobbyists to register and document their spending to reveal the pressure and influence on state lawmakers and officials.

Simmons and Chavis said they were exercising their constitutional right to petition government and were unaware of the State Lobbying Act requirements. The men and the Coalition of Fairness sought reform or repeal of the Rockefeller era drug laws that mandate long sentences even for possessing and selling small amounts of illegal drugs. Reformers say the laws disproportionately affect minorities.

Simmons' activities included a rally and several closed-door sessions with Gov. George Pataki and legislative leaders. In the waning days of the legislative session in June, Simmons was invited into a seven-hour, closed-door session with Pataki and legislative leaders, although no agreement was reached.

To get to Albany for that meeting, Simmons flew from New York on a chartered helicopter along with Secretary of State Randy Daniels. Daniels has since reimbursed the helicopter company for the cost of the flight, said Daniels spokesman Peter Constantakes.



Simmons

## NAACP says South Bend police chief should resign because of officer abuse

SOUTH BEND, Ind. (AP) - The city's branch of the NAACP is urging the police chief to resign, saying officers in the department have used excessive force and were not disciplined.

South Bend Police Chief Tom Fautz said he does not plan to resign. Mayor Stephen J. Luecke said he supports Fautz, who was named chief in September.

Trina Robinson, local president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said in late May that she was encouraged by the department's efforts to prevent excessive force.

Last week, she said that a combination of several issues, including some complaints this summer, prompted the NAACP to seek Fautz's resignation.

Fautz said he expected the NAACP to take action after he explained to NAACP officers last week why he had exonerated officers against claims they used excessive force when arresting Robinson's son, Earnest Dixon.

Dixon claimed that officers beat him in a traffic stop in September. Dixon said that he did not have a license, so he ran until police caught him.

In May, officers were exonerated in the case of a black Columbus, Ind., police officer, Roderick Ivory, who, while off duty and traveling through the city in September, was stopped by South Bend officers and wrestled to the ground.

## Clippers owner facing discrimination and sexual harassment lawsuits

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Los Angeles Clippers owner Donald Sterling was sued for sexual harassment Tuesday by a former employee.

Sumner Davenport, a property supervisor at Sterling's Beverly Hills Properties, was fired in 2002. Her lawsuit also seeks damages for wrongful termination.

Davenport said that while she worked for him, Sterling made "unwanted and offensive physical conduct," which included hugging, kissing and touching her chest.

In the lawsuit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court, Davenport says Sterling at times unbuttoned his pants and "adjust(ed) himself" while she sat across the desk from him.

Davenport said the work environment made her ill, and she had to take medical leave in April 2002. She said she didn't find out she had been fired until three months later.

A call to Sterling's Beverly Hills office last week was not immediately returned.

A separate discrimination lawsuit against Sterling is pending in federal court. It claims Sterling ordered employees at his two apartment complexes to rent only to tenants of Korean heritage, not to blacks or Hispanics.

## Highest-ranking black politician in Washington running for governor

SEATTLE (AP) - King County Executive Ron Sims formally announced last week he will run for governor.

Sims, 55 and Washington's highest-ranking black politician, became the third major Democrat to jump into the gubernatorial primary since two-term incumbent Gary Locke announced last week that he will step down at the end of his term. Locke cited family considerations.

Sims said he's convinced he can win the nomination. He said he brings hands-on experience in solving the problems of a big county. The Spokane native, who attended college in Ellensburg, said he would bring Eastern Washington more visibility in the campaign.



Sims

# Black museum site debated

BY JEFFREY MCMURRAY  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON - Georgia Rep. John Lewis' reason for wanting a black history and culture museum on the National Mall is the same reason others cite for opposing the venue.

Lewis, a prominent civil rights leader, remembers well the march on Washington in 1963 when hundreds of thousands of protesters filled the open green space between the Capitol and Lincoln Memorial.

What better statement, he figures, than to link that historic site with a museum aimed at telling the tale of his people, from slavery to the present?

Critics of construction projects on the Mall argue that cluttering the space with buildings, even one dedicated to the plight of blacks, could detract from the Mall's original purpose of openness to all.

"The fact we have a Mall where people can go and make their case means it's filling a function. That function is not by filling it with buildings, it's by filling it with people," said Judy Feldman, president of the National Coalition to Save Our Mall.

Lewis agrees the Mall shouldn't be cluttered, but if anything deserves some of Washington's most-coveted real estate, he says it's this project.

"The Mall represents the front door to the symbol of



File Photo

Supporters of a black history museum want it to be built on the National Mall in Washington.

our democracy," said Lewis, who was beaten during the 1965 "Bloody Sunday" march over the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala. "An African-American Museum shouldn't be up to the side or in the back. It should be as close to the other museums as possible."

For Lewis, who first floated the idea of a national black history museum a decade ago, there is some consolation to the controversy: It is focusing not on whether there should be a museum, but where it should be built.

Senators have already authorized the construction of such a museum and designated four possible sites on or directly next to the Mall. Among them is a perch on the Capitol's lawn that was recommended by a presidential commission but has encountered the most vocal resistance. The House is still debating the concept and could approve its own measure this fall.

Feldman says the legislation leaves out some good sites that aren't directly on the Mall but are within walking distance. For example, one on the 10th Street overpass is about a 10-minute walk away and, because of less-stringent zoning requirements, it would give designers more freedom to build a grander museum, she says.

But Sen. Sam Brownback, a Kansas Republican who has teamed with Lewis to get a

See Museum on A5

# Race initiative may help Davis in recall

BY JUSTIN PRITCHARD  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN FRANCISCO - Recalling the governor isn't the only bombshell question California voters will face at the polls this fall.

Race also is on the ballot in the form of a proposition that would prevent the state from asking the race or national origin of anyone when collecting data about public education, contracting and employment.

Ironically, the ballot initiative Gov. Gray Davis has described as "a big step backwards" could actually help him keep his job by enticing liberal voters to the polling booths on the day the recall is decided.

Like the recall itself, the proposition - the latest offering by anti-affirmative action icon Ward Connerly - has rekindled familiar frictions.

Connerly, who is black, is the University of California regent who was instrumental in getting the university to ban the use of race in the school's admissions policy.

He later succeeded in pushing Proposition 209, an initiative that banned the use of race and gender in public hiring, contracting and college admissions.

Connerly then looked to export his template to other states. While voters in Washington state followed California's lead, similar initiatives failed to qualify elsewhere. This summer, Connerly went to Michigan to launch a similar campaign after the

Supreme Court allowed the limited use of race as a factor in college admissions there.

That track record has led opponents to demonize Connerly as a civil rights sellout. Critics of Proposition 54 say it would damage the government's ability to address disparities in race or ethnicity in health care and education.

When Proposition 54 qual-



Davis



Connerly

See Recall on A4

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The Chronicle (USPS 067-910) was established by Ernest H. Pitt and Ndubisi Egemonye in 1974 and is published every Thursday by Winston-Salem Chronicle Publishing Co. Inc., 617 N. Liberty Street, Winston-Salem, NC 27101. Periodicals postage paid at Winston-Salem, N.C. Annual subscription price is \$30.72.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: The Chronicle, P.O. Box 1636 Winston-Salem, NC 27102-1636