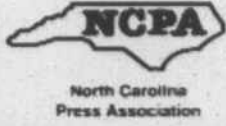


OPINION/ FORUM

THE CHRONICLE 35 years

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It Always Leads Back to Race



Peter Bailey
Guest Columnist

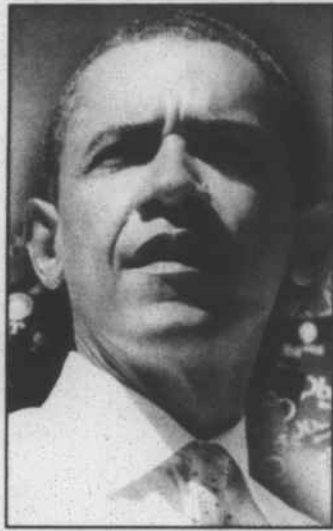
(NNPA) - In the end in the United States, as evidenced by the furor over passing of the Health Reform Bill, it always leads back to race. Those American Tea Party protesters who screamed racial epithets at Black members of Congress and who waved signs whining that "Obama Plans White Slavery," once again illustrated that those who exult over a "post-racial" America are, to put it mildly, living in some kind of fantasy land.

As columnist Courtland Milloy noted, "The tea party people didn't refer to White Democrats using racial epithets. No one yelled 'white trash' or 'redneck cracker' at any of those congressmen."

The race angle around the feverish and vitriolic opposition to the Health Reform Bill is also reflected in a statement attributed to former Republican Speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich. The Democrats, who voted for the bill, declared Gingrich, "will have destroyed their party, such as Lyndon Johnson did, for 40 years." What Johnson did was sign civil rights legislation that eliminated legal white supremacy in the South, a signing that inspired most white supremacists and racists to switch over to the Republican Party, where they and their ideological descendants remain today. It really is somewhat refreshing to see a Republican leader finally acknowledge this publicly.

The long-time political strategy of stirring up Whites by insisting that government programs such as health reform are mainly designed to help Black folks is also flagrantly reflected in a statement attributed to the publication, Investor's Business Daily said that the bill "is affirmative action on steroids, deciding everything from who becomes a doctor to who gets treatment on the basis of skin color."

It is important to note that those statements were not made by the "Bubbas" in the country but from supposedly "responsible" sources. That such a tactic has often been politically successful is confirmed in a very revealing observation by columnist



Harold Meyerson, who noted that... most of the House Democrats who voted no come from heavily White working-class districts that have viewed Democratic reforms since the 60's as programs designed to help 'other people' - Blacks in particular.... The people in those districts, despite concrete evidence that the chief beneficiaries of practically every government program, including affirmative action, are Whites, eagerly believe the lies.

Black parents, educators, journalists, preachers and professionals have the responsibility of informing our people that when politicians and talk show propagandists bellow consistently about what the American people want, what the American people will not stand for, what the American people must do to take back their country, are referring to the people who look like themselves.

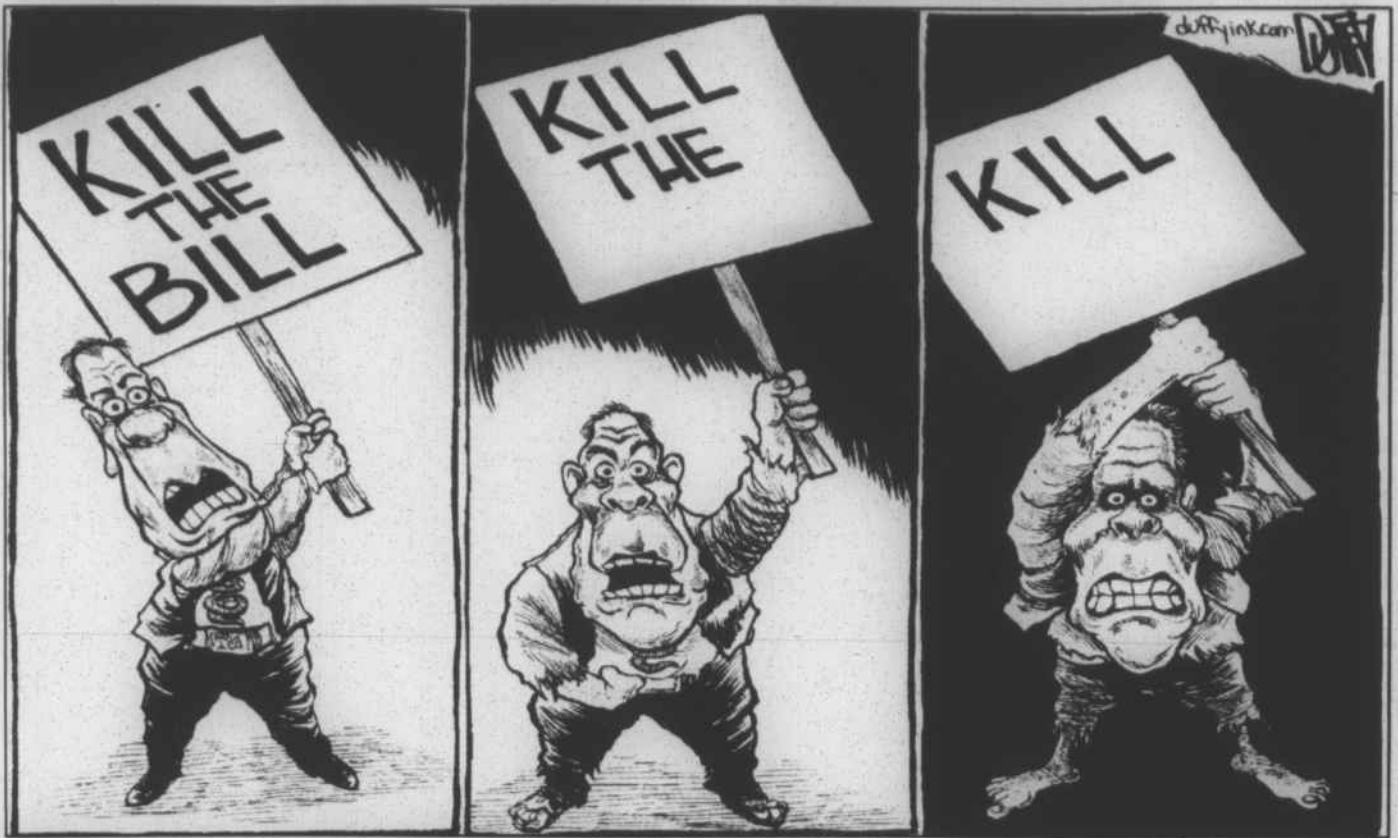
Their definition of "American people" doesn't even include eternally grateful people such as Clarence Thomas, Michael Steele, Star Parker, Walter Williams, Jesse Lee Peterson, Thomas Sowell, Stanley Crouch, Shelby Steele and their cohorts. We are obliged to communicate, by any means available, to Black folks the real deal about the opposition to programs such as health care reform.

Otherwise, we will share the blame if Black folks are unprepared when the attacks become physical as well as verbal.

Journalist/Lecturer A. Peter Bailey, a former associate editor of Ebony, is currently editor of Vital Issues: The Journal of African American Speeches. He can be reached at apeterb@verizon.net.

Clarification

A story in the Community section of the March 25 edition referred to Prince Ibrahim Elementary School as being renovated and revamped. The school is a "replacement school," according to the school system. The term is used to describe schools that were totally or nearly demolished and then rebuilt at the same site.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bail out education

To the Editor:

It seems odd to me that some people separate the Federal Government as if it were some foreign body controlling our destiny. In fact, it is very much a part of us as a country, this I learned in school. All states send representatives and money to keep this entity going. I remember as a child in Davie County going to the polls with my father, where he voted for representatives who in turn would vote to enable the children to attend school together. Let me reiterate the word together. You see, my father believed in education and children learning and it finally took place in 1954, when the Supreme Court outlawed the "separate but equal" doctrine for children in school.

There has been much turmoil since that has happened leaving in our wake a high

reflection of too much money and litigation, and too little learning for our children. The Supreme Court is our court, like it or not, and if the laws are not serving the constituents as they should then they simply must be changed by the people!

After studying the present law No Child Left Behind for a year, I know that there is much needed reform so that children can flourish in their learning of mathematics and reading. According to some very disturbing statistics, it is concluded that most of our children cannot read or figure numbers correctly. The teaching/learning process has been for the most part relegated to a second class or non-existent status while the children and the country as a whole suffer.

Here's a thought for the day: If the Federal government can bail out the banks and corporations with billions of dollars in order to keep the country afloat, then wise judgment

and money should be used to help our children become educated because a democracy depends on an educated electorate. Who knows? Maybe the problem is that some of us can't decide the difference between fiction and fact.

Virginia K. Newell

Thanks supporters

Editor's Note: The following letter was submitted by Gertrude Carter, the grandmother of Keith Carter, who was convicted of second-degree murder last month in the shooting death of Winston-Salem Police Sergeant Howard Plouff. Gertrude Carter says that her grandson penned this letter to his family, friends and supporters as he sat in a courtroom on March 12 to await sentencing.

Carter was sentenced to between 196 to 245 months in prison for the crime, which

took place at a nightclub in 2007.

Carter, his family and supporters continue to declare he is innocent of the crime, but a jury, after about a week of evidence, believed otherwise.

Gertrude Carter asked The Chronicle to publish her grandson's note and after much consideration, the paper has agreed.

Mom, grandma, family, friends:

I love you all. Thank you for the support. I want everyone to stay strong and know that God is in control of everything. We are still at war and the unjust won't prosper. I don't know why I have to go through this but I know it's a blessing somewhere. I will be home before you know it. Much love. I will write or call once I get to where I'm going.

Love,
Keith A. Carter

Bullying Is Killing Our Children



Sirdeaner Walker
Guest Columnist

(NNPA) - One year ago, I was an ordinary working mom, looking after my family and doing the best I could as a parent. But on April 6, 2009, my life changed forever.

While I was cooking dinner for my four children, my son, Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover, excused himself and went to his room. When I checked on him, I imagined he would be doing his homework or playing video games. Instead, he was hanging from an extension cord tied around his neck. He was only 11 years old.

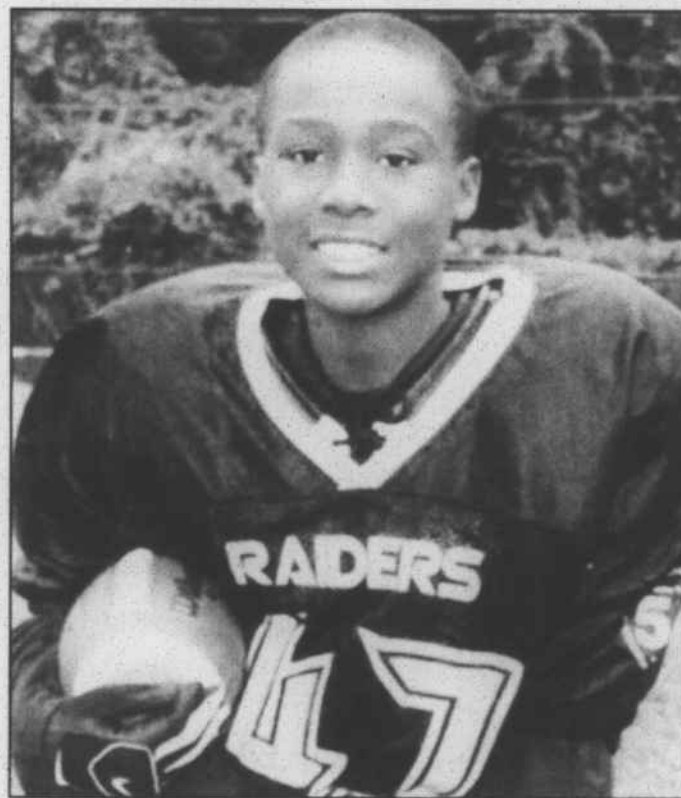
Carl liked football and basketball and playing video games with his little brother. He loved the Lord and he loved his family. What could drive a child to take his own life?

That question haunts me to this day. I will probably never know the answer, but what we do know is that Carl was being bullied relentlessly at school. He didn't want to tell me what was bothering him, but I kept at him, and he finally told me that kids at school were pushing him around, calling him names, saying he acted "gay," and calling him "faggot."

While my heart instantly broke for him, I was furious that he was being subjected to this treatment. Immediately, I called the school and I expected they would be just as upset as I was. But instead, they told me that it was just ordinary social interaction that would work itself out.

I desperately wish they had been right.

I did everything that a parent is supposed to do: I chose a "good" school; I joined the



Carl Joseph Walker-Hoover took his own life.

PTO; I went to every parent-teacher conference; I called the school regularly and brought the bullying problem to the staff's attention. And the school did not act. The teachers did not know how to respond.

Carl's death devastated me. So I can't tell you what it meant to me when, only days after Carl died, I received a FedEx envelope that contained a letter from Dr. Eliza Byard, executive director of the Gay Lesbian Student Education Network (GLSEN), an organization that advocates for safer schools for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) and straight students. It was the first letter I'd received about Carl's death. And it was such a comfort to hear that I was not alone.

But I have to admit, I was a little nervous because my son Carl didn't identify as gay or straight, he never talked about it. Despite the protests of some

of my dearest friends and family members, I trusted my intuition and let GLSEN help me.

Because of GLSEN, I have had the opportunity to share my story and raise awareness about bullying in our schools. After seeing how other children, like my Carl, live in fear every day, it's important to understand that teasing is not mere child's play, especially for children who are LGBT or perceived to be LGBT.

According to a 2007 GLSEN survey, 91 percent of students surveyed said they experienced harassment at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation. 59 percent experienced physical harassment, and 39 percent said they had been physically assaulted. That same study found that 63 percent of LGBT middle school students had heard school staff make homophobic remarks. How can innocent children thrive academically and emotionally in an atmosphere like that? They

can't. Bullying is not a gay issue or a Black issue. It's a safety issue, and it does not have to be an inevitable part of growing up. Bullying can be prevented. And there isn't a moment to lose.

Educators need additional support and clear guidance about how to ensure that all kids feel safe in school. That is why I have chosen to advocate for the Safe Schools Improvement Act—federal legislation that would make effective anti-bullying policies mandatory in nearly every school in the United States.

And when I say effective, I mean incorporating policies that are proven to reduce victimization and create a greater sense of safety and belonging for all students. These anti-bullying policies would address race and ethnicity, gender, religious affiliations, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, ability, and any other distinguishing characteristics. Currently, only twelve states and the District of Columbia have enumerated safe schools laws that include protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity. As a woman of deep faith, I know that the only way to ensure that all children are safe is by passing comprehensive federal legislation.

Carl was denied a lifetime of opportunities when his school failed to act. I am committed to making sure that no other young person has to endure what my son went through, and that no other family suffers as mine has. As we approach the one-year anniversary of my son's death, please honor his life by talking to your state's legislators and asking them to pass the Safe Schools Improvement Act.

Sirdeaner Walker resides in Springfield, Mass. To learn more about the effects of school bullying and how to make your child's school a safer place, go to glsen.org.