

Burr

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Act, among other issues. A press conference will also be held.

"We really want to raise our concerns with our elected officials that we need to take a fair and moral stance when it comes to any reform of public health care," Rev. Carlisle said. "Don't be irresponsible, definitely don't try to repeal without replacing, and when we're looking at replacing, it's important that we also look at bills that will continue to benefit the poor in our community that will also allow for affordable care, and also care that does not discriminate against those that have pre-existing conditions."

Saying that "It's always important that the people's voices are heard," Rev. Carlisle agreed that now that Sen. Burr was just re-elected last November, and has

said that this is his last six-year term in Congress, he may not be vulnerable to public pressure as would someone running for re-election in 2018. But that shouldn't matter, Carlisle said.

"I think it's important for us, not only for him but for all of our elected officials to continue to hear the voice of the people, and, of course, to make clear that they serve at the will of the people," Rev. Carlisle said.

Of course, it would be hard to protest at



Rev. Carlisle

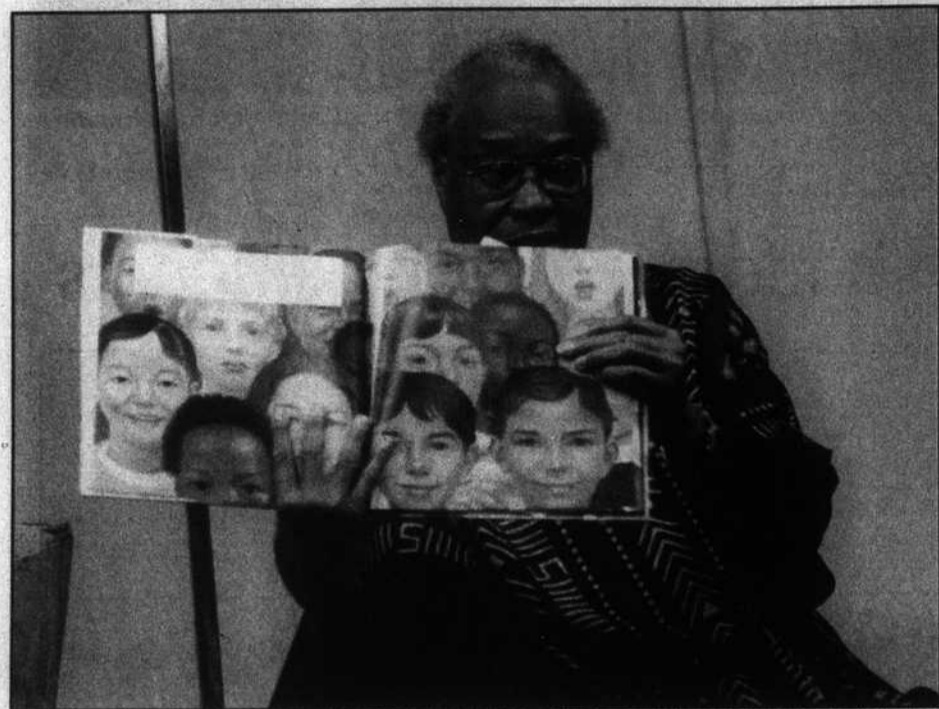
Sen. Burr's office Monday without citing clear concerns about where the month-old Trump Administration is headed, and how many are fearful that the gains of the Obama Administration will all but certainly be erased.

"There are reasons for concern that we've already seen after only one month in," Carlisle said. "There are major concerns about some of the things we're seeing from the Trump Administration. Even when it comes down to executive orders, we still believe that there is a system of checks and balances in our country that needs to be enforced, and we don't feel that our elected officials should sit back and allow '45' [Trump] to do whatever he wants."

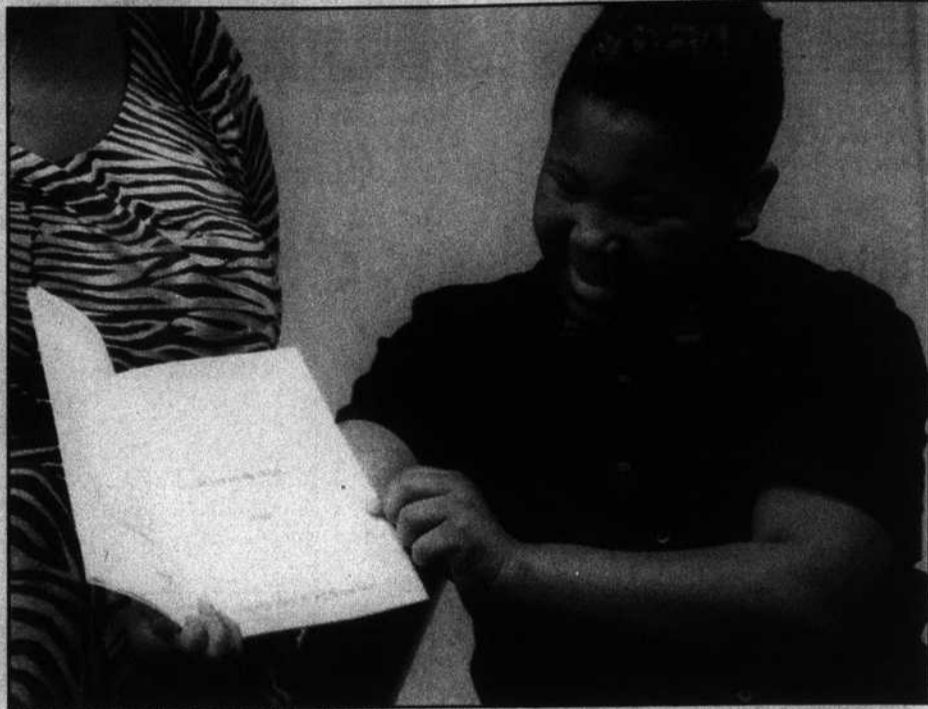
The local NAACP chapter will be only one of several groups from across the country to target Republican lawmakers with concerns about issues ranging from

repealing Obamacare to supporting a ban on Muslims entering the country. GOP congresspeople have been targeted at raucous town hall meetings by their own supporters in many cases.

Earlier this week, the North Carolina chapter of the national group "Together We Will" took out a quarter-page "lost and found" ad in the Sunday News and Observer. The ad said, "LOST- United States Senator. He may respond to the title 'Senator Richard Burr', though his constituents have been unable to verify whether this is still the case, as they have been unable to contact him in recent weeks. ... If found, please return Senator Burr to his constituents by way of a Town Hall meeting or other suitable gathering in which the Senator demonstrates his accountability to his constituents by listening to and honestly addressing their concerns."



Amatullah Saleem reads to children from the Bethlehem Community Child Development Center earlier this week during the annual African-American Read-In Celebration held at the Malloy/Jordan East Winston Library.



Photos by Tevin Stinson

Maurice Graham Jr. reads "The Clouds and Their Faces," which was written and illustrated by his grandmother Kim Bell, during the African-American Read-In Celebration earlier this week.

Read-in

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To wrap up the event Dr. Elwanda Ingram, who recently retired from the English department at Winston-Salem State University, recited her own rendition of "In the Morning" by Paul Laurence Dunbar. During a brief talk with The Chronicle, Dr. Ingram said although she is enjoying her retirement, she felt it was her duty to participate in the read-in event.

"They need to be exposed to African-American literature in all genres. They need to be exposed to the value of reading," she said. "I think if children are exposed to reading at an early age, they will build a thirst for reading that will help them succeed in life."



Retired elementary school teacher Anne Jenkins reads a book to children during the local African American Read-In Celebration on Monday, Feb. 20.

Trump

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the first of many productive meetings in Washington."

The convenor of the two-day conference in Washington, DC next week is Republican Rep. Mark Walker (R-NC-6), a white conservative congressman who wants to see the "full repeal" of the Affordable Care Act; strongly supports North Carolina's controversial HB 2 "bathroom law," and when once asked if starting a war with Mexico was appropriate in order to secure the border, joked that it was, though he seriously added that the National Guard should be used.

And yet, despite his ultra-conservative rhetoric, Rep. Walker, chair of the House Republican Study Committee, apparently has a soft spot for HBCUs.

His wife, Kelly, graduated from Winston-Salem State University with a degree in nursing; summer interns from local HBCUs work in the congressional offices of Walker and NC 12th District colleague Rep. Alma Adams; NC A&T University in Greensboro is in his district; and he is a member of the Congressional HBCU Caucus.

Walker has invited House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Ws), South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, Sen. Marco Rubio and other influential Republican leaders to take part in the conference Tuesday to meet with HBCU leaders, and, according to a spokesman, understand the history of HBCUs and their unique role in higher education, and why the Republican-controlled federal government should continue to support their future.

The event is supported by the Thurgood Marshall College Fund, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit group that helps needy students attend the HBCU of their choice. Its president, Johnny Taylor, says HBCUs have no choice but to work with whomever runs Congress, and whomever

is in the White House.

To that end, it is also expected that the Trump Administration will issue a new executive order next week, moving the HBCU Initiative from under the US

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Dept. of Education, to direct supervision of the White House. There have been unconfirmed reports about what else the Trump executive order contains, but at least one N.C. college president is optimistic.

"UNCF and The Thurgood Marshall College Fund have pushed for the White House Initiative on HBCUs to be removed from the Department of Education and placed directly under The White House, led by an executive director; therefore, we are happy to hear this is being strongly considered," Bennett Interim Pres. Phyllis Dawkins said. "This move, should it occur, will provide direct access to a senior adviser who reports to the President, thereby identifying policy priorities that are important to HBCUs."

HBCUs reportedly comprise only 3 percent of all col-

leges and universities in the country, yet are responsible for 27 percent of African-Americans with bachelor's degrees in science, technology, engineering and math, according to the U.S. Dept. of Education.

While there is naturally some caution, hopes are high that a positive bond can be forged with President Trump. There are still hard feelings from eight years of the Obama Administration that, while HBCUs ultimately saw more funding, also saw Pell Grants cut for black students, and parental qualifications for the PLUS Loan program for college students changed, ultimately disqualifying many parents on the credit bubble, and resulting in many black college students being forced to drop out of school.

HBCU enrollments dramatically dropped, and many schools are still recovering, officials say.

Dr. Ontario S. Wooden, associate vice chancellor for Innovative, Engaged and Global Education at North Carolina Central University in Durham, whose interim chancellor is not attending next week's meeting, hopes the baggage from the Obama Administration can now be fixed.

"We should be making the same [demands] of the Trump Administration that we did of the Obama Administration - restoring Pell Grants so students have the opportunity to use them in summer school; looking at the creditworthiness of parents in the PLUS Loan program; and doing something about the relatively high interest rates on those loans," Dr. Wooden said.

Harold Martin, chancellor of NC A&T University, told this paper last month that HBCUs have to forge a strong relationship with the Trump Administration if they are to survive.

"It is vital that North Carolina A&T State University maintains a healthy relationship with the executive branch," Martin, named the nation's most influential leader of an HBCU by HBCU Digest, said.

Merger

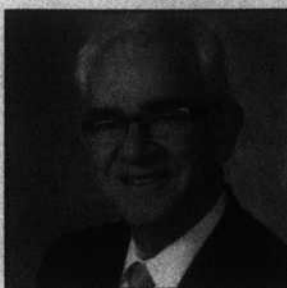
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tion. One is keeping the departments as they are, but eliminating both boards and placing the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners as their governing body. Another option is having a consolidated human services director over both departments, who is appointed by the county manager with the advice and consent of a new consolidated board for both departments. A final option has the county manager hiring a consolidated human services director with the advice and consent of county commissioners, who would act as the board for human services. The last two options would mean that the State Human

Resources Act would be optional for human services staff and put them under the same policies as other county employees.

Assistant County Manager Ronda Tatum told commissioners that most clients of consolidate human services don't notice a change in service. Staff did find some potential efficiencies in consolidation, including cross training between departments and combining back office functions like purchasing, finance and other administrative functions.

When asked by commissioners, Tatum said some counties have had issues with consolidating and have switched between the different types of consolidation. She said Guilford did its consolida-



Martin



Marshall

tion too fast. That county's human services director left in 2015 and still hasn't been replaced. She said Guilford's human services are still "all over the place" and not truly consolidated yet.

County Commissioner Walter Marshall said that commissioners lack the time to provide effective oversight of human services.

"As part time elected

officials, you don't have time to deal with all those issues that I think boards can deal with better," said Marshall, who is on the Department of Social Services Board.

He also said that politics get mixed into things when commissioners run human services directly, which he said was the reason for consolidation problems in places like Guilford and Mecklenburg.

County Commissioner Don Martin felt they could just refer issues that come up to staff at the departments.

"Theoretically, the administrative staff in all agencies should be handling the problems," said Martin.

Martin said he's interested in consolidation because of the possibility that the employees in both departments could be under the county's person-

nel policies and not the state's, which includes an extended state appeals process on things like termination.

Ultimately, the commissioners decided to take the staff recommendation to engage the consulting services of Cansler Collaborative Resources to determine if consolidation would be best for the county and how it could work if it was feasible.

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, N.C. 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