

Editorials & Comments

Why Blacks Should Vote

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Post Executive Editor

A young white candidate for public office told the POST last week that he was advised by a high ranking white elected official not to spend much time campaigning in black communities. Reportedly, the reason for this advice was that blacks have a relatively low registration record and an even lower voter turnout on election day, therefore, few votes would be received by the candidate from blacks.

This is an illustration of the rather low degree of respect that some elected officials and other political leaders - both black and white - have for the black electorate. Such a low level of respect was also illustrated by recent allegations of "bagmen" entering black communities in an effort to buy black votes.

Furthermore, during the Caucus of Black Democrats Charlotte conference in April, it was suggested by a few leaders that blacks on a national scale simply not vote in this election year because the Democratic Party's candidates had ignored the needs and concerns of blacks. Implied here too is a lack of respect for the black electorate by assuming that they cannot act wisely in the "vote-for-the-lesser-of-two-evils" game.

Illustrated Facts

These illustrated facts indicate that an element of the political leadership - local and national, black and white - has little respect for black voters because far too many blacks don't register, don't vote and don't get involved in the political process. In a word, black political apathy is undermining potential black political power and influence and both leaderships are fully aware of this.

The facts are that in the presidential election of 1972 only 52.1 percent (7,032,000) of all voting-aged blacks voted nation-wide as compared to 64.5 percent of whites who voted, and in the off-presidential year elections of 1974 only 34 percent of 7,778,000 registered blacks took time to vote.

Furthermore, recent Bureau of Labor Statistics projections indicate that in 1976 only 55 percent of all eligible blacks will register and, hopefully, vote. In addition, BLS estimates that 80 percent of those registered or 6.6 million blacks will cast ballots for the President. If these estimates are accurate, only 44 percent of the 15 million voting-aged blacks will vote in this presidential election year.

In Mecklenburg County the story is much the same since the 27,585 blacks registered to vote represents approximately half of those eligible to vote, and probably not more than 22,000 will actually vote.

We could mention some quite valid reasons as to why blacks do not vote in greater numbers. However, it

appears to us that the POST might serve a more useful purpose if it states some of the reasons why blacks should vote.

First of all, the POST believes blacks should vote as a part of our democratic right to demand a voice in government and, in so doing, get some response to our concerns.

Having Some Voice

Secondly, Blacks should vote as a means of having some voice in how the tax dollars are spent - dollars that are too often used to benefit the rich at the expense of the poor and moderate income families of our nation and community.

Thirdly, the true power of the vote is to diminish the opportunity for elected officials to engage in corrupt practices and to prohibit the support of policies and legislation that are not in the best interest of minorities.

Fourthly, it is only from a viable voting black electorate that we can recruit competent black candidates for public office. Often the mere presence of blacks in the legislative halls of the nation can make the difference in how our welfare is affected.

A fifth reason as to why blacks should vote is that we can often be the deciding factor in electing or denying a seat to candidates seeking public office. For example, a recent CBS-New York Times survey pointed out that the white vote in a Ford-Carter race for the presidency will probably be so evenly divided that the black vote could definitely be the voting block to decide who the next president will be.

Political Participation

Lastly, by active political participation blacks will have greater assurance "That the American Dream," as Congresswoman Barbara Jordan has said, "need not be deferred."

It has only been through more sophisticated voting and other dedicated efforts in the political process that we have Andrew Young, Harvey Gantt, Fred D. Alexander, Rowe Motley, Phil Berry, Mayor John Belk, Jimmy Carter, Walter Mondale, Howard Lee, and Edward Kennedy, office holders and candidates who are concerned with our needs and share our concerns.

Do your part, register, vote and give some free time to support the candidates of your choice, their ideas and, therefore, your needs. If you support the system, the system will work for you.



DOWN TO BUSINESS

After 200 Years - Moving Toward Parity

Dr. Berkeley G. Burrell
National Business League

What should be the mood, thrust and spirit of Black Americans in the year 1976?

Almost without exception, every segment of this nation is completely involved in America's big birthday party. In everything, the movies, theater, radio, television, news media, organizations, local, state, and federal governments, citizen groups and very definitely, American business, all activities have been geared toward celebrating the Bicentennial. It all boils down to doing what is in their best interest as they say "happy birthday America." Therefore, in this Bicentennial celebration of independence and freedom, Black people must also base their observance of the occasion upon everything that is in their best interest. As a disadvantaged minority group in this "Land of the Free", we cannot afford to miss the opportunity to further our cause for the elimination of disparities of every kind between white and Black America.

Yes, we should look back in honor and pay tribute to the great and outstanding Black Americans who played significant roles and contributed heavily in the struggle for freedom in the development of this nation. This includes every aspect of development in areas such as education, religion, industry, inventions, military, government, politics

and indeed, business and economics.

It is our obligation and duty to recognize our ancestors and contemporaries who helped to build this nation, because the majority of America has conveniently ignored our contributions.

But for us to simply look back over these achievements will only render us empty pride in the year 2000 and beyond. Black Americans must see this Bicentennial celebration as a stage to begin a new level of struggle and to develop a new spirit of '76 that will carry Black people and the whole nation into the next century without the burdens of the disparities of past centuries.

In 1976, it is necessary to move beyond our "gains" in social and civil rights. It is imperative that we develop strategies and identify and coalesce our resources for launching a sustained struggle toward achieving economic parity for Black Americans.

Our celebration should be based on the goal of achieving economic parity by the year 2000. This is the goal that has been adopted by the National Business League. We felt that it is timely, appropriate and in the best interest of Black people to utilize the NBL 76th Annual Convention as a launching pad. Our celebration will be one of analyzing the crippling disparities and developing plans for achieving the goal of economic parity for all people in America.



DR. BERKELEY G. BURRELL

This cannot and must not be a goal of just the National Business League. The tasks demand the total involvement and cooperation of every individual and organization and of business and government. It is a job too big and too important for the future of the nation to be left to a single individual or group.

For the first time in history, organizations and individuals of every walk of life and expertise have joined together to develop the appropriate format for addressing the subject of parity for the people.

As America moves towards its third century, a legacy of deprivation, discrimination and disparity hampers the economic growth of 37 million Black and other minorities.

What we want to see in this Bicentennial year is the entire nation get down to business and work toward economic parity in a society where freedom and equality are the cornerstones.

TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

Towards A New Bill Of Rights

Most of the freedoms we enjoy can be traced to the first ten amendments of the Constitution -- the Bill of Rights.

The hallowed rights to free speech, freedom of religion, press and assembly, protection against unwarranted police powers, rights of accused persons, the right to a jury trial, and other cornerstones of our freedom are to be found there.

It is not to disparage those rights, which are still rare in other parts of the world, to suggest that the time has come for extending other rights to all Americans, rights that are as important and as vital to the continuation of democracy.

It's time to start thinking about a new bill of rights that deals with the economic rights of man and with the human rights to the basic components of life.

Some of those rights would be:

- The right to jobs. Every person able to work ought to have the right to a decent job at a decent wage if he wants one. We learned in the civil rights movement that the right to check into a hotel is worthless without the right to earn enough money to check out of the hotel.

- The right to economic security, which could take the form of a fair and just income maintenance system to enable those in need to live in dignity.

- The right to education and training all young people should have to prepare them for productive lives.

- The right to health, a right that could be accomplished through a national health policy that assures each citizen access to quality health facilities regardless of an individual's ability to pay, race, or geographic location.

Other rights we ought to be dealing with are the rights of cities to survive, the rights of families to be kept together and not broken apart by social and economic pressures, the right to decent housing for all, the right to enjoy safe communities free from fear, and the right to representation and full participation in the political process.

As our nation has evolved, it has become clear that many of the things people think of as essential have been denied to most others. Even now there's no uproar about ten million people jobless.

We've been conditioned to think of rights as being something abstract, and not part of daily life. The right to free press is not something most of us think about often, and except for buying a paper or turning on the tube it has no real conscious impact on us.

We'll agree that everyone who wants to work should have access to a job, but from there it takes something of a giant leap to consider that people have the right to employment. Work, health, housing, and other key aspects of life aren't abstract luxuries. They're real and without them other rights become marginal.

Back in 1776 when the colonists talked about establishing freedom and pressed for free speech and our other freedoms, they seemed to many to be very far out.

as i see it

Trouble With Public Schools

By Gerald O. Johnson
Post Staff Writer

No doubt you've read about the high school graduate who lost his job because of his inability to read and write beyond the fifth grade level.

There are many like him being graduated each year. Parents of the student are threatening to sue the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school system (CMSS). I think the parents should sue.

It is ridiculous for a student to go to school 12 years and come out dumb.

But I think the CMSS should counter sue. It is equally ridiculous for a parent to only realize how stupid her child is after he has graduated.

Thus we can see the problem: the school system and the home.

Let's start with how a student in one grade can be stupid and end up in the next grade the following year. There are numerous reasons for this.

First the school system is responsible for hiring teachers that are disinterested in teaching. They (teachers) could care less about the success or failure of a student. Moreover, the school sys-

tem is responsible for drawing up elaborate programs on paper, but not carrying out the program with qualified teachers, modern facilities, and the like. An example of this would be the open school concept. Most teachers in this program are not adequately trained to operate such a program.

Furthermore, too much emphasis is placed on methods of teaching and not enough emphasis is placed on subject matter when one is learning to be a teacher. Consequently, teachers learn how to teach but not what to teach.

Of course there is the problem of discipline. Some teachers have to waste an entire year trying to discipline kids and they never get the opportunity to teach them anything.

This is where home is at fault. If a parent does not take interest in his child's education, then the parent has no argument about his child not receiving an education.

Parental indifference leads to apathy in schools. Parents who do not make kids do homework are practically telling the kid that education is worthless. Thus the child will take an indifferent attitude about education.



Parents who do not attend PTA meetings are not only breeding apathy in children but also in teachers. It shows that a parent is accepting whatever goes on in a classroom; good, bad, or indifferent.

There is also the problem of parents being too involved with their child passing but not involved with their child learning. This type parent puts pressure on a teacher who is apt not to stand his ground.

Many cases show that parents think of a school as a

baby sitting center. They send their kids to school to get them out of their hair for awhile.

All of this and more leads to the problem of "Social Promotion."

A factor that must be considered is that we force everyone between the ages of 6 and 16 to attend school. This concept is good in principle but poor in reality. The majority of problems that occur in the school system can be attributed to students who do not care to be educated.

Therefore, I think if we really want quality education we must not force people to go to school. We should use a voluntary means of enrolling students in school.

No age limit should be required. If you think about it an age limit is stupid anyway. Since people mature at different rates, are exposed to different environments, and have different ideologies, it stands to reason that all six year olds are not ready for the first grade at the same time.

Once a student has been enrolled in school on a voluntary basis then he is more apt to try to learn something. This will cause less disciplinary problems in the system.

It has been my experience that each student has his own learning point. That is, an age when he is susceptible to learning. For some people this age is six. For others this age is thirty six. I don't think anyone can force this learning point.

Once we realize that schools aren't the place to try to keep students off the streets, then we can start dealing with quality education.

Our education system does not offer many options. They offer numerous teaching methods but few options.

What I would like to see happen is a program that would spend time on finding out a student's interest. Once an interest has been established, build your teaching me-

thods around that. For instance, a student interested in sports can learn basic math skills if those skills are related

to sports. We all know that sports and numbers go hand in hand. There are many other things that could be done to make schools play a vital role in our society.

In conclusion the problems can be summarized as follows: 1) Trying to fit people in with programs rather than building programs around people; 2) Teacher and parent apathy about education; 3) Unskilled teachers in the system; 4) Viewing education as a mass production business.

All of these factors have contributed in making education in our society a liability instead of an asset.

Something On Your Mind?

Something on your mind is the name of a column devoted to our readers of this newspaper-as long as it relates in some way to young people, regardless of age.

It will be written by you and about whatever is on your mind!

So, if you have something to say... WRITE ON! Some subjects that may be of special interest to you are: Drugs, Generation Gaps, Welfare, Gangs, School, Going Steady, Police Revolution, Whites, Blacks, Integration, Busing, Draft, God, Negro churches, etc.

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