

Editorials & Comments

Foley, Walton Win Hollow Victory

By Hoyle H. Martin Sr.
Post Executive Editor

The statement that "politics makes strange bedfellows" was quite evident in the ouster of Liz Hair as Chairperson of the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners on Monday.

While it is customary and traditional for the highest vote-getter to be elected chairperson of the Commission, there have been a number of exceptions to this practice. In fact, Mrs. Hair did herself, in 1974, support the election of W.T. Harris as chairman while she was the leading vote-getter. Why then, it might be asked in Commissioner Bob Walton's own words, are "editorial writers and reporters...busy," just as we are, commenting on this latest change in the county governments chairmanship?

We are commenting because of our concerns about a reportedly sex biased statement by Commissioner Walton to the effect that Mrs. Hair "is a strong woman, but she's still a woman;" conflicting statements by Foley and Walton about a deal to get for themselves the chairmanship and vice chairmanship of the Commission; and Walton's alleged charge that Mrs. Hair constantly usurped the role of the Commission and in effect he and Foley left it to Booe to offer the justifiable criticisms.

As if this isn't enough, we're concerned, too, about how a supposedly intelligent group of commissioners has let Booe become such

a disruptive force that he's consistently undermined Liz Hair's leadership to the point of causing her ouster from the chairmanship, and drawing Bob Walton into some idiotic debates that have no relevance to the Commission's responsibilities. And with all this, Booe has the gall to boast that "there isn't a gavel big enough" to prevent him from speaking and expressing his views on any issue.

While we don't think Mrs. Hair is completely blameless for these developments, we do believe she has been a capable and committed public servant who deserved to have been treated with the dignity and honor she has earned.

We believe, too, that Peter Foley is capable but will face a greater challenge than did Liz Hair because his chairmanship is due in part to the same disruptive force - Bill Booe - that led to Mrs. Hair's difficulties and ouster. As for Bob Walton, he and Booe will continue their usual rounds of irrelevant dialogue while the needs of the county go unmet.

Finally, we deeply regret the emergence of a new chairman that has undoubtedly served to only further divide the Board, which can only lead to diminished service for the citizenry.

Let us hope therefore, that a new sense of maturity and togetherness will emerge as we move to the future. For the Commission to do less would be to unjustly deny good government to the residents of Mecklenburg County.



"I'M MORE ENCOURAGED TODAY THAN I HAVE BEEN IN A LONG TIME. DR. HAMILTON SAID HIS ENCOURAGEMENT DID NOT COME FROM THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF WHITE PEOPLE, BUT FROM THE DETERMINATION OF BLACK PEOPLE TO DO FOR THEMSELVES."

DR. CHARLES V. HAMILTON

TEAMWORK
SELF-HELP and
SELF-DETERMINATION

Black's Destiny In Own Hands....

Congressional Black Caucus
Reports to the People

Welfare Needs Reforming

By Rep. Harold Ford
Special To The Post

Almost everyone agrees the present welfare system is in need of reform. Benefits to the needy are inadequate, inequitable and in many cases non-existent. The Federal government spends over \$17 billion on three welfare assistance programs: Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), \$6.4 billion; Supplemental Security Income (SSI), \$5.7 billion; and Food Stamps \$5.0 billion.

These programs benefit 30 million people, although 40 million are eligible for assistance from one of the programs. The present welfare system must be reformed to eliminate the disincentives to work, but even more importantly to maintain the integrity of the family.

On September 12, President Carter's welfare reform proposal was introduced in Congress as H.R. 9030 and S.2084. The Welfare Reform Subcommittee is holding hearings on the bill and we hope the expert witnesses will provide some answers to some very difficult questions concerning the proposal. However, because of the complexities of the issues in question, it is imperative that the general public provides input into the legislative process.

To deal with the bureaucratic tangle and make welfare more responsive to the needs of the poor, President Carter has proposed a consolidated program. This would eliminate the need for over 40 different programs and the requirement for recipients to enroll in more than one. The proposed plan will merge

AFDC, SSI, and Food Stamps into a single cash assistance program.

A two-tiered benefit structure will be established; those in the upper tier will not be expected to work and will be comprised of the blind, aged, single parent families (with children under 7, or between 7 and 13, if day care is not available), and two-parent families with young children provided one parent is incapacitated.

Those in the lower tier will be expected to work and will be comprised of two-parent families with children, one-parent families with children older than 14, single persons, and childless families.

The job program is expected to end or lessen the chronic welfare cycle and place workers in the mainstream of the economy. The proposal calls for over 1.4 million jobs to be created and annual employment for two million people. To encourage workers to seek jobs in the private sector, a total minimum income of 20 percent above the 1981 poverty line will be guaranteed.

If a job in the private market cannot be found, a federally subsidized job will be provided with a total minimum income of 13 percent above the poverty line. As a general rule under this program, a person who can and does work would always be better off than a person who chooses not to work.

While I believe the President's program is a step in the right direction, I am still studying the proposal. I participated in a public hearing in West Memphis, Arkansas, November 17 to discuss the bill and its many problems which

must be brought to the attention of the Welfare Reform Subcommittee during the Congressional hearings.

A number of other public hearings have been slated throughout the country by the Subcommittee.

As the Subcommittee comes to you - the public - to conduct hearings the next two months, I strongly recommend that many Americans who are, directly or indirectly affected to testify and point out additional problems and solutions that will improve the pending proposals.

Statement Issued

By Rev. Chavis

On behalf of all of the members of the Wilmington Ten, I am issuing this public statement in support of the Charlotte to Raleigh "Wilmington Ten Freedom March" led by the Rev. James Barnett and Concerned Ministers, December 10-17, 1977.

I am hopeful that with citizen support and participation in the "March" Governor James Hunt will once again be made aware of the broad statewide interest, as well as the national and international, in calling for an immediate "pardon of innocence" and freedom for all of the Wilmington Ten.

The continued imprisonment of the Wilmington Ten glaringly stands out to the entire world as a mockery of justice and as an oppressive affront of human dignity and freedom.

I am praying that Governor Hunt will let the Wilmington Ten be home for Christmas. We shall overcome!

By Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

TO BE EQUAL



Vernon E. Jordan Jr.

Race And The Issues

William F. Buckley, Jr., is a resourceful, witty spokesman for the kind of conservative thinking that went out with the demise of Louis XIV, but he represents his views with such grace and charm that even the victims of his verbal muggings tend to forgive him.

At least I do. Last month I joined Buckley on his "Firing Line" television broadcast where he discussed, at great length and with considerable fuzziness, issues related to social changes needed by our society.

Or at least, we tried to. Such conversations with Mr. Buckley tend to get swallowed in a philosophical haze of opaque verbiage. And so there were digressions into the applicability of an Eighteenth Century sage's quaint ideas about who should vote, and other matters bearing tenuous relation to the reality of American life at the end of the Twentieth Century.

Pleasant as our talk was, Mr. Buckley followed it up with a syndicated newspaper article piquantly entitled, "Who Does Vernon Jordan Lead?" The article hewed closely to the point Mr. Buckley valiantly tried to make during our televised talk.

Stripped to its bare bones, his point seems to be that since the demands black leadership is making are related less to old fashioned civil rights issues and are for jobs, national health insurance and other apparently non-racial items, then they are not "black issues" at all. Rather, it furthers the interest of what he thinks is state omnipotence, socialization, and inflation.

That's heady stuff, as is his claim that, absent a Jim Crow society, "race politics should be discouraged" and that the issues black leaders advance are not of racial importance. Further, he suggests the black community is as divided as the white community in such matters.

From his vantage point in a sheltered ivory tower Mr. Buckley presumes to advance the notion that blacks should reject the positions taken by virtually all national and local black organizations and black elected representatives. And he remains possessed of the quaint notion that a people disproportionately unemployed, disproportionately ill-housed, disproportionately subjected to inferior health care, has no group stake in issues of employment, housing and health.

The black disadvantage in our society is due to racial discrimination and racial judgments. It is no accident of blind neutral market forces that black levels of income, education and other social indices are markedly lower than those of their white counterparts.

Mr. Buckley, and too many others, would have us believe that getting the right to sit on a bus should have ended, for once and for all, the struggle for civil rights. He would have us believe that blacks as a group have no legitimate interest - as blacks - in issues other than breaking the barriers of formal, legalized segregation.

Consider employment. Black jobless rates are double those for whites; among young people, they're even worse. The crippling effects of joblessness pervade the entire black community. Black representation in most professions is at about two percent.

The High Price Of Equality

As blacks continue the pursuit of fairness and equality they are constantly reminded that in addition to the years of rejection and denial of the past they must bear the burden of changing the system during the present and possibly the future.

Black Charlotteans were made painfully aware of this high price of equality last week when the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System revealed their latest pupil assignment plan that will reportedly affect only 5,250 (6.5 percent) of the system's nearly 80,000 students. Unfortunately, and in spite of the efforts of an apparently concerned pupil assignment planning staff, more black children than white will be bused greater distances if the plan is approved by the school board in January.

School officials told the school board last week that under current desegregation guidelines they have little choice but to bus blacks, primarily elementary schools, from concentrated black residential areas to schools with higher white percentages.

School superintendent Dr. Jay Robinson noted that one of the plan's major weaknesses is that black

children bear a disproportionate share of the busing burden. We must hastily add however that this is simply the continuation of an old problem because a 1973 pupil assignment study noted quite clearly that elementary school black children "are bearing the dominant burden of assignment change and time of transportation, both in hours and years."

This major inequity in pupil assignments, Dr. Robinson added, is due largely to the high concentration of housing for blacks - 93 percent of all blacks in Mecklenburg County live on only nine percent of the county's geographic land mass. This, of course, is the result of many years of residential segregation, yet as such housing patterns change and begin to ease the busing problem for black youth, another emerges.

The new problem relates to the fact that black neighborhoods can nearly guarantee black City Council representation. As such neighborhoods disappear, in part to accommodate the school problem, black political power losses may be the new high price or cost for one kind of equality.

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as i see it

All About F. I. C. A.

By Gerald O. Johnson
EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the final of a two part series on the F.I.C.A.

The Government can't control when people die, nor can they control how many people get hurt on the job. Since the individual life spans have increased drastically, the number of people eligible for retirement has increased. Lay-offs are indirectly controlled by the Government, but it, too, has many uncontrollable variables influencing it. Consequently, the pay outs from the Social Insurance Program have no ceilings, no limits. How then can a program be managed when the managers can not control the program.

On the other side of the coin the contributions have a limit. The amount of money coming into the program can never be more than the number of employed people in industry times the percentage of the tax times two. Thus the program is destined for failure.

The Government tries to cure the problem by increasing the tax percentage. But this is only a temporary cure at best. It can be seen from the above statistics that increasing the rate does not solve the

problem. This is why the Government has had to increase the rate so often.

Moreover, the tax increase aggravates the national economy. A business contribution to FICA is an amount equal to the total amount of the employees contribution. This means that if a business has 10 employees, each paying \$10.00 a week in FICA, then the business must pay \$100.00 as its contribution to FICA (10 x \$10.00). This \$100.00 is apart from the employees contribution. To increase FICA is a heavy burden for a business to pay. The increase has to be multiplied by the number of employees to get the total cost a business will have to pay.

Because of the increased cost of businesses the increased tax has the effect of driving up unemployment. But if it drives up unemployment, then you are adding more people to the list of beneficiaries of the Social Insurance Program. Moreover, you are forcing contributions to the program to become beneficiaries. Therefore the increase in the tax has been nullified.

Also, many businesses will pass the increased cost brought about by the increased tax



Gerald O. Johnson

directly to the consumer. Thus prices will rise and inflation will soar. Hence the increased tax will hit the employee (who is the consumer) directly with higher deductions from his pay and indirectly with higher prices for the products he consumes.

To increase the tax a detrimental move made by Congress.

The problem with the program is that it is under Government control. Instead of being an Insurance Program it is a welfare program. The money you pay into the pro-

gram now is used to keep the program functioning now and it does not guarantee you anything in the future. Moreover, there is no relationship between what you contribute and you receive from the program.

If it is supposed to be an Insurance Program then let it be an Insurance Program. Turn the administration of the program over to private insurance firms. Then let people decide what benefits they would like to participate in. Don't take my money and tell me what you are going to do with it. Develop the program around the people making the contributions.

Just ask yourself why is it this program is failing and private insurance firms are doing well. In closing I would like to say that even the people receiving benefits dislike the program. They complain that the amount of the benefit checks is insufficient. Congress will agree with this most of the time and increase the amount of the checks. But when you are talking about nearly 40,000 people receiving checks, even a minimal increase in the amount of the checks results in a substantial

amount of money.

The burden for paying this falls on the shoulders of the working people. The idea of Social Insurance is conceptually o.k. but the current program is inefficient, counterproductive, and expensive. I think it is unfair for the government to continuously tax us for programs that need revamping.

Gold Bowl Mania

The Gold Bowl turned out to be a spectacular affair. The football game was very good and the press was treated royally. The event, overall, was good.

It did have its major drawbacks, however. The major drawback was the location of the game. City Stadium in Richmond holds approximately 20,000 people with parking facilities for about 5,000 of the 20,000. The field is made out of cheap astro turf that was as hard as cement.

Once the game was over I saw 1 policeman trying to direct nearly 9,000 vehicles away from the stadium. It took nearly an hour to get away from the stadium. Moreover, the stadium traffic has to filter in with the city traffic

at one of the Boulevards. There was no policeman to direct traffic at this point. It took me and many others almost as long to get back to the hotel from the stadium as it did to watch the whole game.

Furthermore, Richmond is an oversized dead town. There is nothing to do once the main event is over.

I will agree that Richmond is probably the central location for MEAC, CIAA schools and will, also agree that hotel accommodations in Richmond are more than adequate. However, I for one would like to see the event moved to another location. Atlanta or Charlotte would be ideal locations. The first year the Gold Bowl was held it drew 6,000 fans. This year it drew over 14,000 fans. That's a 60 percent increase in 1 year. If this trend holds, then City Stadium in Richmond could not hold the expected turn out for next year's game.

The Gold Bowl has the potential of becoming a big drawing card for the two conferences and it will take proper planning now to make it a reality.