

# Editorials & Comments

## A New Blend For Quality

by Bill Johnson  
Editor-Publisher

Once again we are approaching the time when responsible concerned citizens should cast their votes for the candidates they think will give us greater quality in public service. Assuring this quality will require that we look to the past as one means of projecting what these candidates may do in the future, that is, how effective they will be as public servants of the people.

The Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners, caught-up in discord, chaos and personal hostilities over the past two years, is in need of some change in order to restore the quality needed for effective leadership and public service.

To fill four of the five seats on the Commission, we recommend incumbents ELIZABETH G. HAIR (D), ROBERT L. WALTON (D), and newcomers TOM RAY (D) and SAM SMITH (R).

Mrs. Hair has demonstrated effective and compassionate leadership during three terms on the Commission. She is a committed public servant, who, with her willingness to listen, a vast knowledge of county problems, and the ability to find solutions, qualifies her for a fourth term on the Commission. Whatever weakness she may have far outweighed by her strengths and professional abilities.

### Walton Shows Courage

Robert "Bob" Walton, an incumbent has shown courage in not backing away from controversial issues or unpopular causes. His abrasiveness, candor and sometimes heated debates with fellow Commissioners may have disturbed some, but when viewed within the perspective of the issues at hand, they added to the effectiveness of the debates for solutions to problems. Walton has a depth of knowledge of county problems, he communicates well with the citizenry and will return to the Commission a business and public point of view unequalled by others.

Tom Ray, a lawyer and long-time political activist, is making his first bid for public office. He is considered to be a political conservative. However, he has clearly demonstrated that he's a man of social concern as evidenced by his six years of quality service as a member of the Charlotte Housing Authority. Ray will take to the Commission, a mature mind and a willingness to serve faithfully.

Sam Smith, a businessman, was active in Mayor Ken Harris' election campaign and was a major force in the successful effort leading to district representation with the city Council. These activities clearly demonstrate Smith's commitment to public service by virtue of fact that he is not a resident of the city

that has benefitted by his labors. He has a suprisingly indepth knowledge of county problems, is articulate, knowledgeable and will, along with Tom Ray, be a welcomed blend into a revitalized County Commission.

The lackluster interest in legislative service is evident by the fact that only five people offered themselves in the Democrat primary for the four Senate seats representing Mecklenburg and Cabarrus counties. These seats in turn will be filled by four lackluster candidates since none have outstanding legislative accomplishments and all are comparatively low key campaigners.

For the four State Senate seats, we recommend incumbents FRED ALEXANDER (D), CRAIG LAWING (D), CAROLYN MATHIS (D), and newcomer CECIL JENKINS (D). The single independent candidate, Jim McDuffie, ranks a distant fifth behind our choices and the lone Republican candidate, Thomas Ghent, shows little knowledge of governmental operations or the political process.

In the State House race Mecklenburg voters have a better chance to send some people of quality to Raleigh in selecting eight office holders from among 12 candidates. For seven of these eight House seats, we recommend incumbents PARKS HELMS (D), BEN TISON (D), MARYILYN BISSELL (R), LOUISE BRENNON (D), RUTH EASTERLING (D), GUS ECONOMOS (D), and newcomer PARKS TODD (D).

### Walls For Sheriff

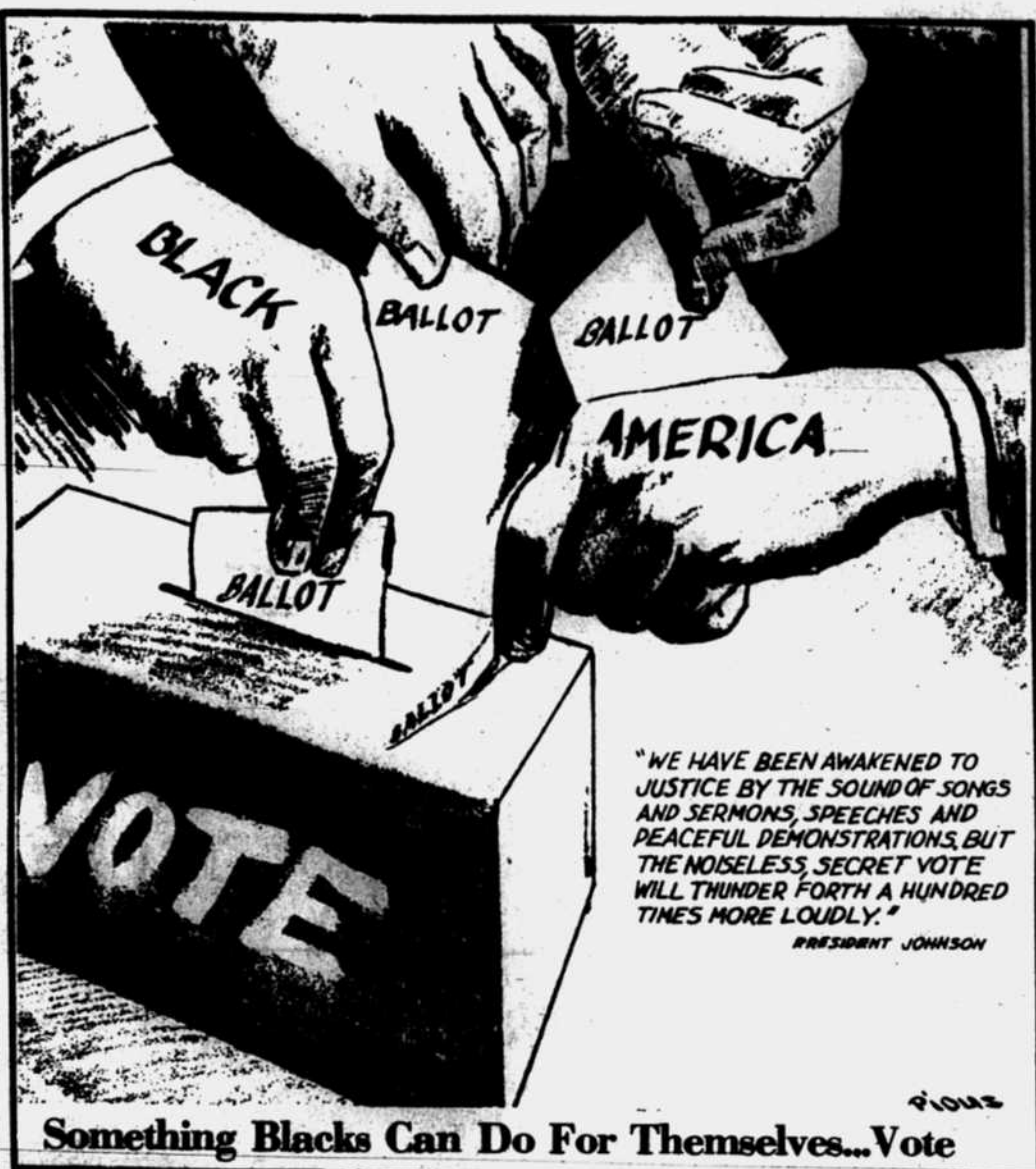
For sheriff of Mecklenburg County, we recommend JOHN KELLY WALL for two reasons. His 21 years of service in the county police department, retiring as a captain, should make him adequately able to assume the sheriff's duties. Secondly, the Mecklenburg voters are surely tired of the antics and controversies that sheriff Stahl has gone through over the past four years.

Our other recommendations are: 9th Congressional District, JIM MARTIN (R) Appeals Court Judge, RICHARD C. IRWIN (D) District Court Judge, JAMES E. LANNING (D) District Attorney, PETER GILCHRIST (D) Clerk of Superior Court, MAX BLACKBURN (D)

Finally, the POST supports the bond issues for parks and recreational facilities, CPCC, water, sanitary sewer and storm sewer.

Now, Mr. and Mrs. Voter, it's up to you to think, analyze, then vote your conviction on these and other candidates and issues.

Your vote does count in making government whatever it is or may be-Vote on Nov. 7.



Something Blacks Can Do For Themselves...Vote

## Our Defeatist Congress

by Bayard Rustin  
Special To The Post

Throughout my career, I have been patted on the back innumerable times and smilingly told that half a loaf is better than nothing. In most cases, the "half loaf" represented a weak, disappointing compromise, but always something of substance, always something to build on in the future.

Using that old cliché, many Congressional leaders have told us that working people, minorities, and the poor received at least a "half loaf" from the 95th Congress. But an honest examination of the record suggests a basic revision of the old analogy. Instead of a "half loaf" we received little more than a few crumbs.

Some critics will surely accuse me of undue bitterness, but the facts, I think, more than justify my attitude. In compiling a quick balance sheet of Congressional actions I found it difficult to identify more than three moderately significant victories. Setbacks and stalemates, however, became so numerous that I stopped jotting them down. Looking at the lists, my conclusion was easy: While we received crumbs, someone—especially business interests—walked out of Congress with "nearly a full loaf."

Interestingly enough, all our legislative gains came in cost-free areas. For instance, the ransacked version of the Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Bill—a proposal which Hubert Humphrey would barely recognize as his—will cost the government nothing. Likewise, full congressional representation for the District of Columbia, and the extension of the ratification deadline for the Equal Rights Amendment involve no new expenditures. Yet even for these basically symbolic, no-cost

measures, we had to fight bitterly.

While we battled for new advances, our energies were frequently diverted to defensive actions. Here, I believe, we did rather well. For example, we halted the forward advance of the highly dangerous and simplistic Kemp-Roth tax bill, a piece of legislation which would cause chaos in the public sector while further shifting the tax burden from the rich to low and middle-income groups.

Energy legislation, specifically the question of gas deregulation, serves as another example of political stalemate. While the bill adopted by Congress has serious deficiencies, it does, nevertheless, offer some minimal protection for energy consumers. The deregulation of gas prices will have a devastating impact on the poor. And even more important, the energy package offers a faint glimmer of hope for the future development of a comprehensive and fair energy program.

Our defeats, I fear, heavily outweigh our victories. In the area of public service jobs, for instance, revisions and cuts in the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act have eliminated approximately 100,000 CETA slots. To make matters worse, Congress approved an unnecessary and shocking amendment lowering the already stingy wages paid to CETA workers.

As Congress busied itself with various measures to tighten up services and income to the poor and jobless, it adopted a tax bill which provides new and broader loopholes for the rich, especially those who thrive on unearned capital gains income. As a result, the old aphorism about the rich getting richer and the poor

getting poorer, has sadly gained renewal validity.

Congress handed us other defeats as well. We also lost on key issues like labor law reform, consumer protection, hospital cost containment, and public financing of elections. We abandoned proposals like national health insurance, equitable tax reform and fair import controls. And we were compelled to accept a seriously diluted version of our minimum wage proposal. In short, we achieved painfully little, and frequently at enormous costs.

How, then, does one account for all these stinging defeats and miserable disappointments, especially when Congress includes so many avowed friends of minorities and working people? Possibly one leading cause is the attitude that Congress is simply responding to a resurgence of "social meanness" throughout the country. Americans, he asserts, no longer care about the unemployed, the poor, and the "welfare cases" of society.

As attractive as this "social meanness" analysis might seem, it is, I believe, fundamentally flawed. As I see it, we are not dealing with mean-spirited people who enjoy kicking blacks, and stealing from the poor. And even if we were, there is no sure cure for meanness.

Instead our political problems arise more from a deep and pervasive sense of social defeatism rather than simple-minded meanness. As evidence of this, I point to several studies indicating that many people who support massive tax cuts, and a contracting public sector, vigorously support full employment, improved education, and assistance for the poor.

## TO BE EQUAL

By Vernon E. Jordan Jr.



### National Health Plan Debated

With health costs skyrocketing and large numbers of people outside the makeshift private and federal health insurance programs, a debate over a national health program is under way.

The Administration announced a set of principles designed to lead to a more detailed plan, but those principles have led to strong criticisms. The principles are vague. And since they call for a national health plan to be phased in a step at a time, they invite Congressional distortion and dilution.

The only workable national health plan is one that is universal and comprehensive. Every citizen should be covered for complete health care services, and everyone should have equal access to such services.

A step in the right direction is embodied in Senator Edward Kennedy's proposal for a National Health Insurance Act.

It satisfies the requirements that a workable national Health plan have universal and mandatory coverage, comprehensive benefits, quality care for all, and accessibility built-in cost control features, an essential element of any health program in this most inflationary of all sectors of our economy.

Another key element is the involvement of the private sector—people would be insured by private insurers operating under federal regulation and oversight.

The Kennedy plan represents a reasonable compromise between those who would make only minor changes in the present system and those who support a sweeping reform of the entire system that would do away with fee-for-service medicine. It is likely the most advanced proposal that could be passed today, given the political realities.

The present health care system is a mess. Those who can afford quality care can usually buy it. But for those who are not affluent or whose work-related insurance coverage is less than adequate, health care is inferior. The urban and rural poor are largely outside the health care system, except for Medicare and Medicaid. And those programs are deeply flawed.

Medicare and Medicaid are often cited as reasons for not going ahead with a universal national health system. Critics cite their flaws, and stress their escalating costs. But in my view, with all their faults, they provide evidence that federal intervention in the health care system is advisable.

Before those programs, poor people were largely cut off from health care. By 1974 though, poor people were reported to be utilizing physician services slightly more than the rest of the population. Because of Medicare and Medicaid, health care has improved for the poor, the elderly, and minorities.

Despite their importance, Medicare and Medicaid represent a two-tier health care system. They are for the poor; the rest of the popular enjoys health care that preserves individual dignity and is less liable to be exploited by unscrupulous practitioners.

The private health insurance industry has done much to relieve the financial burdens of illness, but it too has numerous flaws, and it is unavailable to large portions of the population. Since so much insurance is work-related, through unions or employers, job losses such as we saw in the recession lead to major crises in health care coverage.

### Our New Day Begun

## The NAACP Needs Funds

by Benjamin L. Hooks

Special To The Post  
When a group of Port Gibson, Miss., merchants won a massive \$1.25 million judgment against the NAACP just over two years ago, Americans rallied to save the civil rights organization from certain bankruptcy. Within a few months, NAACP branches, black churches, fraternal and social organizations provided the bulk of \$1.6 million that was needed under Mississippi law to post a cash bond against the judgment.

Although a federal district court reduced the bonding requirements considerably before the year's end, we still had to set aside more than \$1 million in certificates of deposits to cover the judgment in case the NAACP loses the case on appeal.

While staving off these and other attacks, the NAACP was continuing its regular civil rights programs. Indeed, the obstacles to equality and the economic well-being for every black person are often greater than in previous years. Black Americans have certainly won numerous victories since the sixties.

But the harsh reality is that



Benjamin Hooks  
NAACP Executive Director

opposition to progress has become more entrenched and elusive in many areas. Black people now have laws to protect their rights to vote, to live anywhere they wish, to travel in the front of the bus and stay at any hotel in America. These rights are all guaranteed by law. Not assured, however, has been their ability to pay for the enjoyment of many of these rights.

Nevertheless, attacks on affirmative action and school desegregation have been more extensive and intense. More blacks are now out of work than ever before in the nation's history. The resurgence

of the Klu Klux Klan is well documented. The national mood is excessively conservative and certainly not supportive of programs for the poor and oppressed.

To develop the required strategies for this new phase of the struggle, the NAACP has had to expand its dimension and programs. We now have, in addition to education, labor, housing and voter registration programs, departments for church work and communications. A department of economic development will soon be established. Also, our present staff has been actively developing and conducting programs on Africa.

We have not only had to hire new people, but also to rent more office space. Still, as every black man, woman and child knows, our programs are hardly enough to meet the task. The NAACP, however, is blessed with a dedicated staff which routinely contributes hundreds of man hours beyond their salaried requirements. The staff provides the indispensable support to our volunteer workers in 1,700 branches around the nation.

This work and expansion

have been costly. As a result of the overwhelming support, we received during the Mississippi crisis, the NAACP was able to end 1977 in the black, the first in about 15 years. As Roy Wilkins, Walter White, James Weldon Johnson and all the other NAACP leaders knew, civil rights is a hand-to-mouth endeavor. We have never had enough money to conduct the struggle the way it

### Liz Hair:

"Air Pollution Is Major Health Problem" elderly."

Liz Hair, who is currently seeking a fourth term as Mecklenburg County Commissioner, appeared on the Citizens Air Quality Commission Panel last week at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Charlotte describing air pollution in Mecklenburg County. According to Mrs. Hair, Mecklenburg County is a "Non-Attainment Area" because we don't meet minimum EPA standards for clean air.

"Air pollution is a major health problem in Mecklenburg with the major pollutants being created by auto exhaust," she said. Mrs. Hair is concerned with the particular impact which pollution has on "small children and the

should be done. Mississippi, however, taught us that Black Americans will support their organization when its survival is at stake. This is again the challenge we now face.

At the end of August, the NAACP was \$300,000 in the red. Our other arm, the NAACP Special Contributions Fund, had a deficit of \$380,000, for a combined total of

\$680,000. In short, the NAACP is an a serious financial crisis.

We are therefore appealing to every American who supports our goals to make a prompt financial contribution to the NAACP. They might send their contributions to 1790 Broadway, New York N.Y., 10001, or take out a NAACP membership with your local branch.

and public transportation." As a County Commissioner and concerned citizen, Mrs. Hair said that she would continue to make a plea for public support by the citizens for efforts to help reduce pollution in one of the most livable countries in the state.



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