

# Editorials & Comments

## Bus Strike Makes Only Losers

by Hoyle H. Martin Sr.  
 In 1976, a 36-day long bus strike, the city's first in 18 years, had a significant effect on nearly 10,000 daily riders and city government. Many downtown businesses were stranded, 132 buses were idled, the striking drivers and mechanics had little of no income, the city lost revenue and many people could not get to their jobs or attend school. Undoubtedly, it was the memory of these 2-year old factors that led to published reports that Mayor Ken Harris said the bus strike that began last Sunday would make us all losers.

While staying within President Carter's wage-price guidelines, the city offer includes an increase of 99 cents per hour over a two year period. This would raise the average bus driver's salary from \$12,000 to nearly \$14,300 yearly or up to \$18,200 with overtime work. However, since bus revenues only cover 38 per cent of the cost of bus services, a \$3.4 million deficit occurs annually. That fact alone thus makes the \$1.97 per hour increased wage proposed requested by the union both unreasonable and unrealistic.

Since Mayor Harris has taken a justifiably hardline position on the union's wages demands, the union has expressed a greater concern about some proposed new work

rules. These rules deal with such issues as: (1) company requirements that drivers give a 30 minute notice if they won't be reporting for work; (2) a rule giving the company more authority in disciplining drivers for work rule violations; (3) allowing the company to hire part-time drivers during peak hours; and (4) a company proposal requiring drivers and mechanics to attend safety meetings and to participate in re-training programs.

The union is opposing each of these rules changes we feel without justifiable cause. The fact is the union's entire position in this strike is weak and largely unreasonable.

We hope they'll reconsider their position, return to the bargaining table and settle with the city's fair and just offer.

The taxpayer subsidy of the existing cost of bus service, the needs of the poor who ride the buses, the possibility of losing more permanent bus riders, and the absence of any media support further point out the weakness of the union's position in the strike.

To repeat, we hope the drivers, mechanics and their union will take another look at their position on the issues and realize that in the end they may be the biggest losers. Let the buses roll again! We need them.

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## Good Luck Lions!

The West Charlotte Lions with a 12-1 record will meet Richmond County High, 11-2, for the state 4A football championship tomorrow night in Richmond. Such newspaper lines are fairly common across the country this time of year. However, what is often overlooked in the hoopla proceeding such a big game is how the participating teams reached the prestigious final gridiron encounter of the season.

Regardless of the outcome of the West Charlotte-Richmond County game, the Lions have had a storybook season that any school can and should be proud of.

First, no one, including Head Coach Rudy Abrams, expected the Lions to reach the 4A football playoffs, much less be a participant in the championship game. Coach Abrams said in a nearly disbelieving manner, "This really wasn't the year we thought it would happen, but here we are in the final..."

Coach Abrams' near-disbelief stems from the West Charlotte Lions' capture of the Southwestern 4A Conference Championship with a 9-1 regular season record. This was followed by play-off victories over Ashbrook, East Burke and R.J. Reynolds High Schools.

In compiling this overall 12-1 record, the Lions rolled up another disbelieving statistic—seven straight shutout wins and eight overall including the three play-off victories.

What accounts for this phenomenal success of the Lions? It is obvious of course that the Lions are a talented team, they'd have to be to win seven straight shutouts. It is obvious too that the Lions have been well directed by Coach Abrams and his crew. What may not be so obvious is that the 1978 football Lions are a group of mature young men who have refined the art of self discipline, demonstrated the ability to play under pressure and set an example for other students to follow with regard to these qualities since they can be applied to any part of one's life.

The Post is proud to salute the Lions as they journey to Richmond County in quest of the state 4A Football Championship. While we wish them well, there is no doubt in our minds that the West Charlotte Lions are "Number One" in North Carolina. Thus, regardless of the outcome in Richmond County tomorrow night, the Lions have beaten the best and thus are the best. Right on Lions!

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## Something On Your Mind?

"Something on your mind" is the name of a column devoted to you—the young at heart readers of this newspaper—as long as it relates in

some way to young people, regardless of age. Let us hear from you on any subject of your choice.



For A Safe Community Let's Unite...

## Community Affairs

### Competency Testing

by Kenyon C. Burke  
 Special To The Post

Why are so many groups of people upset about competency testing? Who stands to benefit and who stands to lose by the emergence of this type of testing?

These questions are being debated by educators, parents, students, taxpayers, employers, psychologists, legislators, and minority groups.

The public push for instituting some form of standard in education and requirements on a statewide basis for schools to identify minimum basic academic or life skills that students should have before receiving a high school diploma has created much unrest and controversy throughout the nation.

To date 36 states have adopted some form of competency testing program through legislative action, while other states are in various phases of discussions, planning, drafting or implementation.

Parents are disturbed and fearful that many of their children are being passed through schools systems without receiving basic fundamental skills that are necessary for surviving and coping in our increasingly complex technologically oriented society as responsible adults. Tax payers are strongly voicing concern over rising educational costs, declining schools enrollment and declining test scores. They're asking for a more detailed accounting of just what their tax dollars are buying.

Employers continue to register disappointment regarding the less than satisfactory skill level of many high school graduates. They report instances of high school graduates who can barely read their names on their diploma in addition to not being able to fill out a simple job application form. They further question why they should have to provide skill training for simple and basic tasks as answering telephones, simple computation and spelling.

Psychologists and other social scientists are questioning the entire educational process along with what we should expect from our school system and how best that can be measured objectively and fairly for all concerned.

Minority groups, knowing full well that the schools for the most part are failing to equip their children with basic coping skills, are also questioning what form of testing will not adversely affect their children. Additionally, blacks, hispanics and other disadvantaged minorities are pressing for improvement of the quality of education in their schools.

Students are concerned with receiving educational experiences that will prepare them adequately to compete in our skills demanding society. They too are concerned about abuses in the school system including testing practices that will limit their life chances.

Legislators are also feeling the heat from all of these groups in addition to many professional educational associations and teacher unions

who are opposed to allowing anything to exist in the schools that approaches holding teachers accountable for the quality of education and the skill achievement level of their students.

All this points to our having to closely monitor competency testing to insure that blacks and other disadvantaged minorities are not once again victims of unfair testing and educational practices sanctioned by legislative mandate. It is also clear that any intelligent public policy on competency testing must include teacher and school system accountability and not penalize the student for the poor or inadequate educational experience he or she had in preparation for receiving a high school diploma. To do otherwise would be blaming the victim.

Wingate College  
 To Present  
 Christmas Concert

Wingate College will present a Christmas program featuring the concert band, concert choir, and the Wingate Community Orchestra on Thursday evening, December 7 at 8 p.m. in Austin Auditorium.

The program will be a highly varied one with selections ranging from the sacred to a sing-a-long conclusion, the final numbers featuring all three groups plus the audience playing and singing favorite Christmas hymns.

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By Vernon E. Jordan, Jr.

# TO BE EQUAL

## Black Opportunities Diluted

While blacks have been doing battle with the forthright opponents of affirmative action, a new threat has come up, almost unnoticed. And this threat often comes from our "friends" who say they support affirmative action programs.

The threat lies in the definition of "minorities" that will be included in various special programs. Back in the 1960's, there was little confusion about who such programs were for. The black minority was perceived as the minority by discrimination and therefore most in need of special assistance.

Hispanics and Native Americans were also included in such definitions of minorities in need of special opportunities, because they too were victimized by discriminatory practices and because race and color were basic factors in their victimization.

Then others clamored for special treatment. Various ethnic groups pointed to the historic hardships they had faced as immigrants to predominately white, Protestant America.

Then the women's movement picked up steam and argued for inclusion of women in "minority" programs on the obvious ground that women had been persistently discriminated against throughout our history.

Now, with a big push from the Bakke decision, it is being asserted that anyone who comes from a background of economic disadvantage should be given access to special programs.

So the original intent of special efforts to help black people overcome the effects of centuries of legally imposed racist discrimination has been obscured, as special efforts are demanded by a host of other groups. In effect, the definition of "minority" is being expanded to the point where it is meaningless.

In the process, black opportunities are being diluted. Thus, blacks have been placed in the position of confrontation with other groups for the shrinking opportunities our society offers. If this trend continues, blacks will lose out and may be forced back to our society's lowest rungs.

It stands to reason that if a company or a university aims to have, let us say, fifteen percent minority representation as a goal, then defining "minorities" as "minorities" leaves fewer openings for blacks.

Affirmative action programs have to be returned to the realistic social context of our society. That contest is plain—black Americans have received treatment that has been different in kind from any other ethnic group. As a result of that heritage of oppression, many blacks have been denied access to the mainstream of our society.

The basic fact underlining black claims for special efforts to overcome that heritage is that black disadvantage was legally imposed. Slavery, peonage, social and economic discrimination, housing and school bias, all were embedded in the structure of American law.

Ethnic groups that point to the difficult times faced by their immigrant ancestors are right, up to a point. America has been harsh to many groups whose language, religion, or customs were perceived as different. But the hard times they faced were shared even by members of the American majority. Appalachian whites were treated as badly as European immigrants in the mines. The history of America in the nineteenth century is a dismal story of exploiting all labor.

not only have been harmful but also humiliating. Rizzo flaunted the charter reform issue before blacks as well as whites, Puerto Ricans and everyone else.

The city responded in kind and demonstrated that its reputation for "brotherly love" does not include those who would fan the flames of racial division. It is now up to the black community to translate this commendable victory into a long-range program for developing appropriate and long overdue political muscle.

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## Our New Day Begun

### Decency Triumphs In Philadelphia

by Benjamin L. Hooks  
 Special To The Post

While advising Philadelphians to "vote white" on election day, Mayor Frank Rizzo at the same time arrogantly predicted that 40 percent of black voters would cast their ballots for a charter reform which would have permitted him to run for a third term next year. As it turned out, though, blacks went to the polls in record numbers on election day; a minuscule four percent cast their votes for the charter change, thus assuring the measure's defeat by a two to one margin.

Due to Rizzo's devious tactics, the Philadelphia charter reform issue drew national attention. His tireless campaign—in white wards only—to assure himself a third shot at the mayoralty pitted him not only against local black residents but also against white businessmen, civic and religious leaders and a host of others who had become tired of his vitriolic verbiage.

Consequently, it was no surprise to the NAACP and many others who had worked to defeat the charter reform measure that the final results ran close to the two to one margin of defeat that had been predicted earlier.



Benjamin L. Hooks  
 ...NAACP executive director

Next came the frosting on the campaign. On election day, an estimated 20,000 people, mostly blacks, were delayed or prevented from casting their ballots because between 200 and 400 voting machines broke down. After the polls had closed, District Attorney's office received complaints that at least 10 voting machines had not registered a single vote during the day.

Another complaint alleged that a city official had moved voting machines from one polling place to other locations without informing voters the Monday evening before elections.

When the polls closed that night at 8 o'clock, thousands of blacks were still in long lines outside polling stations. Many others were in police stations seeking authority to vote.

The subsequent arrest of one city official and investigations by law enforcement agencies, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, was the clearest measure of the national disgrace that the Philadelphia elections had become.

Having demonstrated welcomed unity, blacks are now looking toward next year's mayoral race. They had turned out in especially large numbers, and chosen issues and candidates carefully, as their ticket-splitting indicated. Among organizations helping to achieve these results were the NAACP and the United Black Front, which led voter registration and get-out-the-vote drives. One particularly encouraging development was the unity that the black and Puerto Rican communities displayed as they forged a coalition to defeat the charter reform question.

The dilemma that blacks now face, though, is whether they can remain united long enough to avoid the threat of destruction in next year's

mayoral election. Clearly, the danger now is not from without but from within their own ranks.

The excitement of victory and the joy of discovering their own strength was well earned. They were presented with a clear issue that would

## Business In The Black

### Tax Cut: Benefit Or Balloon?

by Charles E. Belle  
 Special To The Post

Many Black Americans cannot get too excited about the recent tax cut. No doubt it's because it will only amount to approximately \$60 for a black family of four which normally has a median income of less than \$10,000 per year. Any colored family averaging \$20,000 per year will only have its tax bill cut by \$167 or \$14 a month.

Why then all the huff about a tax cut for the white middle class in Congress and the Carter White House, you may rightfully ask? Because white folks are finding their pay checks committed to paying off consumer debt spending and social security costs rising faster than their wages are increasing.

It should be clear that neither

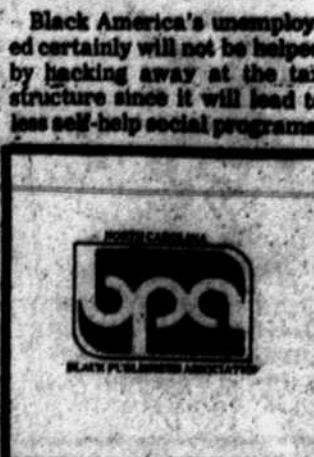
or this tax cut for white America or the helpless Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Bill for Black America are going to save the average American. The biggest benefit for Black America is that white America will discover that destroying needed social programs by paying pennies less in taxes will not solve their personal or America's peculiar problems.

Senator Edward Kennedy, steward of the underprivileged, says the tax relief is insufficient even for taxpayers in the \$10,000 to \$20,000 per year income brackets. These people are not exactly your extreme poor. They are the white middle class which this tax relief was meant to mother for election year votes.

The \$100 tax reduction for the almost 40 percent of Black

Americans earning around \$5,000 a year amounts to less than half of the \$296 rebate to those with adjusted gross income of \$25,000. It's clearly not a Black American tax relief bill.

Black America's unemployed certainly will not be helped by hacking away at the tax structure since it will lead to less self-help social programs.



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