

Report Says African-Americans Still Trail Whites In Living Status

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Americans suffered most from slow overall growth of the economy during the 1970s and 1980s. "Under conditions of increasing economic hardship for the last prosperous members of society, blacks, because of their special legacy of poverty and discrimination, are afflicted sooner, more deeply, and longer," the committee stressed.

FIFTY YEARS OF DATA

The report summarizes and interprets a large body of data and research analyses concerning the position of blacks in American society since the eve of World War II. The committee was asked to assess the status of black Americans; it was not charged with recommending policy changes to alleviate any disparities it found.

The 22-member committee was augmented by 18 additional experts in economics, education, government and politics, health care, history, and sociology. Robin M. Williams Jr., Henry Scarborough professor of social science (emeritus) at Cornell University, Ithaca, NY, chaired the committee. Study director Gerald D. Jaynes, professor, department of economics and program in African and African-American studies, Yale University, New Haven, CT, and Williams edited the report.

The National Research Council is the principal operating agency of the National Academy of Sciences and Engineering. The study was funded by the Carnegie Corp. of New York; the Pew Charitable Trusts; the Ford, Robert Wood Johnson, Andrew W. Mellon, Rockefeller, and Alfred P. Sloan Foundations; and the National Research Council fund.

INDICATORS OF STATUS

The committee focused its attention in six primary areas: participation in the political process, economic status, schooling, health, crime and criminal justice, and well-being of children and families. Among its specific findings:

- **Economic status.** In income and earnings, blacks gained relative to whites fairly steadily from 1939 to 1969; many economic measures of relative status peaked in the early 1970s and since have remained stagnant or declined. The percentage of people living in households with incomes below the poverty line declined for both blacks and whites through the mid-1970s but have risen in the past decade; black poverty rates have been two to three times higher than white rates at all times.

- **Residential Segregation.** Residential separation of whites and blacks is practically unchanged since the 1960s. Segregation of blacks and whites is nearly twice the rate of white and Asian-Americans, and in many cities is often much greater than residential separation between Hispanic Americans and whites. Discrimination against blacks currently seeking housing "has been conclusively demonstrated," the report notes.

- **Education.** "Segregation and differential treatment of blacks continue to be widespread in the elementary and secondary schools," the committee found. Early intervention programs, such as Head Start, "have had positive effects on blacks' educational performance," and black students have made small but consistent gains on tests of academic achievement. Nevertheless, college enrollment rates of all high school graduates declined sharply after 1977; while white rates have recovered, black rates remain well below those of the 1970s. The odds that a black student will enter college within a year of graduation from high school are less than one-half the odds for a white student.

- **Political Participation.** When measured against whites of the same socioeconomic status, blacks vote in equal or greater percentages in national elections. Moreover, the number of black officials has risen from a

few dozen in elected officials. The black proportion of federal, state, and local public administrators rose from less than 1 percent in 1940 to 8 percent in 1980, but this figure is still less than blacks' current 13 percent proportion of the U. S. population.

- **Crime.** The homicide rate for young black men is six times the rate for young white men. "Black Americans are disproportionately victims of crime": they are twice as likely to be victims of robbery, vehicle theft, and aggravated assault. Blacks also suffer disproportionately from injuries and economic losses due to criminal actions. "As long as there are great disparities in the socioeconomic status of blacks and whites, blacks will continue to be overrepresented in the criminal justice system as victims and offenders," the committee wrote.

- **Health.** Persistent wide gaps in the mortality and morbidity of blacks compared to whites remain at all ages except for individuals 85 and older. Twenty-two percent of blacks under age 65 are not covered by health insurance or Medicaid (as compared with 14 percent of whites). The odds of dying shortly after birth are consistently twice as high for black babies as they are for white babies.

- **Child and Family Issues.** "Black and white children are increasingly different with regard to their living arrangements," the committee found. A majority of black children under age 18 live in families that include their mothers but not their fathers, while one in every five white children lives with just

their mother. In the course of their childhood, 86 percent of black children and 42 percent of white children are likely to spend some time in a single-parent household. This is particularly significant in view of the fact that female-headed families were 50 percent of total black family income. During the 1970s, one of every three black children lived in poverty for at least seven of those 10 years. The comparable figure for white children was one in 33.

A CHANGING SOCIETY

Two general developments in U. S. society since 1939 stand out as important to understanding the current status of black Americans, the committee observed. First, for the period 1940-1973, real earnings of all Americans improved steadily, but they stagnated and declined after 1973. Second, during the post-1973 period, inequality increased among Americans in general as the lowest income and least skilled people were hurt most by changes in the overall economy.

Thus, for the 50-year span covered by the study, "the social status of American blacks has on average improved dramatically, both in absolute terms and relative to whites," the committee found. However, the current status of black Americans today can be characterized "by a glass that is half full - if measured by progress since 1939 - or as a glass that is half empty - if measured by the continuing disparities between black and white Americans since the early 1970s."

Demographic conditions in the future may serve to heighten

awareness of this disparity, the committee noted. The Bureau of the Census projects that the U. S. black population will rise from 11.7 percent in 1980 to 15 percent in the year 2020; blacks will be nearly one of five children of school age and one of six adults of working age.

'CULTURE OF POVERTY' QUESTIONED


The committee found that the data and analyses it examined throw "serious doubt" on the

commonly accepted notion that a self-perpetuating "culture of poverty" exists in the black community. The chronically poor are a minority of poor people in general, including blacks; attitudes toward work and the desire to succeed are not very different among the poor and non-poor, the committee said.

The committee found instead that racial barriers and disadvantages "persist in blocking black advancement."

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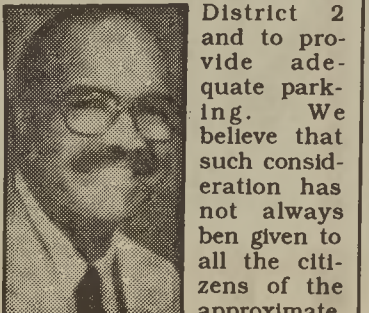
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Martin To Open Campaign Headquarters

Hoyle H. Martin, Democratic candidate for the Charlotte City Council District 2 seat, will open his campaign headquarters on Thursday, August 10 at 3921 Tuckaseegee Rd., south centrally located, near the intersection of Freedom Dr. and I-85.

Dewitt Reid, Martin's campaign manager said, "The location was selected to assure easy accessibility to all voters in



Martin

District 2 and to provide adequate parking. We believe that such consideration has not always been given to all the citizens of the approximately 27,717 voters in the district.

The public is invited to attend a 6 to 9 p.m. grand opening reception.

Night Out For Prevention

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portunity for neighborhoods nationwide to join forces and make a powerful statement against crime. For at least one night, we'll return to the good old days when neighborhoods were safer because people cared and routinely looked out for each other. Hopefully, it will be a step towards returning that sense of camaraderie, safety and security back to our communities."

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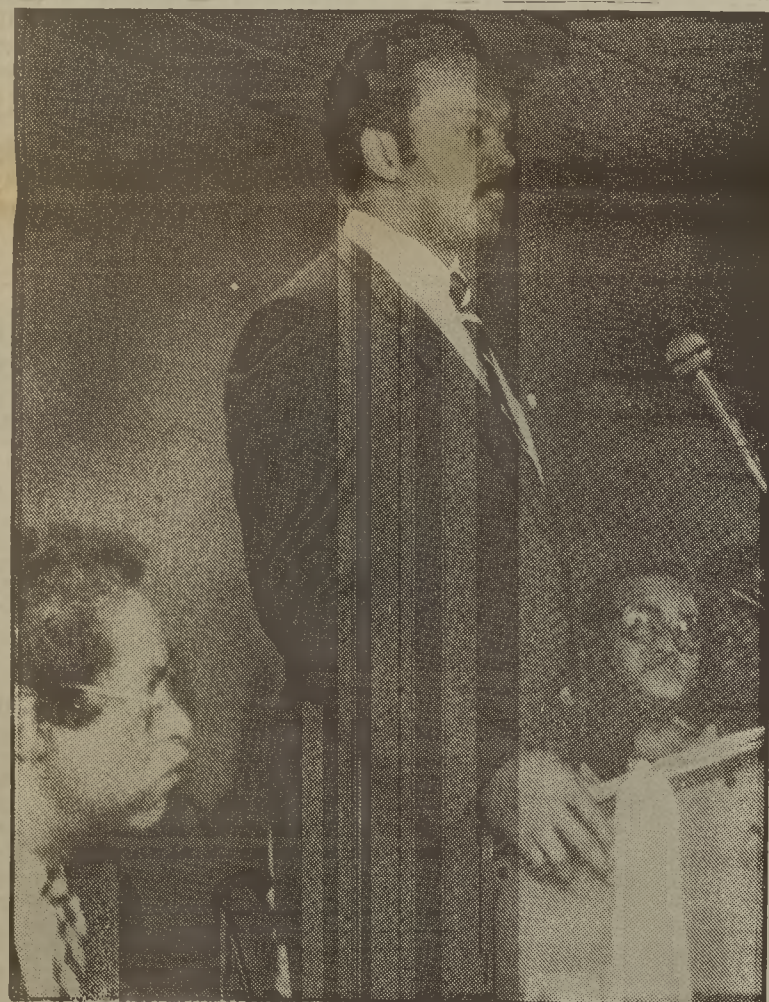
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Photo/LANEY

A speech by Jesse Jackson was the highlight of the North Carolina Black Leadership Caucus meeting held in Charlotte.

D.C. Mayor Talk Is 'Hype'

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) --Jesse Jackson wouldn't say whether he would run for mayor of Washington, but the subject kept coming up during a weekend visit to Charlotte.

Jackson, a former presidential candidate and a native of Greenville, S.C., said his family began moving from Chicago on Friday. He already had announced that his National Rainbow Coalition would relocate from Chicago next week.

"We have moved to Washington as a family and as one rainbow coalition," Jackson said. "We're moving to Washington... under the presumption that Washington requires that kind of time, that kind of focus."

Tired of speculation over the

issue, Jackson said it's "a lot of hype that's become a diversion."

About 250 people, including Jackson's mother and grandmother, crowded into a banquet room to hear his speech to the North Carolina Black Leadership Caucus of Charlotte on Saturday.

Jackson also confirmed that Charlotte will host this year's PUSH-EXCEL Pro Basketball Classic. Organizers are still trying to arrange which NBA stars will play in the Sept. 23 game.

Jackson said the game, along with 10 scholarships awarded to local college-bound students, is intended to promote education. And he encouraged parents to help their children study at home.

Charlotte's Evening In Nairobi

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aren't black.

"The organization was started to get that closeness between black Americans and Africans," Sazuru said. "But it's worked in reverse. Ninety-five percent of our students are white."

Nairobi's international culture will be on display in the exhibition, with representatives from 50 nations within and outside Africa.

Thirty-two representatives from 32 states will also be on

hand with arts and crafts, giving the city a chance to host the world for a day.

"It enhances Charlotte's image as an international city," said Doug Stafford, president of the the Charlotte Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Beyond the multinational flavor of the exhibit, AIFS's wants to bring people together through Africa's unique culture.

"We see ourselves as missionaries coming here to teach," said Sazuru.