

# The formation of the citizenry has its rewards

By Stan Faryna

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

In a recent op-ed column, Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institute Dr. Thomas Sowell rightly took President Bill Clinton to task for extolling the virtue of community service over traditional education during his commencement address. Indeed, why is the President talking about community service when the academic performance of American students is falling by the wayside? Has the President discovered the principal secret of life?

Dr. Sowell keenly pointed out this was only more of the same politically correct group-think responsible for ever lowering standards in American education. It might also be the same thinking responsible for lower numbers of graduate students in competitive fields like math and the various sciences. Certainly, community service cannot substitute for academic or professional performance. What is the best education? The Christian scholar Jacques Maritain wrote that the best education teaches the pursuit of truth for freedom. The Bible tells us why; only truth will set us free. Educating our children in the ways of freedom leads to noble possibilities. Among those possibilities is the fulfillment of the deepest and most

noble of qualities in the human person: intellectual, moral, and spiritual virtues.

Less ideally, a good education gives students a comprehensive vision of reality -- of God, humans, and the world. Such a comprehensive vision would guide our children well in their living. Though the student should receive formation as a citizen, such instruction is not defined principally by community service.

Indeed, the formation of a citizen is not inconsistent with the goals of a traditional education. The development of the innate capability of every student to seek enrichment and achieve ever higher levels of personal and professional excellence has several rewards. It makes the student a better person and a better citizen. Such development is included in an education for Freedom.

Obviously, it would be wrong to say that traditional education is an education in egotism. Dr. Sowell was right also to point out that such perceptions of traditional education are misformed. There is no question that the student should seek out the enrichment of human relationship outside of one's immediate circle of friends and family. Nor is there question that human fulfillment includes befriending the stranger who needs our help.

Of course, it will be the virtues that we learn in family life, among friends, and in church that prepare us for the challenges ahead. Without such virtues, we won't have effective relationships with people outside our circles and we won't be able to help the stranger in need. But if these are the aims of liberal advocates of community service, why have liberals struggled to undermine the natural formation of the virtues at home and church? Indeed, why did President Clinton veto the partial-birth abortion ban and so condemn the little strangers in the womb?

Community service is an enriching and noble endeavor. But President Clinton is mistaken if he thinks that community service is just about serving in government, in its various social services, or even in political movements. As Booker T. Washington long ago noted, one's own education and training makes one better able to serve others. "A person must be able to earn his living," said Washington, "before he can be of much benefit to himself and the community in which he lives."

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## Letters To The Post

### The whole story on consolidation of governments

In response to your article "Combined government affects representation, service in black areas," of July 18, I would like to express my sincere concern for how this article was prepared and what it didn't say. Every quote that was taken from me was correct but you fail to tell the whole story and in the context that it was given.

First of all, I absolutely and wholeheartedly support the consolidation of city and county governments. However, throughout the 1 1/2 hour interview with John Minter, I made it clear that I support black representation at the same levels that we have today, if not to a greater extent, because black people everywhere in Mecklenburg County have benefited from their devoted service. True, the people in my district, as in other districts, have many of the same concerns for their specific districts. But as long as there are people that judge me, and people that look like me, on the basis of the color of my skin, we all benefit from the representation from the historically black districts that this article describes.

Secondly, what does it matter the price of the houses in my neighborhood? As we also spoke, this is the progress that many in "middle" Black America have achieved through the efforts of many in the '60s like Martin Luther King, Rosa Parks and Malcolm X. I, like many of my counterparts, have taken advantage of this struggle by participating in opportunities for a better future by graduating from high school and other higher learning institutions, studying hard and delivering the best that I have to offer.

The article mentions my involvement in the Charlotte Chamber and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission, but it fails to point out how I give back to the community from which I've come. As a native Charlottean, I have always felt the responsibility to reach back and help someone else. That's why I am an active member of 100 Black Men and a board member of the Teen Health Connection, a non-profit organization that provides health care to many of our young black men and women.

In closing, I would like to note that The Charlotte Post provides a much needed voice and presence in the black community regardless of one's economic state. And I'm not so naive as to not understand that the same bus that brought me here can take me back. Instead of focusing on what I have and what someone else doesn't have, we should be involved in dialogue of what we have in common and how we can work together to make Charlotte work for us.

Leroy Hill Jr.  
Charlotte

## GOP wants your input

By Henry Hyde and Haley Barbour  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

The Republican Party has launched an unprecedented effort to invite Americans across the country to participate in the development of the 1996 Republican Platform. This effort would not be complete without the support of the African American community. As Chairman of the 1996 Platform Committee and Chairman of the RNC, we are writing to you to encourage you to submit your ideas to help shape the Republican Party platform for the next four years.

The Republican vision for our country is a vision based on America's values, not Washington's values. We want to continue to work with African Americans to ensure their input in the national policy debate and to ensure that their wisdom and common sense are heard. It is our hope that anyone who believes in the fundamental principles of the Republican Party -- lower taxes, less government power, greater individual freedom and more personal responsibility -- will share their ideas with us.

In recent years, Republicans have been listening to Americans at the grassroots and working to reconnect the public with the national policy debate through scores of hearings and conferences held around the country by the National Policy Forum, a non-profit organization devoted to the development and advancement of Republican ideas. We have heard from our fellow Americans--families, young people, senior citizens--hardworking individuals who are making things better in their own communities. Our 1996 platform deliberations will build on that experience.

Like other Republican leaders, we have benefited enormously from the policy ideas gleaned from Americans at the grassroots by the National Policy Forum. The Republican Platform Committee now encourages African Americans at the grassroots to play an active role in sharing the Republican vision for America as it will be articulated in our 1996 Republican National Forum.

The RNC has set up a Web site on the Internet for submitting ideas to the 1996 Republican Platform. The Internet address is [www.mc.org](http://www.mc.org). Or, you can send your ideas to Dave Gribbin, Executive Director, Republican Platform Committee, 310 First Street, S.E. Washington, D.C., 20003.

We urge all African Americans to take advantage of this most important and unique opportunity to help shape the platform of the party that represents America's values.

U.S. Rep. HENRY HYDE (R-Ill.) is chairman of the 1996 Republican Platform Committee. HALEY BARBOUR is chairman of the Republican National Committee.

## Listen to women's welfare concerns

By Lisa Jennings and Sara Van Note  
SPECIAL TO THE POST

In the 1994 elections, 54 million eligible women did not vote. Now their "representatives" are making decisions on women's futures.

On Aug. 8, 1995 a full-page ad in the New York Times warned Americans, particularly women, to "beware of welfare cuts." The ad, put out by the Women's Committee of One Hundred, asked readers to "imagine the worst."

"You're laid off from your job. You lose your health insurance. Your marriage falls apart. Your young children need child care."

One segment of women this scene neglects are teenagers, girls who are not married, who were never employed, and who are students and children themselves. What is to become of young, pregnant girls who are denied access to welfare money? This is a frightening reality that many young single mothers may have to face -- unless all women take their political responsibilities seriously, keep informed about issues affecting women, and vote.

There are many myths concerning women on welfare, particularly teenage women. One is that teenage mothers make up the largest portion of those exhausting welfare funds. In actuality, only one percent of mothers receiving AFDC benefits are under 18, and four percent of mothers are 18- and 19-year olds. Further, aid to five million women, nine million children, and 500,000 men makes up only one percent of the federal budget.

Another myth is that young women have children in order to receive aid money. According to the research center Child Trends, welfare benefits aren't a major factor in teens deciding to have children. Teen birth rates in the U.S. have risen while



benefits have fallen.

Consider the following: according to a 1988 study by the Alan Guttmacher Institute, 42 percent of mothers between the ages of 15 and 17 were impregnated by men between the ages of 20 and 24. "On average, 15-17-year-old mothers were four years younger than their baby's fathers...the younger the mother, the greater the age difference between her and her partner." For almost 20 percent of children born to women aged 15-17, the father was six or more

years older than the mother. In many states, such age discrepancies constitute statutory rape. Yet the "solutions" to the problem of teenage pregnancy continually focus on penalizing the teenage mother, not the older father.

These young women are already at a huge disadvantage: their pregnancy disrupts their education, making them less likely to get a job with a livable wage; they often have no partner to help support the child; and further, they must cope

with the day-to-day problems of parenthood, all at a very young age. Regardless of any judgments that some may make, the reality persists -- these women need help.

Yet in January 1995, the House of Representatives majority leadership proposed to cut off aid, to unmarried mothers under 18. Their plans for "welfare reform" came in the form of a bill called the "Personal Responsibility Act." The bill passed the House and the Senate in December 1995, although with changes. The bill cut aid to unmarried mothers under 18 who did not attend high school or an equivalent program, and were not living in an adult-supervised setting. A mother could be denied aid if she did not name the child's father. The bill was properly vetoed by President Clinton.

All voters, and all women especially, should find out how their representatives in Congress are voting. Every representative and many senators are up for reelection this year. North Carolina has been designated a "target state" by The Women's Vote Project '96, a non-partisan voter outreach campaign. In North Carolina, only 57 percent of eligible women voted in the last three presidential elections, one of the ten lowest percentages in the nation, and more than 15 percent of registered women did not vote, also one of the ten worst ten records. Also in North Carolina, eight out of 12 representatives and both senators voted for the welfare bill that would restrict aid to unwed teenage mothers.

Do you know how your representative and Senators are voting?

LISA JENNINGS and SARA VAN NOTE are members of Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press in Washington, D.C.

## Let's conspire to help African Americans get ahead

By William Reed  
NATIONAL NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

Has there been a conspiracy to keep African Americans disorganized, poor and outside the economic mainstream? This may well be the case, but who is heading the conspiracy? Is it a conglomerate of white people, or is it possibly from inside our own group?

Thirty years after America's Civil Rights Era, the African American community is still being led toward socialism by civil rights leaders and their social policies. As it becomes more and more obvious that civil rights solutions can never be translated into economic power, more and more African Americans are becoming discontent with the black status quo and starting to wonder if the conspiracy is coming from our own. Some blacks are starting to wonder aloud; "With friends like these who needs enemies?"

Thankfully these days ranks of blacks are losing their reluctance to focus attention on internal social problems which are at the core of why the vast majority of our community still finds itself in economic hardship. Although conspiracy theories still abound in America's urban communities, more of us are looking at the people who are supposed to be accountable for our well-being and are less willing to accept blindly the notion that racial discrimination is the only reason why blacks are failing to eradicate poverty. African Americans need to educate themselves on the nature and power of the marketplace. Civil Rights Era leaders are not the proven experts on these matters. Those of us who believe in an internal conspiracy believe our community has been recklessly misled by a tide of propaganda which has been preached (mainly by preachers) that blacks should not, indeed could not, strive as other Americans

in the competitive marketplace. Even though this nation has hosted a succession of ethnic groups, which struggled its way up and out of poverty through the route of business enterprise, we blacks were too often urged and persuaded to wait on the unpredictable outcomes of social reform programs.

We are paying dearly for the folly of heeding such counsel of self-denial and self-inflicted abuse. Since the first slave ships 400 years ago, blacks have watched wave after wave of new immigrants surpass them. Today, African Americans across the country have adopted non-black ethnic groups to make rich. The "conspiracy" is occurring in Detroit where the Arabs supply our food and liquor needs with chains of inner-city supermarkets and convenience stores. In Harlem, the Koreans own most of the stores along 125th Street. And in Miami, it's the Cubans and Haitians who are building the

economic enterprises from the pocketbooks of African Americans in that city. In Houston, it's the Indo-Chinese and Nigerians, aspiring to equality via enterprise while blacks rely on an unstable political agenda that services the few at the top.

The positive "conspiracy" for us needs to start with us. It is imperative that blacks take on a more important role in becoming a functional part of the American free enterprise system by creating capital. Among a myriad of things, surely we should collectively conspire to: Have our churches hire black contractors to build their steeples; buy our gas from black service stations; buy our cars from black-owned dealerships; have our middle-class invest in inner-city stores, shops and ventures and have black-led local governments plan and initiate building commercial strips and developments where we live.

Too long have blacks been led

to live in a socialist environment and mindset within a capitalistic system. Every other group has used the free enterprise route to move up the economic ladder, and blacks can do it as well. In fact, if we have learned anything from the experiences of those groups which have moved into the economic mainstream, it is that competing in the free enterprise arena is the best guarantee of attaining long-term economic prosperity. It is the practical realm of economic development to which we have to turn our attention and formulate effective strategies to permanently reverse the ongoing decline of our communities.

Is there a conspiracy to keep African Americans poor and disorganized. Yes, it is possible. But, it is important for us all to note the old "Pogo" comic strip saying that goes: "We have met the enemy and they are us."

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