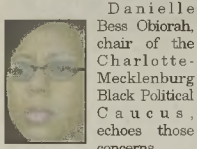


Resistance to election changes

Fairness, cost of at-large races at issue

Continued from page 1A
wouldn't be able to win at-large elections or raise money to run at large.



Danielle Bess Obiorah, chair of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Black Political Caucus, echoes those concerns. "The response I've been getting is folks aren't buying into it," she said. "The task force was crafted to deal with suburbanites. Some of the issues people in our communities aren't helped in that report."

The League of Women Voters of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, which released a report last week challenging the proposals, will host a panel discussion March 30 at 6:30 p.m. at the Main Library at 310 N Tryon St. The report criticized the task force initiative as an effort to "diminish grassroots and district representation, therefore undermining optimal democratic representation and accountability."

Obiorah said electing district-nominated candidates through an at-large campaign runs counter to community representation. By forcing candidates to run countywide, she contends, race and income become larger factors.

Historically, black candidates have fared poorly in at-large races, although Mecklenburg Commissioner

Wilhelmina Rembert was elected twice at large, including one school board campaign. Former CMS board chair Arthur Griffin also won at-large races.

"They're trying to make it district-specific, but you have a problem with at-large races," she said. "You're going to dilute the votes of minorities and folks in some districts. Those districts, in effect, aren't being represented."

Gantt acknowledges the concerns of black voters, but counters that the proposal would likely move the school board to the center. Moderate candidates — regardless of district, race or politics — would stand a better chance of winning, he said.

"The structure by nature forces candidates to be more circumspect about what's going on in the rest of the

district," said Gantt, Charlotte's first — and only — black mayor. "If you don't, you don't have a very good chance of winning."

The League of Women Voters report also raised concerns about the cost of running at large and the proposed appointment of a seventh school board member by county commissioners.

"There would be a substantial increase in the cost of running for office besides campaigning across the district to be elected to the School Board, the successful candidate must campaign throughout the county — six times the size of a district."

The league also concluded that commissioners would have undue influence assigning an appointed member to an elected school board.

"If the County Commission appoints the seventh School Board member, a partisan body would be choosing a member of a non-partisan body. This arrangement also could raise questions about loyalty and accountability."

The Charlotte Post

CAR INSURANCE WITH PERSONAL SERVICE.
NO EXTRA CHARGE.



Paul E. Dockery Ins Agency Inc
Paul E. Dockery, Agent
10230 Berkeley Place Dr
Charlotte, NC 28262
Bus: 704-547-1277



Like a good neighbor, State Farm is there.™

State Farm Mutual Automobile Insurance Company • State Farm Indemnity Company • Bloomington, IL • statefarm.com

Get Your \$\$ Money \$\$ FAST
In as little as 6 Hours with Overnight Tax Service

Call Today 704-370-3700
Expanded hours for fast Professional Services

OVERNIGHT TAX SERVICE

1404-B Beatties Ford Rd., Charlotte, NC 28216
(Electronic Filing Available)

Specializing in:

- 1040 • 1040EZ • Schedule C for Small Businesses
- 1120 Corporate Taxes • Back Taxes

Services provided via email, fax, phone, pick-up and delivery



WALLS COMMUNICATIONS PHOTO

Tuskegee, Ala., Mayor Johnny Ford, Henretta Anderson, chair of the Tuskegee Area Chamber of Commerce and Catherine Light, supervisor of the National Park Service helped break ground for the new headquarters for the Negro Airmen International headquarters.

Home of Tuskegee Airmen to host national black pilots association

SPECIAL TO THE POST

Negro Airman International is relocating its headquarters from Savannah, Ga., to Moton Field in Tuskegee, Ala., where the legendary Tuskegee Airmen trained.

NAI made the announcement at a recent ground breaking ceremony for the new site at Moton Field Municipal Airport.

"The City of Tuskegee is elated that NAI has decided to locate their headquarters at Moton Field," said Tuskegee Mayor Johnny Ford, who added the move would make Moton "a marvelous destination point."

Established in 1967, NAI's goal is furthering

black participation in aviation.

"We have always had a facility here and throughout, the people of Tuskegee have always opened their doors to us. Moving our headquarters here gives us an enhanced opportunity to conduct all of our operations in this historic spot," said Sam Jones, NAI's president.

In addition to hosting its Memorial Day Fly-In, Jones said the relocation offers:

- Flight training programs
- More classroom space for training
- A general aviation museum

Please See HISTORIC/3A

State laws hit predatory lenders

Continued from page 1A

ber of loans available. That refutes industry claims that legislation chokes off credit in the subprime mortgage market, where people with credit problems borrow and where most predatory lenders operate.

The study found that borrowers in states with predatory lending regulation pay about the same or even lower interest rates for subprime mortgages.

Legislation pending in Congress would erase state

laws and replace them with a federal law introduced by Rep. Bob Ney (R-Ohio).

The CRL, consumer groups, civil rights organizations and unions are supporting a bill co-sponsored by U.S. Rep. Mel Watt (D-N.C.), that would beef up federal predatory lending statutes and let states go further if necessary to protect consumers.

"For years, the debate over predatory lending has been conducted in an information vacuum," said Keith Ernst, senior policy counsel at the

Center for Responsible Lending, which supervised the study. "Now we know, beyond a doubt, that these laws work, and that they don't harm consumers. We are at a whole new stage in the debate."

The Center for Responsible Lending is a nonpartisan research and policy organization that works to eliminate abusive financial practices.

On the Net:

CRL report:

www.responsiblelending.org

DOUBLE YOUR DEPOSIT!!!

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU

When It Comes to Free Checking?

How about a chance to win up to \$5000?

Open a new M&F Bank Gratis Checking Account with no monthly fees and no minimum balance, and you could win *double* your opening deposit, up to \$5000! Enroll in free online banking or Direct Deposit and earn extra chances to win.

Offer good through June 30, 2006. For details and official rules, call or visit the M&F Bank branch nearest you, or go to www.mfbonline.com. No account opening or purchase necessary to win.

Be a winner with M&F Bank. And remember, if it's important to you — *like getting a chance to win \$5000* — it matters to us.

M&F
MECHANICS AND FARMERS BANK

Eligible deposit must be new money — transfers or withdrawals from existing M&F Bank deposit accounts not eligible.

There will be one winner each in Durham, Raleigh, Charlotte, and Winston-Salem. Maximum deposit eligible to be doubled is \$2500 per individual.

Limit three (3) entries per individual regardless of entry method. No account opening or purchase necessary.

Employees and their immediate families, members of the Board of Directors of M&F Bank and M&F Bancorp, Inc., are not eligible to participate.

AFFORDABLE FAMILY FUN WITH THE BOBCATS

4 TICKETS
4 HOT DOGS
4 SODAS
2 HATS **\$60**

A \$170 VALUE FOR ONLY

Available for all Bobcats home games

UPCOMING HOME SCHEDULE

Tuesday, March 21 vs. Orlando Magic
Tuesday, March 28 vs. Atlanta Hawks
Friday, March 31 vs. Chicago Bulls

704-BOBCATS • BobcatsBasketball.com • Purchase parking in advance at CharlotteBobcatsArena.com