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As the debate over U.S. immigration reform picks up steam, more African Americans are joining the fray. Like the rest of the country, there is no consensus on what should be done.



TOP PHOTO: GLOBAL INFORMATION NETWORK; BOTTOM: CURTIS WILSON
Demonstrators in New York City waved U.S. and Mexican flags Monday to demand amnesty for illegal immigrants. In Charlotte, Kimm Williams (below) showed her support with a homemade sign.

Our continental divide

Native-born blacks weigh economic realities against rights of undocumented.



By Chenis F. Hodges
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As immigrants rallied in Charlotte and across the U.S. Monday to show America what this country would be like without them, African Americans remain relatively silent on the issue.

But some politicians and experts say immigration often has serious effects on the wages and employment

of blacks and other low-income groups.

Former Winston-Salem alderman Vernon Robinson, who won the Republican primary for the District 13 seat in the U.S. House of Representatives, has been an outspoken opponent of aid to illegal immigrants.

"Anyone wishing to work here must return home to apply, agree to be deported for any violation of the law,

carry a biometric ID card at all times and have their employer sponsor bear the cost of any public service used," Robinson writes on his web site.

But some blacks have lent support to the cause — or at least understand why immigrants are fighting to stay in America.

Ahmed Allhamisi, who attended Monday's pro-immigrant rally, said he

HOW TO insure poorest workers

Task force proposes options to improve N.C. health care coverage

By Herbert L. White
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Expanding health insurance to North Carolina's working poor will take the combined efforts of public and private institutions, according to a report.

The study, released Wednesday by the North Carolina Institute of Medicine, stems from a task force which identified groups most likely to lack insurance coverage, the consequences of being uninsured, factors that result in escalating healthcare costs, and policy options to expand coverage to the uninsured.

"The primary reason that people lack coverage is that it costs too much," stated Pam Silberman, NCIOM president and CEO. "Low income families and small employers often have difficulty paying for health insurance premiums, as do other individuals with pre-existing health problems."

Seventy-eight percent of N.C.'s uninsured are full-time workers or in a family with one, and a third are in a family with two or more full-time employees. Most of the uninsured have a connection to the workforce, but are more likely to be low income or work for a small employer than those with insurance coverage.

More than 80 percent of the uninsured are African American.
Please see STUDY/3A

the box

NEWS, NOTES & TRENDS

Events for mentoring young men

By Angela Lindsay
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

An estimated 400-500 people decked to the nines in tuxedos and ball gowns are expected to convene at the Westin Hotel on Saturday for a very special event. It is not the prom. It's the fifth annual 100 Black Men Black The Gala at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$100 per person or \$800 per table. They can be purchased at www.100blackmenofcharlotte.org/events.html.

The 100 Black Men is a national organization whose goal is to improve the quality of life in the African American community through their collective resources, abilities, and experiences. The gala benefits the 100 Black Men of Greater Charlotte's Scholarship & Movement of Youth programs. Movement of Youth programs.

Please see 100 /3A

VOTING RIGHTS ACT AUTHORIZATION

Lawmakers back federal extension

By Herbert L. White
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U.S. Rep. Mel Watt joined black lawmakers and members of the Senate and House leadership to introduce legislation to reauthorize the 1965 Voting Rights Act.

The legislation, called the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006, will extend the federal law for 25 years and update provisions of the original Voting Rights Act to take into account continuing obstacles to voting by minorities. The legislation will also clarify provisions of the Voting Rights Act that Congress has concluded have

been misinterpreted by the United States Supreme Court.

"I anticipate that every member of the CBC will shortly become co-sponsors of this historic reauthorization legislation," said Watt, of Charlotte and chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The legislation will restore the Act's original intent the rights of minority citizens at the ballot box. The continued pervasiveness of racially polarized voting in jurisdictions covered by the VRA's expiring provisions demonstrates that racial and language minorities remain politically vulnerable, warranting the continued protection of the VRA.

Provisions that would be reauthorized and extended include

See LEGISLATORS/7A



PHOTO: CURTIS WILSON

EYES ON THE BALL: Shabazz Weatherly looks in a pass Wednesday during a flag football game coached by Carolina Panthers players at Bank of America Stadium. Members of the Boys & Girls Clubs from North and South Carolina played at the stadium.

Pioneering urban literature author Nikki Turner adds publishing to her resume/1D



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