



**Congressional  
Black Caucus  
Reports to the  
People**

Congress is now working on the federal budget for 1979 for which the President last February recommended \$500.2 billion in spending. The budget affects everyone and every place in America. But most of all the people and places that depend on federal assistance are: The poor and the elderly who receive welfare and social security, youth seeking job training and employment, the cities that require federal funds for housing, social services, and economic development.

Federal spending affects local economies. Money spent on building highways that circle cities is money lost to mass transit projects within the cities. The billions spent on weapons, most of which are made in factories in the south, and west, is money that is not working to rebuild industries in northern cities.

Nearly one-quarter of the budget -- \$117.8 billion -- goes to national defense. If the current rate of defense spending continues, in only 10 years the military budget will have doubled and over the decade nearly \$2 trillion will have been spent on weapons and military forces. This staggering amount will not be available for additional job programs, aid to cities, and other vital social needs.

What the budget includes and leaves out is important because we live in a society of vastly unequal opportunities, in a world of limited resources. And the government must choose where to spend its money and for whom. Because there are not enough public funds to go around, it is essential that Washington gives priority to those things citizens need most, but which they cannot provide on their own.

When we ask ourselves, for whom and for what the federal government is spending public funds -- what groups and activities the budget is helping and hurting -- we are raising the major question about what the budget does.

In the coming year the President's budget calls for a \$10 billion increase for national defense, but only a \$1.8 billion increase for additional CETA public service training and employment positions. It provides under \$14 billion in direct job creation funds, but nearly twice that amount for the purchase of new weapons for the military establishment.

While the defense budget goes up rapidly, the President recommends only minimal increases or even no increases at all for major social programs. Is this the best way for the government to spend its funds? The answer is, emphatically no, and there is a good reason why.

The United States already has in its arsenal some 20,000 tactical and strategic nuclear warheads, that can destroy our adversaries many times over. We really do not need additional weapons and defense spending to provide an extra margin of security. As a matter of fact, developing newer and deadlier weapons will make us less secure, not more, since the Soviet Union will always match us with new weapons of their own. And each new round in the arms race brings the world closer to nuclear disaster.

We do not need more weapons, but we urgently need more jobs, especially for blacks of whom 12% of the adults and 40% of the youth are unemployed. If the federal budget were working for people, Washington today would be spending far more on jobs programs than on weapons programs.

Unfortunately, the reverse is true because the budget does not now reflect decent national priorities. The sad truth is that when the Congress votes approval of a budget, it does so virtually without any consideration as to whether its policies and programs will accomplish the goals that are intended.

I am optimistic, however, that the Congress is beginning to take the first step in setting budget priorities. Thursday, March 16th was an

historic day in this process. The House of Representatives approved the Hawkins-Humphrey Full Employment Bill (H.R. 50) by a vote of 257-152. If the Senate approves it later this spring, the President will sign it into law. This law will provide for the first time a mechanism for coordinating federal policy to achieve the goals of less than 3% adult unemployment and 4% for adults and teenagers within 5 years.

H.R. 50 is the mandate we have lacked up until now that requires the government to make full employment the top priority. With it in place the decisions that are made on federal budget will be focused on reducing unemployment, and putting the federal budget to work for people.

**Unemployment Down**

February provided an "economic bonanza" for the Las Vegas area, pushing the Clark County unemployment figure well below the national rate to the lowest mark seen here since June, 1970.

Director Larry McCracken of the Nevada Employment Security Department (ESD) said Clark County's seasonally adjusted jobless rate was 5.6 percent in February, down six-tenths of a percentage point from January. The nation's February jobless rate was 6.1 percent.

McCracken said the large decrease in the rate came about because "job growth was twice as great as labor force growth" during the month.

"Expanding Southern Nevada businesses opened up 2,400 new jobs, and only 1,200 persons entered the labor force in February. This meant 1,200 less on jobless rolls and a healthy cut in the unemployment rate," McCracken said.

The ESD chief said 163,800 Southern Nevadans were employed in February, out of a labor force of 174,700. Unemployment dropped to 10,900 for the month.

"The area's excellent economic outlook for February capped a year of steady growth," McCracken said. He reported 10,000 more jobholders than in February 1977, for a 6.5 percent gain in employment.

Unemployment decreased by 28.8 percent over the year, with 4,400 fewer persons out of work. The area labor force added 5,500 for 3.3 percent gain in the 12-month period.

McCracken said all but one of Clark County's eight major industries added jobs in February or held steady at January levels. The county's gigantic service industry led the gainers with 900 new jobs, chiefly in hotels, gaming and recreation.

Government jobs increased by 600. Construction added 300 workers during the month. Another 200 jobs were split evenly between transportation-public utilities and finance-insurance-real estate.

Manufacturing and mining remained at their January job levels. Only trade, with holiday and white sales over, was down -- by 100 jobs.

McCracken reported jobs growth in all of the major industrial sectors during the 12 months since February, 1977. He said here, again, the service industry led with 5,000 new openings over the year.

In the same period trade added 3,100 workers. Construction and government were up 1,900 and 1,500 jobs, respectively. Another 700 Southern Nevadans found posts in finance-insurance-real estate. Transportation-public utilities gained 400 jobs and manufacturing added 300. Mining was up 100 jobs over the year.

**NEW DAY BEGUN**  
by  
**Benjamin L. Hooks**

The recent death of two fighters for freedom and human dignity and justice, one in Colorado Springs, the other in Kimberley, South Africa, was yet another poignant demonstration of the common bond between black people across the Atlantic. Daniel (Chappie) James, the youngest of 17 children, rose from poverty to become a Four Star General in the U. S. Air Force.

That was the highest rank ever achieved by a black person in U. S. military history. And it was no simple feat. Indeed, Chappie James not only was a superb fighter pilot; he was also commander-in-chief of the North American Air Defense Command.

Robert Sobukwe never lived to see his people attain the level of freedom that Black Americans have won. Founder of the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress, he himself spent the last 18 years either in prison on Robben Island or under severe government restrictions. He spent six straight years in solitary confinement in South Africa's prisons.

Despite these odds, he studied law, was admitted before the bar and had a limited practice in Kimberley. Like Chappie James, Sobukwe never lost hope that some day his people would be fully free politically, socially, economically and psychologically.

Gen. James' fight for equality began early. A native of Pensacola, Fla., he attended segregated schools and rode in the back of the bus as was then customary for blacks. With his mother's inspiration, he rose above these obstacles. His opportunity to begin a great military career came when he joined the segregated Army Air Corps at Tuskegee, Alabama.

One of his most poignant experiences was the manner in which the NAACP saved him and his career when he was about to be punished for protesting against discrimination in the Air Force. General James recalled these experiences when he, in turn, supported the NAACP by submitting an affidavit to buttress the NAACP's case before the U. S. District Court in Mississippi during the Port Gibson boycott crisis in 1976.

Only those Black Americans who have experienced the harshest form of southern jim crow can comprehend Sobukwe's life-long torment under apartheid. Like the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Sobukwe was a devout follower of India's Mahatma Ghandi. He rejected violence, but was still persecuted for practicing civil disobedience. Both the African police killed 61 Africans who were demonstrating against the identity cards they are required to carry. His original sentence was for three years. But he was kept on the dreaded Tobben Island for another six under a specially enacted law that was popularly known as the "Sobukwe clause."

Common to both Chappie James and Robert Sobukwe were the qualities of profound moral strength, willpower, and ambition and confidence in their own history and destiny. Such are the qualities of greatness.

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