

Point of View

To Be Equal

SAVING SOCIAL SECURITY

By Vernon Jordan

It has been predicted that the social security fund will run out of money in the near future. Long-term, the aging of our population suggests deep funding problems lie ahead.

The Administration's response to that situation is a plan that would slice benefits for people who retire below the age of 65, cut pensions of future retirees, and put heavy eligibility and benefit restrictions on the disabled.

It proposed other adjustments, too, and the entire package would break faith with the implicit contract between workers and the govern-

ment, and would take money away from the elderly.

That is why the Senate slapped the plan down so quickly in a resolution. But objections to the Administration's plan must still be prepared or its feature may be incorporated into the



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ultimate compromise.

The reduced benefits for under-65 retirees would hit especially hard at the minority poor. People who opt for early retirement are disproportionately people who are in ill health or hold marginal jobs in troubled industries and face recurrent unemployment.

If the Administration's idea is to keep people in the work force it is going about it the wrong

many decades, paying disproportionate parts of their low wages into the social security trust fund.

To deny them now the right to retire at a liveable income is to lay a new and unfair burden on people who have had their full share of such burdens in their lifetimes.

Tighter eligibility and benefit restrictions on disabled workers would also be unjust. Disability

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way. Sure, such sharply reduced benefits may delay some retirements, but it will work terrible hardships on people who have been burned out by a lifetime of hard work at low wages.

For such workers, early retirement is the only viable option for preserving a minimum standard of living and avoiding the welfare rolls. They've worked at mean, hard jobs for

insurance is a traditional target of those who see cheats under the bed, but there is little evidence to support the notion that those who receive such benefits can hold down a job.

Seven out of ten applicants are already rejected, and minorities, who work in hazardous, low-paying jobs, would be affected most by the See SOCIAL, page 12

A VICTORY IN THE SOUTH

By Bayard Rustin & Norman Hill

The recent victory in Mississippi's interim election by Wayne Dowdy, a labor and black-endorsed Democratic Congressional candidate, is no mere accident. It may well be an indication of a turn in public opinion against the Reagan administration's conservative economic policies.

Mississippi's Fourth District, which has elected the first solidly pro-labor congressman in that state's history, is populated in significant numbers by white collar, well to do whites, who have provided Republicans with a strong base of votes. Even John Stennis, a respected state legislator and the son of a popular Democratic Senator, lost in the district in 1978 by a margin of nearly two to

one. This year not only has the district backed a Democrat, it has elected a Democrat who strongly supports the extension of the provisions of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and backs legislation which would provide food stamps for striking workers. Moreover, Mississippi's voters have defeated a Republican who based his campaign on staunch support for the Reagan economic program.

The key to Rep. Dowdy's victory was the coalition forged between blacks and organized labor, whose hard work turned out the vote. Local public opinion polls also indicated that another factor in the Democratic victory was considerable unease among voters concerning President See SOUTH, page 12

PEOPLE, PLACES and POLITICS

By Joe Neal



While our minds and attention were being directed toward the Reagan budget cuts and his tax plan for the wealthy, it almost slipped by without notice that the conservatives in Congress were making one of their greatest assaults upon the Constitution.

Article III of the Constitution sets out the power of the Judiciary. Subsection 1 of Article III states that "The Judicial power of the United States shall be vested in one Supreme Court and such inferior courts as the Congress may from time to time ordain and establish."

In Article III, Subsection 2 the Constitution talks about how and to what extent the Supreme Court may involve itself in entertaining cases before it. Subsection 2 of Article III says the Supreme Court's powers extend "to all cases involving law and equity, arising under this Constitution, and the laws of the United States."

One would think that this is sufficient to give the Court its powers to handle all cases and that it is the Court which shall determine the efficacy of all laws of the country as to their constitutionality.

The conservatives are not buying this argument, because there is a provision in Article III, Subsection 2, which states, "In all the cases before mentioned, the Supreme Court shall have appellate jurisdiction, both as to law and fact, with such exceptions and under such regulations as the Congress shall make." Those conservatives in Washington take the phrase "with such exceptions and under such regulations as Congress shall make," to mean that Congress can pass laws to prevent certain

cases from being appealed to the Supreme Court. In other words, the Supreme Court could only hear cases which Congress permits them to hear.

The problem with this thinking, if it prevails, is that every state in the Union would become the final arbiter of its own laws. Can you imagine what this would mean to minority progress in this country if every state became the final arbiter of its laws? You could forget about minority rights.

Conservatives such as Utah's Orin Hatch, North Carolina's John East and Jesse Helm are determined in their efforts to push this cause. They have chosen such issues as abortion and busing as the vehicles in which they can ride such a cause through Congress with a great deal of public support.

There is no doubt in my mind that abortion and busing are issues which have attracted and can attract a lot of attention. These issues have a volatile air about them and can propel changes which are an unreasonable course for the country to take. With such issues as abortion and busing, the nation could be easily beguiled into supporting this change in our constitutional process without any appreciation for the consequences of such support.

Before imbuing the conservatives with accolades of genius, one must realize that this argument is not new. Alexander Hamilton in 1778 confronted this argument at the adoption of the Constitution in his Federalist Paper No. 78. He wrote, "It is not otherwise to be supposed, that the Constitution could intend to enable the representatives of the people to See NEAL, page 4

Editorial

SOMEONE IN TROUBLE

Gentlemen:

In reply to your request to send a check, I wish to inform you that the present condition of my bank account makes it impossible. My shattered financial condition is due to federal laws, state laws, county laws, city laws, corporation laws, liquor laws, mother-in-laws, brother-in-laws and outlaws.

Through these laws, I am compelled to pay a business tax, amusement tax, head tax, school tax, gas tax, light tax, water tax and excise tax. I am required to get a business license, car license, truck license, operator's license, not to mention a marriage license and a dog license.

I am also required to contribute to every society and organization which the genius of man is capable of bringing to life; to woman's relief; also to every hospital and charitable institution in the city, including the Salvation Army, Community Chest, Red Cross, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Y.W.C.A. and Y.M.C.A.

For my own safety, I am required to carry health insurance, life insurance, fire insurance, property insurance, liability insurance, burglar insurance, tornado insurance, unemployment insurance, and old age insurance.

My business is so governed that it is no easy matter to find out who owns it. I am inspected, expected, suspected, disrespected, rejected, dejected, examined, re-examined, informed, required, summoned, fined, commanded and compelled until I provide an inexhaustible supply of money for every known need, desire or hope of the human race.

Simply because I refuse to donate to something or other, I am boycotted, talked about, held up, held down and robbed until I am almost ruined.

I can tell you honestly that except for a miracle that happened, I could not enclose this check. The wolf that comes to my doorstep each day just had pups in the kitchen. I sold them, and here is the money.

Yours Very Truly,

AUTHOR UNKNOWN