

# Point of View

## Editorial

Las Vegas and Clark County are becoming notorious for the neglect of their citizen protection in the matter of flood control.

After every rain in this area, bridges are washed out, streets remain flooded for hours and sometimes days, and, of late, people have been killed trying to cross unmarked flooded areas.

Perhaps there is no one who can be blamed directly for the condition of our city and county as regards flood control, but it would seem to be most humane for our politicians to stop politicking long enough to build an adequate drainage system for our area.

This same situation existed in Phoenix, Arizona, for several years, with no "public servant" daring to mention a permanent solution to the problem. Nothing was done until an almost new city commission was elected. This new commission selected as its first priority the task of doing something about flood control. Bridges were built, street drainage as vastly improved, and dangers from flooding were vastly reduced. Needless to say, this commission has been reelected almost intact since then.

Perhaps we should take a good look at persons who are responsible for the lack of attention to flood control and elect someone who we feel will do more about it than just engage in nonsensical rhetoric.

November is not too far away. Flood control is important. It might save lives.

## To Be Equal

# THE IMPORTANCE OF AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

By John E. Jacob

Affirmative action is central to the black quest for equity. But the war for affirmative action is in danger of being lost.

The Supreme Court just said that seniority takes precedence over minority jobs. Reasonable goals and timetables are stigmatized as reverse discrimination and quotas. Perpetuating black disadvantage is excused by pious statements about a "color-blind, racially neutral society."

Well, black people also want a color-blind,

racially-neutral society. But we're not there yet. And the only way to get there is through affirmative action programs that overcome discrim-



John Jacob

inatory barriers to opportunities.

There's nothing color-blind when the black poverty rate is triple the white rate. There's nothing racially-neutral when black unemployment is more than double the white rate.

The heritage of racism will not be broken until effective remedies overcome the disadvantage imposed on blacks because of their blackness.

That means race-conscious remedies would replace the historic negative exclusion of black people.

In 1789 the U.S. Constitution defined blacks as three-fifths of a person for counting pur-

poses. In 1984 we are still three-fifths of white people as measured by family income, by employment, by educational attainment, by all of the other meaningful measures of life.

Affirmative action is I am encouraged by a

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not a new concept. Back in the 1930s when racist administrators kept blacks out of work relief programs, the Public Works Administration wrote specific hiring quotas for blacks into its contracts.

We've lived with veterans preferences for years, and no one complained about reverse discrimination. Throughout our history we had an unwritten affirmative action code that reserved the best jobs and schools for white males.

Black people have been — and continue to be — subjected to pervasive negative action that will perpetuate our disadvantage unless our society implements positive affirmative action as a remedy.

I am not prepared to abandon the war for affirmative action as lost. The hostility of the Jus-

tice Department and the inconsistencies of the courts notwithstanding, there is still hope that the innate fairness of the American people will give affirmative action a chance.

recent Harris Poll that asked this question of potential voters: "Do you favor or oppose federal laws requiring affirmative action programs for women and minorities in employment and education, provided there are no rigid quotas?"

Two-thirds said, "Yes," they favor such laws. Less than one in five opposed them.

Now, one poll doesn't mean too much in the general scheme of things. But it is heartening that such a strong majority backs affirmative action in the face of the extraordinary campaign against it.

If nothing else, that poll ought to put some backbone into politicians in both parties who seek to exploit racial divisions by pandering to racist sentiments.

## LET'S DO OUR PART

By H.P. "Fitz" Fitzgerald

Within the past twenty years, more than \$20,000,000 in city, county, state, and federal funds have been spent to clean up, fix up, revitalize, and make the Old West Side and the Vegas Heights areas more attractive and viable communities. And more than 95% of this money came to our areas in the form of grants. That is, the money provided free

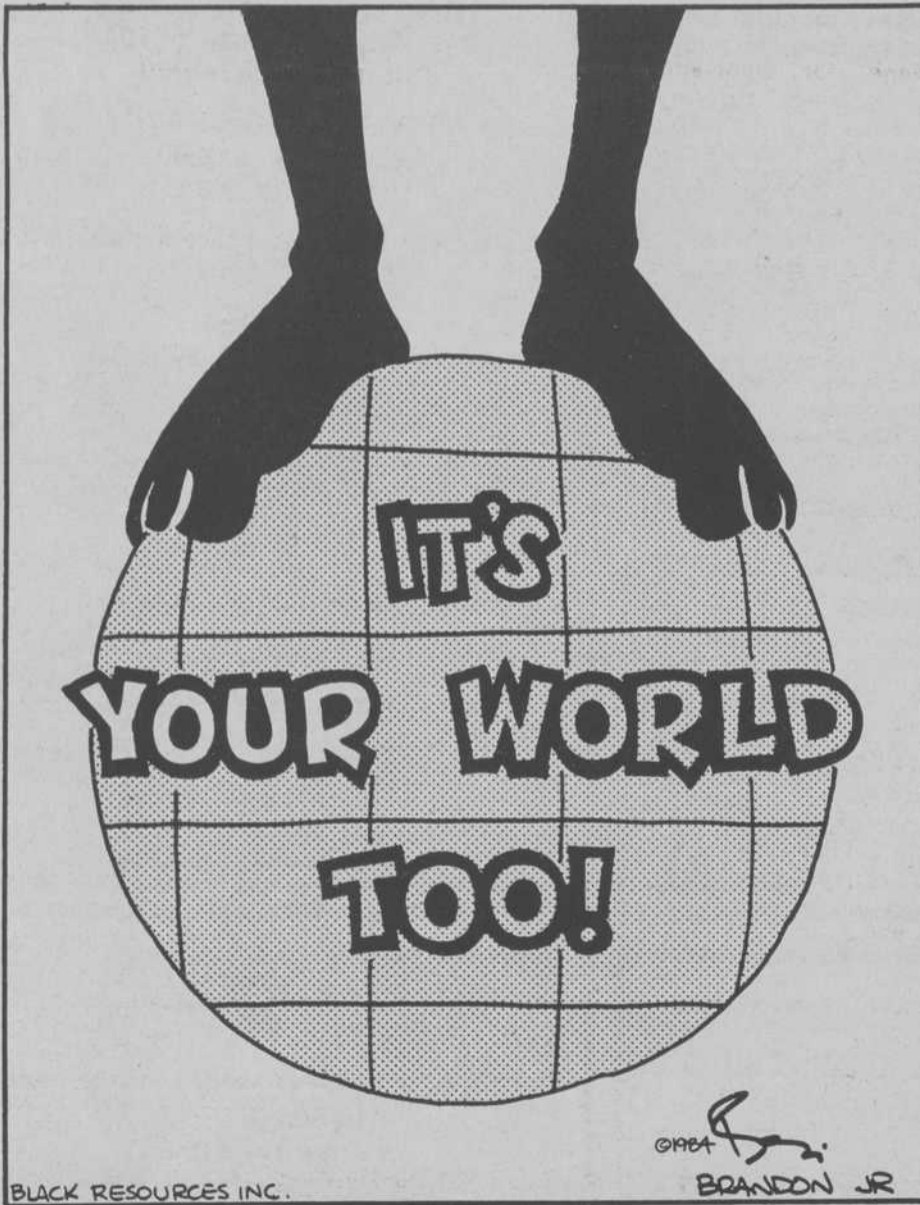
clean up and fix up services to those of us who live in these areas. And, in most cases the services provided free labor and materials.

Our organization, the Westside Community Development Commission, a Community Development Block Grant, Housing and Urban De-

velopment (HUD) funded program, has refurbished more than 1,000 dwellings in the Old West Side and Vegas Heights between 1977 and this date. Our program alone, has saved the homeowners in our areas more than \$1 million and, in most

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