

# Point of View

## Editorial

The news media is filled with reports of local, state, national and international crises. There are crises situations to include the alleged bombing of an Air India jumbo jet claiming the lives of 329 people; a container blast in the Tokyo International Airport; the hostages held by terrorists in Beirut following the hijacking of the TWA jetliner; huge numbers of missing children across the country; the huge wave of dope peddling across the nation; the loss of the orange crop in Florida, and the alarming minority unemployment everywhere.

We, as law abiding citizens, must begin to question the effect of so many crisis situations upon the physical and mental health of ourselves and our children. Will our sons and daughters be forced to fight in a war that may or may not concern them directly?

The above question is being asked by more and more of our young men especially. There can be no definitive answer to this question as long as our world leaders do not put forth an honest effort to peacefully settle their differences.

It seems rather apparent that crisis become more serious just before announcements are made concerning intentions to seek reelection or afterwards.

One other question that we may ask is: Are we in any way responsible for the creation of any of the crises mentioned above? If the United States is responsible in the least for any one critical incident, then we must examine our motives for becoming involved.

Blacks are particularly vulnerable to the effects of crisis situations on the national level. It appears that every time there is an emergency situation, programs aimed at helping Blacks are either reduced or curtailed.

As we enter the summer season, we would do well to rethink our priorities for dealing with situations all around us.

*The views expressed on these editorial pages are those of the artists and authors indicated. Only the one indicated as the Sentinel-Voice editorial represents this publication.*

*"Remember that we are one, that our cause is one, and that we must help each other, if we must succeed... What you suffer, we suffer; what you endure, we endure. We are indissolubly united, and must fall or flourish together."*

Frederick Douglass  
Editorial from North Star

## To Be Equal

# The Washington Numbers Game

By JOHN E. JACOB

The Office of Management and Budget, which is supposed to be the guardian of the budget, has taken on the task of undercutting civil rights under the cover of reducing paperwork.

Many government agencies demand statistical breakdowns on race and gender from users of their services. At the Department of Housing and Urban Development, for example, home loan lenders seeking federal guarantees have to indicate the race and sex of loan applicants on their forms for government-insured loan guarantees.

Why? The answer is simple.

In the past blacks, Hispanics and women were routinely discriminated against for housing loans. That discrimination is now illegal and to monitor compliance with the law, HUD, the Veterans

Administration, and other federal agencies include race and sex information on their forms.

That way they can tote up the statistics and determine



John E. Jacob

whether discrimination appears to be taking place and who is doing it. Take away that valuable enforcement tool and you virtually guarantee that discrimination can go on without fear of being caught or punished.

So why does OMB want to do away with those statistics?

It says they aren't necessary — that the same numbers are collected elsewhere by other government agencies. But those agencies often do not have the responsibility for enforcing the laws and regulations applicable to

Department's data collection procedures and you virtually ensure that it will not be able to measure progress.

The Transportation Department is affected too, since it administers similar set-aside programs. Federal monies distributed to states

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HUD and VA applicants.

OMB isn't politically naive, so it doesn't come right out and say its purpose is to get government out of the business of enforcing the civil rights laws. Rather, it claims it has the "responsibility under the Paperwork Reduction Act to reduce the burden to the public in filling out forms."

That raises the issue of whether paperwork reduction is more important than civil rights enforcement and suggests a very strange set of priorities. Sure, it is good to cut government red tape and paperwork, but no one ever thought the Paperwork Reduction Act would in effect become the Minority Opportunities Reduction Act.

If OMB has its way other agencies too, will eliminate racial and gender questions on their forms. The Commerce Department, for example, runs programs designed to give minority-owned businesses their fair share of government contracts. Eliminate the

and cities could also be used to discriminate without data on race and sex of employees, contractors, and users.

It is clear that OMB's aim is to stop civil rights enforcement by eliminating information crucial to that enforcement.

It has a parallel in the Justice Department's war on numerical guidelines in affirmative action programs and in the government's own reluctance to comply with requests for statistics about its own employment patterns.

Speaking of numbers, it would be interesting to have some numbers about OMB itself — how many blacks, Hispanics and women it employs in professional positions and how many were involved in its current campaign against vital statistics.

Effective measurement is a form of control. Take away the data and you lose control. OMB is trying to make sure the government loses control over civil rights enforcement.

The National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) is pleased to join the National Medical Association, the National Council of Negro Women, the

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Be aware of and protect against cancer . . .

## Health Important To Black Progress

Poor health is increasingly becoming an important factor in Black progress and survival.

Health experts say, in most instances, our environment and the way we live our daily lives directly affect the state of our physical health.

A striking example of this is documented evidence that Blacks drink and smoke more than any other population group, and, as a result, Black Americans get cancer more often and die from cancer more often than the general population.

Specifically, cancer data during the past 25 years show that the incidence rate for Blacks is up 27 percent in comparison with a 12 percent increase for the white population. Mortality rates for Blacks have increased 34 percent, although the rate for whites has increased only nine percent. Studies show that socioeconomic factors, including diet and lifestyle

decisions, rather than inherent biological characteristics caused the prevailing difference between Blacks and whites.

There is encouraging news about a new national effort to reduce cancer risks and deaths among Blacks. Officials of the National Cancer Institute and representatives of key national Black organizations have announced the launching of a JOINT HEALTH VENTURE to help protect Blacks from cancer through prevention and health awareness.

This JOINT HEALTH VENTURE is a cooperative program of the National Cancer Institute of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and national Black organizations to utilize existing grassroots communications networks and the mass media to convince Black Americans that there is something all of us can do every day to protect ourselves against cancer.