

Point of View

To Be Equal

EQUALIZING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

by John E. Jacob

Equity in our educational system depends on real steps to improve the schooling for disadvantaged youngsters. State and local school reforms won't work unless the federal government provides the resources necessary to assure that poor youngsters get the help they need.

The federal program known as Chapter One provides \$3.4 billion a year to 14,000 school districts to enrich the educational experiences of disadvantaged kids. It is used for classroom aids, books

books, counseling services, special instructional assistance, and other vital items that wouldn't otherwise reach those children.

Chapter One has been on the books since 1965 — long enough to have built a successful track record. Many experts credit it with the rise in black SAT scores and with equalizing educational opportunities for poor children.

But Congress has never funded Chapter One so that

its benefits reach every eligible child. The majority of poor children are not served by this program, and even the relatively small proposed budget increase for Chapter



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One still leaves half of all eligible children outside its reach.

If our leaders are serious about excellence and equity in education, Chapter One should be fully funded so that every eligible child has access to its benefits.

The budget deficits can't be used as an excuse to continue withholding Chapter One programs from eligible youngsters. Even business leaders concerned about the deficit insist that govern-

ment invest more in education. The prestigious Committee on Economic Development's report, *Children In Need*, specifically backs full funding for Chapter One.

As important as more funds is what the schools do with the money. Chapter One programs need to be de-

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signed to get the biggest educational bang for the bucks, and they should be directed at helping the youngsters who need help most.

That's why parental involvement in planning, implementing and evaluating those programs is absolutely crucial to their success.

Parents and their children have the biggest stake in Chapter One, and it's long been known that when parents are involved in school activities their kids tend to achieve better in the classroom.

Beyond that, parental involvement is essential to ensure that programs actually do work to make a difference in student achievement.

Local school districts ought to implement parent involvement programs, train parents in educational issues and work with community-based organizations to help make those Chapter One programs work better.

Our kids are shortchanged when there's anything less than a full partnership between schools and informed parents. Ideally, educators, parents and community and civic groups should be working closely together — both to improve the schooling our kids get, and also as advocates for programs like Chapter One.

Poverty is on the rise among children — their poverty rates are the highest of any population group. Education is an important way to help them break out of poverty. Programs such as Chapter One, Head Start, and others that give disad-

Clarence Brandley is a 36-year old African American. He has been on death row in Texas since February 1981 and has escaped two execution dates by the skin of his teeth, most recently in March of this year. When the Brandley case was presented before Cong. John Conyer's Subcommittee on Criminal Justice earlier this year the Congressman raised this question: can a young Black

United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT—TEXAS STYLE

man receive justice in the small southern town of Conroe, Texas?

That is, indeed, the question. For, evidence presented at a recent judicial hearing indicates that Mr. Brandley's case was handled in a blatantly racist manner. Key evidence was lost or thrown away, there is strong indication of collusion between the prosecutor and the judge, and one of the prosecution's

own witnesses has now confirmed the racial overtones surrounding the arrest. He testified that a Conroe police officer said of Brandley before his arrest. "You're the nigger; you're elected."

The case is based on a 1980 assault and murder of a white female student at a high school in Conroe, Texas. Conroe is just 45 miles outside Houston. Five janitors worked at the high school. Mr. Brandley was the only African American janitor. At the first trial in 1981 the white janitors provided alibis for one another, but not for Mr. Brandley. In addition, and most importantly, Brandley was tried twice by all-white juries.

Think Tank Head Reports On Status of Blacks and GOP

by C. R. Gibbs
NNPA News Release

After saying that new research by his organization shows that the Republican Party faces an "enormous image problem" and yet has "enormous opportunities" within the Black community, Joint Center for Political Studies President Eddie N. Williams recently released a set of provocative findings at a luncheon of Black Republicans.

Based on a survey of 1800 randomly chosen Americans, 900 whites and 900 blacks, Williams revealed that only 17% of all blacks believe the Republican Party cares about their problems. Only 55% of black Republicans believe their own party cares about them. Among Black Democrats, 80% believe their party cares about them. "This perception," Williams said, "may well be a central determinant of black partisanship."

Williams also reported, however, that despite the image problem, there is considerable potential for the GOP to win more black support. He cited three reasons. First, the weakening of black ties to the Democratic Party. The survey showed a decreasing number of blacks calling themselves strong

party members.

Another reason, according to Williams, is that many blacks between the ages of 18-29 align themselves with Republican aims and should be a "major target" for recruitment efforts. Eighteen percent of this group already call themselves Republicans. And many plan to vote GOP in the upcoming Presidential elections. Less than a third of these young blacks call themselves strong Democrats. And while 20% of them approve the way President Reagan performs his job, over 70% of these young blacks want Jesse Jackson to become the Democrats' candidate for President.

The third reason for GOP optimism, explained Williams, is that none of the other Republican Party Presidential candidates cause such a negative reaction as the President does now.

Williams challenged the luncheon's sponsor, The Council of 100, to be more active in the black community and particularly in their own party.

Williams, 55, was appointed President of the Joint Center in 1972. Founded in 1970, the Joint Center is the leading think tank on black political issues.

The first trial ended in a mistrial because one, lone white juror held out, saying the prosecution had not proved its case. That juror was besieged by thousands of angry telephone callers screaming "nigger-lover" and other epithets. The second trial ended in conviction.

Then, finally, in October of this year, Mr. Brandley was granted a hearing that looked at new evidence in the case. The new evidence is convincing. First, one of the white janitors, John Henry Sessum, has now revealed that he saw another white janitor, Gary Acreman, accost the girl at the high school just before she was murdered. Then, after a photo of Mr. Acreman, the white janitor, was televised, it was discovered that he had been fired from his previous job because of physical harassment of a female employee and had, in fact, been involved in several such incidents.

Now, as for the old evidence: it was revealed before Brandley's first trial that certain key evidence was allegedly lost. Then, before the second trial, additional evidence, also essential, was thrown away "by mistake,"

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Words of Marcus Garvey

By Kofi Tyus

"It is so hard, so difficult to find men who will stick to a purpose, who will maintain a principle, for the good of that principle."

vantaged children extra assistance and are directed to helping them to achieve are essential.

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