

MINORITY PARTICIPATION ERODING IN OLDER AMERICANS ACT PROGRAMS

Although the Older Americans Act (OAA) specifically directs federal, state and local governments to serve older persons with the "greatest economic or social needs," minority Americans, who most often fall into those categories are losing ground in receiving the benefits of the programs. This issue will be explored in a congressional hearing to be held at the conclusion of the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged (NCBA) 18th Annual Conference in Flint, Michigan. The hearing, to be held on Saturday, June 25 at 9:00 a.m. at the Hyatt Regency Flint will be chaired by U.S. Congressman Dale E. Kildee (D-Michigan), who is Chairman of the Subcommittee on Human Resources of the House Education and Labor Committee, which has authorizing and oversight responsibilities for the Act. U.S. Congressman Charles Haynes (D-Ill.), also a member of the House Education and Labor Committee, will participate in the hearing.

According to figures gathered by the Administration on Aging, the federal agency charged with implementing the Act, the rate of elderly minority participation in some of the services provided for in the OAA, called Title III-B support services, has fallen by almost 30% during this decade from 21.9% of total served in 1980 to 15.6% in 1987. In 1987, there were nearly 700,000 fewer aged minority citizens, including 400,000 fewer Blacks, receiving Title III-B support services than in 1980. Some of the services provided under Title III-B of the OAA are transportation, health screening, crime prevention and victim assistance, and outreach.

There has also been a downward trend in minority participation in nutrition (Title III-C) services, although that decline has not been as dramatic as that of support services. The minority participation rate in nutrition services, which includes congregate meals and home

delivered meals, has declined by 12.6% from 19% of total served in 1980 to 16.6% in 1987.

According to Aaron Henry, co-chairman of the NCBA Board of Directors and a member of the Mississippi State House of Representatives, "NCBA is encouraged by the fact that the Subcommittee is holding a hearing on this vital topic. Throughout its history, NCBA has placed priority emphasis on expanding the level of minority participation in all programs providing services to seniors. This hearing shall once and for all document the issues, problems and solutions for increasing minority participation in Older Americans Act programs."

A distinguished panel of experts representing state, regional and local aging agencies, and advocacy organizations will discuss the status of minority participation in OAA programs, the barriers to increase minority participation, and specific measures that can be taken by government and private organizations to increase the participation rate.

The National Caucus and Black Aged is a non-profit membership organization which provides employment, housing, training and advocacy services to the Black aged, as well as technical assistance and professional development opportunities to those interested in serving the Black elderly. During 1986, NCBA assisted in hosting a series of forums and Congressional hearings on the status of the Black aged in areas such as housing, health care and income. The results were published in a comprehensive report entitled, *The Status of the Black Elderly in the U.S.*

RFK

From Page 6

which too often portrays government as the enemy. But like his brother John, Robert Kennedy understood that government is simply a tool that can be used wisely and compassionately. Not necessarily more government—but better government. RFK was inspired by a passage from George Bernard Shaw which was the basis for his ambitious agenda:

"You see things; and you say, 'Why?' But I dream things that never were; and I say, 'Why not?'"

As we confront new problems and new dilemmas we should take note in RFK's dream of a better America. People helping people. City, state and federal elected officials working in tandem. Government complementing the process along the way. Seeking to find solutions to poverty and ignorance. Lifting our fellow citizens up when they need a helping hand.

Even today, after two decades of international political development, the words of Robert F. Kennedy ring true in the hearts of Black South Africans. This passage from a speech he delivered to students in the University of Cape Town, is inscribed in marble above his gravesite:

"Each time a man stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different

Those interested in obtaining more information about the hearing or the conference which takes place June 23-25, may call the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged in Washington, D.C., at 202-637-8400.

It's The Kerner Report Years Later:

Commission Finds Minorities 'Moving Backward'

by Chester A. Higgins, Sr.
NNPA News Editor

Shades of the Kerner Report 20 Years Ago!

WASHINGTON—A panel of bipartisan political, business and education leaders whose honorary chairmen were former Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford, issued a grim assessment of the status of minorities in the United States. And it warned that "America is moving backward" in efforts to achieve equality for Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans. The report was entitled "One-Third of a Nation." The Kerner Report (named for its chairman, the late Ill. Gov. Otto Kerner) in 1968 declared the U.S. was becoming two nations — "one Black, one white — separate and unequal."

Called The Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life, the panel was formed by the American Council on Education and the Education Commission of the States. It was headed by Cornell University President Frank H.T. Rhodes. The report, released

centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance."

When you hear these stirring passages it reminds us of the tremendous possibilities of government and people. In remembering Robert Kennedy we should be guided by his compassion and caring which challenges all of us to work harder to improve the quality of life for our citizens.

at a Washington, D.C. news conference, was blunt:

In education, employment, income, health, longevity and other basic measures of individual and social well-being, gaps persist—and in some cases are widening—between members of minority groups and the majority (white) population.

There is nothing new in such a report. Pick up any annual report of the National Urban League on the Status of Black America and you'll find it all there, chapter and verse and probably in much more definitive detail. Or, absent that, if you are a reasonably careful observer, just look around you. It leaps out at you like an unleashed tiger in the nation's teeming inner cities, its crowded prisons, bulging with Black men, or the daily obit notices and bloodstained police blotters, the worrisome statistics on pregnant teens and horrendous joblessness, all chron-

icled in daily news or weekly magazine pieces.

What may be new in this report, or better, about the people who compiled it is a seemingly determined resolve in setting a definite goal—"within 20 years"—for the nation to achieve equality of life for minorities. The Commission recommended several strategies, including renewed efforts to recruit minority students into higher education, "a new vision" of affirmative action and expanded leadership in the minority community. The latter recommendation is one that Black Americans and their institutions — the Church, civil and civic as well as political organizations—are already beginning to implement.

Among the 37 panelists were former Senator Edmund Muskie (D-MA), Mrs. Coretta Scott King, baseball Commissioner Peter Ueberroth

EOB SENIOR ACTIVITIES

The Economic Opportunity Board of Clark County's Senior Center, located at 330 W. Washington Avenue, offers programs and services in health, education and social activities. Call 647-2536.

The summer heat should be a time of concern for seniors with health problems. Have your blood pressure or your weight checked by the EOB senior center every Monday, 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The service is free.

Foster Grandparents are needed to work with special children, a few hours per week. Earn a stipend while helping mentally retarded, delinquent, emotionally handicapped, neglected and abused children.

A community clean-up campaign is being offered by Top Teens of America. Low-income seniors needing assistance in cleaning up their yards are encouraged to telephone the EOB Senior Center to make arrangements for the free yard service.

Hollyhock Adult Day Health Care Center is now offering Monday through Saturday service for the elderly and impaired individuals needing assistance in their daily activity. For more information call 382-0588.

Masjid Muhammad Services Scheduled

In The Name of Allah,

The Most Gracious, The Most Merciful

- Masjid Muhammad begins Jumah Prayer promptly at 12:00 p.m. Friday.
- Sisters class starts at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday (for women of all ages).
- Taleem & The Jr. Taleem Program (ages 3-15 years old) commences on Sunday at 1:00 p.m.
- Masjid Muhammad is open every night for The Ishaah Prayer.

All Praise is due to Allah (The Creator)

711 Morgan Street
647-2757

ATTENTION!!!

*All former members of the
CHRISTIAN CHURCH
(Disciples of Christ)
living in Southern Nevada.*

*You are invited to become a part of
a newly organized Fellowship of the
SECOND CHRISTIAN CHURCH*

located at

**950 West Owens Avenue
Las Vegas, Nevada**

P.O. Box 5072, Las Vegas 89127

Sunday Services from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Mondays and Fridays — Bible Study - 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

**Rev. Jesse D. Scott, pastor
646-1662 646-1510**

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Churches are urged to send their services and program announcements, typewritten, to the Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice Church Reporter, Mary Wilson, at 1201 South Eastern Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89104. Articles must be mailed or delivered to the above location no later than Monday noon of each week.