

# Point of View

## To Be Equal

# THE HIDDEN CAMPAIGN ISSUE

by John E. Jacob

The 1988 presidential election campaign should have been a forum to debate the national problem of poverty and to propose realistic solutions for it.

But that was not the case. Both candidates kept the issue under wraps. The vice president, because the Administration he serves has presided over an increase in the numbers of the poor, and Governor Dukakis, because he appeared reluctant to offer the inevitably costly solutions.

Because of that, an opportunity was missed to educate the public to the terrible extent of poverty in America and to the need for an integrated program of child care, education, and job training to deal with it.

Particularly shameful is the poverty toll among children—about a fourth of all kids under the age of six.

It's not as if we don't know how to reduce poverty—we do. And it's not as if we couldn't afford to do it—we can.

Education and job training programs can help move people out of poverty by giving them the skills a tight labor market needs. The cost of such programs may be high initially, but when you

factor in the increased productivity and higher wages and taxes of the formerly poor, they're sound investments in the future.

Programs aimed at improving the life chances of poor children are probably the most cost-effective of all.



John E. Jacob

For example, the federal government has a program providing nutritional aid for women, infants and children who are poor. But it's underfunded, so only about two out of every five eligible people participate. The program reduces infant mortality and increases the weight of newborns, a crucial factor in a baby's survival and future health.

Every dollar invested in that program is estimated to save \$3 in hospital costs.

Another cost-effective program is developmental pre-school education. The

Head Start program is the prime example and it's built a two-decade-old track record.

Studies show that kids in Head Start perform better when they get to school and are more successful in later life than similar kids who aren't in the program. And there are a lot of them -- less than one out of five kids

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eligible for Head Start is enrolled in it.

It's estimated that for every dollar spent on Head Start, another \$6 are saved in later social costs.

I know from my Urban League experience that job training programs that equip people with skills for today's job market have a better than 4-1 dollar payoff. That is, for every dollar invested, \$4 is returned to the community through increased economic activity and taxes paid by the newly-employed.

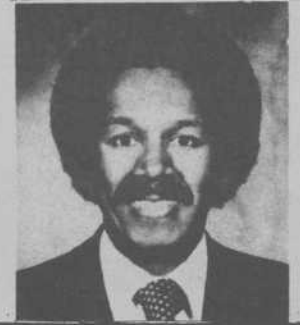
It's sad that the campaign became a missed opportunity to show people that government has to be a partner in solving the problem of poverty and that well-conceived, well-managed federal

NNPA FEATURE

## COPING

by

Dr. Charles W. Faulkner



### "WHY ARE BLACKS SO UPRIGHT?"

Dear Dr. Faulkner:

I like your column but why do you always have to talk about prejudice, discrimination and racism. Your ideas about psychology make a lot of sense but why are you and so many other black people so uptight? Sincerely yours, a white American."

Dear American:

Of all the questions that whites ask, your question is the most disturbing. It is disturbing because it reveals an unrealistic and insensitive view of the world.

The average black person probably experiences two to ten acts of racism a day,

everyday of his life. Which constitute horrendous blows to his/her ego and self-image. After living a life of daily, unnecessary racial abuse, can you expect blacks to be anything but uptight? Put yourself in this black man's position:

He leaves home to go to work and a white person bumps into him while getting on the bus. The person doesn't offer an apology.

He sits on a seat next to a white person who acts as if a diseased, insane person had just sat down.

At work, his white supervisor refers to him as

"John" and complains about all of those "street people who are always begging." (Most of those street people are black.)

While he is working, the other white employees regularly tune the radio to an outspoken racist talk show whose host refers to himself as "conservative." They laugh at his racial jokes.

He overhears a group of whites expressing their antipathy toward Jesse Jackson, Louis Farrakhan, Washington, D.C. Mayor Marion Barry and "those other smart alecky blacks."

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## THE BLACK VOTE CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

by Norman Hill

Recently, I went to Chile as a monitor of the October 5 plebiscite on whether General Augusto Pinochet should continue as President. The jubilant street demonstrations following Pinochet's admission of defeat were a vivid reminder to me of the importance and power of the ballot. For with

programs can pay off in lower social costs and a healthier economy.

The next administration will have to face up to the issue of poverty because no country can successfully compete in this global economy without fully utilizing all of its human resources.

Instead of seeing the poor as a problem to be swept under the rug, the next Administration will have to see poverty as something to be overcome through strategies that give people opportunities while strengthening our economy by helping the poor to become more skilled and more productive.

their votes, the people of Chile had taken the first step toward ending a 15-year military dictatorship.

Our own November 8 presidential election may not offer as much drama as the Chilean plebiscite. But it is vital because, as I indicated in my last column, there are crucial issues at stake.

And like the voters of Chile, blacks can demonstrate the power of the ballot in this year's election—just as they did when their votes made the difference in the 1948 Truman-Dewey election, the 1960 Kennedy-

vote is becoming increasingly important because it is growing. The number of voting-age blacks is 20.4 million or 11.2 percent of the electorate, up from 18.4 million or 10.8 percent in 1984. Black registration grew from 9.4 percent of all registered voters in 1980 to 10.5 percent in 1984. Between 1980 and 1984, black voter turnout increased from 8.9 percent of all voters in 1980 to 10.01 percent in 1984. In the off-year election of 1986, the black turnout grew still more as a percentage of the

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Nixon contest, and the 1976 Carter-Ford race. The black vote can be decisive in close election like these, and the polls show that this year's race is very close.

Furthermore, the black

total vote (and made the difference in the Senate races in Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, Louisiana, and California).

But that's just the begin-

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