

Point of View

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

CHILD WATCH

OUR VOTE IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE

by Marian Wright Edelman

By failing to register and vote, we blacks nationally wasted nearly half - 48.5 percent - of our hard-won voting power in the 1988 general election. In 17 states, we wasted even more than that. In Kentucky we threw away the most - 68 percent. In Illinois, where we did the best, we still forfeited 29 percent of our vote.

We can't afford to waste our voting power in the upcoming November election. The stakes are far too high:

Nearly half of all black children are growing up in poverty.

Drugs, violence, and despair are destroying too many of our families and our neighborhoods.

Black babies are dying during their first year at more than

twice the rate of white babies. Racism and bigotry are on the rise.

Before these realities will change, our national, state and local priorities must change. Housing, health care, child care, education, job training, immediate help for families caught in the nightmare of addiction - these are the kinds of concerns that must dominate the nation's agenda in the coming decade. But priorities won't sufficiently change until ordinary people of common sense and integrity - black, white, and brown - insist on it through the power of the ballot box.

The civil rights struggle taught us that we cannot sit and wait for change. We must take the lead. We must elect officials who have

publicly committed themselves to policies and programs that will strengthen and support children and families and will give poor neighborhoods the resources to revitalize themselves.

Once we have elected such officials, we must never stop holding them accountable for living up to their commitments.

You may be tempted to think your vote won't be missed if you

don't go to the polls November 6. But please think again. An average shift of just 2,000 votes would have changed the outcomes in 11 elections for the U.S. House of Representatives

in 1988.

There is another critical reason to register and vote in this election and every election. We adults must show our children (See CHILD WATCH, Page 7)

BUSH: FULL RETREAT ON CIVIL RIGHTS

by Congressman Augustus F. Hawkins

Well, he did it. George Bush vetoed the Civil Rights Act of 1990. By continually calling this a "quota" bill, the President waved a red herring before the public, misleading many along the way. His veto appeals to his conservative followers. Our civil rights bill did not specifically require the use of quotas.

He can no longer continue to rely on the same "code words"

and shopworn excuses trotted out against every great piece of civil rights legislation.

Bush has offered his version of a civil rights bill, already rejected by clearly bipartisan majorities in the House and Senate. Members of Congress will not accept his "full speed to the rear" approach to justice.

Here are some of the provisions George Bush would slip past you as civil rights:

His "customer relations"

component would allow employers to bar women, Jews, Catholics and minorities from certain jobs, even if they are qualified, if a business customer expresses a dislike for a member of one of these groups. No job performance reason need be included in the customer's dissatisfaction.

The President would adopt, rather than overrule, the damaging Wards Cove decision which allows discriminatory job practices. He would overrule the Griggs decision requiring employers to justify discriminatory practices as a business necessity.

Bush would make it difficult or impossible for women and religious minorities, who are the victims of discrimination, to recover damage awards. His so-called \$150,000 equitable relief provision would prohibit jury trials on the amount of damages, and thus create new barriers to damage relief.

This "kinder, gentler" President would overturn Supreme Court decisions which authorized voluntary affirmative action agreements between employers and workers.

The National Association of Attorneys General wrote President Bush: "to urge that you approve the Civil Rights Act of 1990 in the version passed by the Congress...Enactment of the Civil Rights Act of 1990 will signal that the federal government remains committed to principles of fairness and equality, and will preserve citizen confidence that our system of laws permits meaningful redress from invidious discrimination in all of its forms." The attorneys general believed so strongly in the passage of the Civil Rights Act, they issued a resolution to that affect at their summer meeting in July.

Obviously, the President trusted his political sidekicks rather than the attorneys general of our fifty states. Arthur Fletcher, appointed by Bush as chairman of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, had also urged him to sign the bill.

George Bush has pulled the plug on civil rights for years to come. It is now up to the citizens of our nation to spur the Congress to necessary action.



POLITICAL POINTS: HOLD TIGHT

Since African-Americans set foot on American soil, we have as a people experienced two "identified" economic depressions. I say "identified" because unfortunately too many of our people remain in a constant economic depression most of their lives. The first depression that we experienced occurred back during the years of 1871-1873. The second depression, also known as the "Great Depression", took place during the latter part of 1929 and throughout 1930. Hold on tight and get ready for the depression of 1990.

The first depression came about basically due to the "abolishment" of slavery. By the end of the Civil War most Southern planters had little money, if any, left. With their slaves freed, their problem was

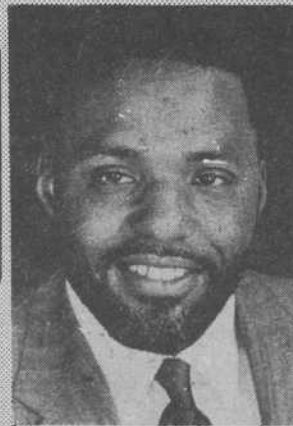
how to secure labor for the huge plantations. But the free African-Americans had no money and barely a change of clothing. So they were driven by hunger to work for little or nothing.

Theoretically, when a crop was sold they would share in the profits. But usually debt, sometimes combined with dishonest bookkeeping, left the worker at the end of the year owing the planter. Poor whites suffered even more than we did, partly because we were familiar with abject poverty.

The important political issue surrounding this first depression is that out of the small farmers' discontent grew the Southern Farmers Alliance, which by the 1890's had acquired considerable political influence in attempting to force agricultural reforms in Washington and in voting out of office many local officials who

were anti-small farmers. This group united with the Colored Farmers National Alliance and we became the "swing vote" that brought the necessary change to lift the depression.

The second depression almost brought Black America to its knees. There was a bit of poetry: "The Last Hired and First Fired." Businesses tightened their belts and waved their African-American employees goodbye. By 1935 about one out of every 4 African-Americans were on relief. The need in urban areas was appalling. In Atlanta, 65 percent of the African-Americans were on public relief, in Norfolk, Virginia, the figure was 81 percent. However, we held on tight and we endured still another "Great Depression." Again, at the close of this depression, we became politically active, changed from being traditionally



Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

Republican, and voted for the "bread and butter instead of the memory of Abraham Lincoln." Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected and the New Deal began. This liberal Democratic administration appointed many African-American advisors in various government departments; more than ever before served in high official capacities.

Now, in the next few months it will definitely be a time to "Hold On tight" once again. The faltering economy and Persian Gulf crisis already have put a big crimp in consumer spending. The increase in oil prices alone will deplete consumer dollars by \$300 billion. This will cause an extremely difficult time for retail. (See POINTS, Page 7)

Letter to Editor

Dear Editor,

Please consider printing the following article. It presents a new way to look at the causes of gangs in Las Vegas.

Thanks, Dean Wilson.

TWELVE WAYS TO INCREASE GANG ACTIVITY IN LAS VEGAS

- 1) Reduce taxes for millionaires in the 1980's
- 2) Adopt a trickle down monetary policy
- 3) Oppose attempts to reduce teenage pregnancy
- 4) Decrease federal funds for education
- 5) Increase homelessness
- 6) Allow drugs to proliferate
- 7) Oppose increases in the minimum wage
- 8) Encourage racism
- 9) Oppose greater gun control measures
- 10) Permit uncontrolled growth
- 11) Allow excessive salaries for athletes
- 12) Support the Republican Party, for they support the above positions.