

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.

United Church of Christ • Commission for Racial Justice

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

PROTEST FEDERAL OBJECTIONS TO "RACE-BASED" SCHOLARSHIPS

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

At a time when the United States is becoming more racially polarized, the recent announcement by the U.S. Department of Education concerning its stated objection to educational scholarships designed for racial and ethnic students by colleges and universities is bound to make matters worse. The fact that an African American was chosen to

lead the charge on this issue is in itself an indication of the lengths to which the Bush Administration intends to go to further erode this nation's commitment to racial justice.

Dr. Michael L. Williams, an African American, is the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights in the Department of Education. Williams staged a national press conference to announce the

Department of Education's objection to what is termed "race-based" scholarships. Williams asserted that these scholarships are discriminatory and illegal.

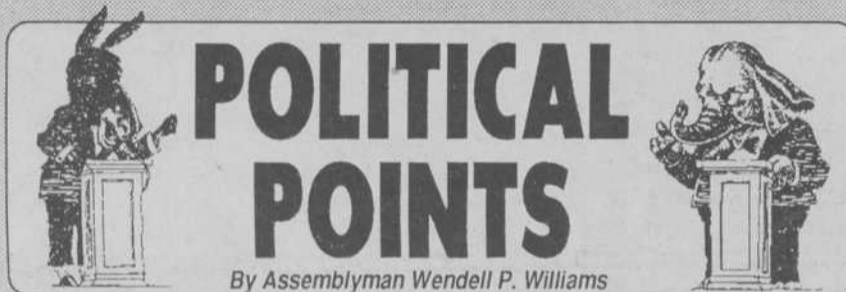
Since the initial announcement of the decision by the Department of Education, an uproar of dismay and disapproval from university officials, civil rights leaders and others has echoed across the nation. Alleg-

edly, in an attempt to allay growing public outcry, aides to President Bush forced Dr. Williams to call another national press conference "to retract and revise" this new Department of Education policy. Like adding salt to an open wound, Williams and the Department of Education did not totally "retract" or reverse the policy of opposing minority-based scholarships. Williams

stated that the current policy would not allow colleges to use money from their general operating budgets for scholarships designed specifically for racial and ethnic students. **The New York Times** has reported that for private colleges the current source of money available for minority scholarships is in fact the general operating budgets of these colleges. Thus, hun-

dreds of colleges would face a cut off in Federal funds if some scholarships were restricted and awarded to minority students.

Currently, there is a debate among key aides to Bush concerning how to do "damage control" as a result of the Administration's position on this issue becoming public. According to **The Washington Post**, (See Protest, Page 17)



By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

"BUT BY THE CONTENT OF THEIR CHARACTER"

It has now been almost 28 years since Martin Luther King, Jr. proclaimed that America could be the great country it declared to be, if only it judged its citizens "not by the color of their skin, but the content of their character." Almost 28 years later that segment of his "Dream" remains a questionable and unfulfilled.

Although progress has been made in some small pockets, color of skin, gender, and race still to often play deciding roles in decisions of human and property rights. Today far too many entities ignore the plea for fairness and the right to be judged by qualifications and content of one's character.

No organization in the U.S. has activated more "reverse discrimination" suits than the International Association of Firefighters an AFL-CIO union with a membership of 177,000 men and women, is on a crusade against affirmative action. Almost every

consent decree established from 1975 to 1985 and designed to integrate fire departments by race and gender are now under attack.

The union's assault on African-Americans has become especially ugly in the past few years. When African-American firefighters were elected in 1988 to the East Cleveland Executive Board, the International president, John Gannon simply declared the outcome "null and void". There are over 13,000 African-Americans who work as firefighters in the nation, but not a single one is on the national executive board of the I.A.F.F. sounds like a quota system to me, yes 100% of the total white firefighters population.

In 1977 the editors of the I.A.F.F. local 798's newsletter were caught perpetrating "white-outs" of African-Americans in photographs of meritorious firefighters. In one case the image of an outstanding African-American firefighter had been deleted from the published photo, and the omission was discovered

only because the I.A.F.F. censor had failed to cut out his legs. White outs and other forms of disrespect are commonplace in firefighting journals. These qualified men and women are not locked out because of the content of their character but for other insecurities.

The Clark County Fire Department was established in 1953, but didn't hire the first African-American until 1972. The Las Vegas Fire Department was organized in 1942 and didn't hire its first African-American until 1963. Why? No content of character? In the 1950s and 1960s and much of the 1970s these fire departments would not hire regardless of content of character if you were female or African-American. However, in the 1980s hiring has improved but promotions have been almost none.

Finally, in Clark County currently the position of Chief is vacant, formally held by Mr. Roy Parrish. Mr. William Bunker is now the acting fire chief. Many Clark County firefighters think political juice along with family



Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

ties will land Bunker the job permanently. Yes, many firefighters across the board feel that Bunker as a member of a prominent Nevada family which includes former U.S. Senator Berkeley Bunker, former city councilman Wayne Bunker, as well as Nevada Resort Association president Richard Bunker gives him the inside track. They also feel that the decision of who becomes the new chief should be based instead on qualifications and content of character. They are unhappy that Bunkers last three promotions over four years have been through by retiring fire chief Roy Parrish. The highest rank he accomplished through competitive process was fire engineer.

By law the fire chief has the power to appoint 3 percent of the department staff; which means that if you have strong "content of character" you still may not be able to move higher than battalion chief without an appointment from the chief. Sounds like quotas in effect for the chosen few only.

REMEMBER THE HOMELESS

by Congressman
Augustus F. Hawkins

While most of us find ways to enjoy the holiday season with friends and loved ones, there is an increasingly large group of adults and youngsters whose holiday will bring no reason to celebrate: the homeless.

Many of these families and individuals find themselves in this unfortunate circumstance through no fault of their own. With our economy approaching a recession, many businesses have failed or issued pink slips to employees to reduce expenses. State and local governments have begun hiring freezes and/or lowered pay rates, and corporations have "downsized" operations as well.

While many local communities have taken action to provide

some shelter and food, particularly during the holiday season, we have a long way to go to alleviate this human displacement. Each of us ought consider how we might help.

The federal government has been somewhat responsive to this national embarrassment through the McKinney Homeless Assistance Amendments of 1990. The Act addresses a number of the elements of homelessness; including literacy, education and job training, child abuse, emergency community grants and prevention. Here is some of what the Act will provide:

... literacy and basic skills training by local school districts.

... grants to public/private partnerships with demonstrated

(See Homeless, Page 17)

THE SENTINEL-VOICE

Nevada's only black community newspaper.
Published every Thursday by the Brown Publishing Co., Inc.,
1201 South Eastern Avenue • Las Vegas, Nevada 89104
Telephone (702) 383-4030
Serving Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, Reno, Carson City,
Sparks, Hawthorne Henderson and Tonopah.

Betty Brown, President and Publisher-Editor; Lee Bown, General Manager; Ramon Savoy, Advertising and Marketing Director; Pamela Jeanne Wright, Secretary-Receptionist; Willis Brown, Production; Don Snook, Graphics; William Ramirez, Distribution

Members: National Newspaper Publishers Association,
West Coast Black Publishers Associations
This newspaper is audited by Community Papers Verification Service,
6225 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53705 (608) 238-7550

Subscriptions payable in advance
Six months \$15.00
Twelve months \$25.00

The rates apply to Continental United States Only