

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

THE FEDERALIZATION OF RACISM

by Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

January 15, 1991 became an historic day in U.S. judicial history because on that day the Supreme Court of the United States took another step backwards away from racial justice. Ironically, January 15th is the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the renowned slain civil rights leader who championed the cause of racial equality.

In the case known as the Dowell vs. the Board of Education of Oklahoma City, the Supreme Court ruled favorably to

constitutionally allow a return to racially segregated "neighborhood schools." This latest decision by the Supreme Court follows a pattern of retreat from a strong commitment to affirmative action and other legal remedies to compensate for past and present racial discrimination.

Earlier we filed our protest to the U.S. Department of Education attempts to limit the provision of minority-based scholarships at colleges and universities. All of this comes on the heels of President Bush's veto of the Civil Rights Act of 1990.

Now we have learned of Bush's inclination to also veto the proposed Civil Rights Act of 1991.

During the last thirty years the role of the federal government has changed dramatically from being an advocate of measures to eliminate racism to being an advocate of measures to maintain and further institutionalize racism. We refer to this phenomenon as the "federalization of racism" in the United States.

The executive, legislative and judicial branches of the federal government are all guilty of prom-

ulgating racism. Of course, this goes against the grain of the future demographic character of the nation, which is to be more multi-racial and multi-cultural.

Justice Thurgood Marshall, in a dissenting opinion to the Oklahoma City school desegregation case, explained the complexity of the racist nature of the issues involved in this case. Marshall posited "In 1972 — 18 years after this Court first found segregated schools unconstitutional — a federal court finally interrupted this cycle, enjoining the Oklahoma City School Board

to implement a specific plan for achieving actual desegregation of its schools ... The practical question now before us is whether, 13 years after that injunction was imposed, the same School Board should have been allowed to return many of its elementary schools to their former one-race status. The majority today suggests that 13 years of desegregation was enough. The Court remands this case for further evaluation of whether the purposes of the injunctive decree were achieved sufficient to justify that decree's dissolution. However, the inquiry it commands to the District Court fails to recognize explicitly the threatened reemergence of one-

race schools as a relevant "vestige" of de jure segregation."

In other words, the stage has been set by the Supreme Court of the United States for lower courts to have a free hand in authorizing the resegregation of the public schools in this nation. Racial segregation in public schools serves directly to consign millions of African-American and other racial and ethnic children to receive substandard education.

All forms of "federalized racism" must be challenged. We join with Justice Marshall in dissent and protest to the decision of the Dowell vs. the Oklahoma City School Board case. Equal quality education for all!



By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

"WOMEN, INFANTS AND CHILDREN"

by Wendell P. Williams

As we begin this last decade of the 20th century, we must get to work rebuilding the moral and social foundations of our society, starting with the treatment of our children. We must make it un-American for any child to grow up poor or without adequate child care, health care, food, shelter, education, and safety from neglect, abuse and violence.

We have no moral or practical choice. The ever mounting crisis of our children and families is a rebuke to everything America professes to be. It will also bring America to its economic knees and increase violence and discord unless we confront it.

As the wealthiest nation on earth and the standard-bearer of Democracy, we have an "A" capacity to care for children but an "F" on many key indicators of child well-being. By every measure, the U.S. performance is unsatisfactory.

American one-year-olds have lower immunization rates against polio than one-year-olds in 14 other countries. Polio immunization rates for babies of color in the U.S. rank behind 48 other countries, including Botswana, Colombia and Jamaica. In fact an African-American child born in the inner city of Boston has less of a chance of surviving the first year of life than a child born in Panama, North or South Korea. Moreover, United States and South Africa still remain the only two industrialized nations that have no national policy on health coverage, child care, or parental leave for their children and parents.

In the area of prenatal care, not a single state in the nation made the grade towards improved access to prenatal care at a rate that will meet the Surgeon General's 1990 goal of early prenatal care for 90% of all pregnant women. Not one. Nevada by the way only provides access to prenatal care to about 30% of its pregnant women. Although prenatal care saves the lives

and dollars, about \$3 for every \$1 invested, only 15 states at the end of 1989 were covering all pregnant women and infants with incomes below 85% of the federal poverty level, as permitted by federal law.

Nevada has over 77,000 children under the age of five, 15% of these children die each year during the first year of those that survive about 1,200 are low birth weights.

Currently in Nevada a family of three receives a mere disgraceful \$330 a month to pay for all their needs. The governor's current budget is recommending an increase to \$372 with no updates for two years. The Welfare Division is also placed under a "CAP". This "cap" means that the Welfare Division is the only state agency which may not ask the Interim Finance Committee for supplemental funds between legislative sessions. Due to an unanticipated increase in caseloads plus new federally mandated programs the Welfare Division is projected to incur a 29 million shortfall during the



Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

current biennium.

There is a positive move to increase ADC benefits from \$330 monthly to \$496, remove the "caps" on the Welfare Divisions budget and restore the payment of ADC benefits back to the date of application. If this happens, it will be a move in the right direction. If you care, express your support by writing or calling. Matt Callister Assembly Ways & Means Committee — NV Legislature — Rm. 313A, Carson City, NV 89710 / Nick Horn, Senate Finance Committee — NV Legislature — Rm. 222A and Governor Bob Miller, Capitol Complex, Carson City, NV 89710. You may also help by attending the Ways & Means Subcommittee Hearing in Las Vegas on Feb. 23, at Cashman Field. Let's all make a difference for women, infants and children.

TO BE EQUAL AFTER THE FIGHTING STOPS

by John E. Jacob

Like everyone else, I've found it hard to pry myself away from the radio or the television set.

Following the progress of the war and praying for our brave men and women at the front has become a national obsession.

Many of us have friends and family members in the armed services, and our concern for the success of our nation's struggle is matched by our concern for their safety.

This is not a war many people welcomed. It's always easier to justify a war if you've been directly attacked, such as the attack on Pearl Harbor that brought a reluctant America into World



JOHN E. JACOB

War II.

War is a terrible thing, and no one can take pleasure in the resort to deadly weapons. But war is upon us.

It was made inevitable by Iraq's attack on Kuwait, its threat (See To Be Equal, Page 16)

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