

Point of View

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CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

"SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DEFENSE FUND 1992 CAMPAIGN"

By Benjamin F. Chavis, Jr.

Amidst the political election-eering of the 1992 Presidential campaign, there is one campaign that we endorse enthusiastically and wholeheartedly. It is not a campaign of an individual seeking to be President of the United States.

But, we are endorsing a campaign of a national organization committed to save millions of

children entrapped in poverty throughout the nation.

Marian Wright Edelman and the Children's Defense Fund deserve support and endorsement. Beginning in March 1992, the Children's defense fund will launch a national campaign, "Leave No Child Behind," around a national agenda for children in the United States.

The statistics concerning

children in this nation are alarming: Every 32 seconds a baby is born into poverty. Every 61 second, a baby is born to a teen mother. Every 111 seconds, a baby is born at a low birth weight. Every 13 minutes, a baby is lost to infant mortality. Every 2 1/2 hours, a child in the United States is murdered. In each of these statistical categories, African American, Hispanic American,

Native American, and Asian American children rank very high.

The problem is that our society has become a "care-less" society when it comes to the plight of infants and children. This problem is compounded in an election year that permits the triage of the interests of the young who can not vote. A nation that disregards the interests of its

children is a nation with no future.

In a recent detailed interview with *USA TODAY*, Marian Wright Edelman, who is President of the non-profit Children's Defense Fund, outlines 4 key actions which we support. First, every child in the nation should have a "Healthy Start," i.e. "All children and pregnant women must have health-insurance coverage; all children must be immunized; community and migrant health centers and the National Health Services Corp must be funded fully."

Secondly, all children should have a "Head Start." In other words, "All children must be able, through increased funding, to participate in programs to help them get ready for school."

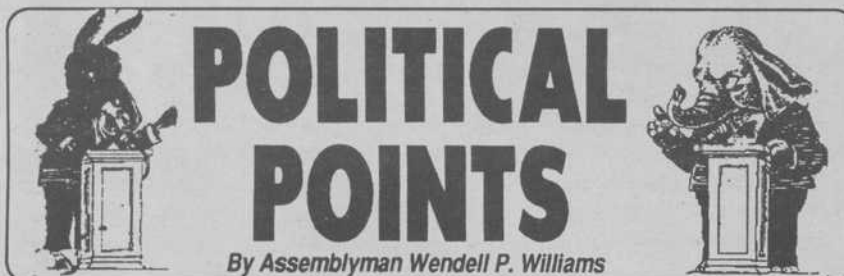
Thirdly, all children should have a "Fair Start." According to Edelman, "Every family must get the resources to provide basic needs for a child, such as, refundable tax credit for children and establishment of a child-

support system in which government provides support when an absent parent does not."

Fourthly, there are other actions that all children should receive as a result of using the "peace dividend to fund projects and investments in children and their families; pass legislation on child abuse prevention and family preservations; raise basic benefits for families on food stamps."

We appeal to all who stand for justice to support the efforts of the Children's Defense Fund. **Our Children are our future.** We must engage the politicians in a manner that rectifies the current absense of this issue in the national political debate.

Edelman is correct when she emphasized, "The country is either going to go real bad or we're going to flip the paradigm and, hopefully, move in a positive direction. And that is what I hope can be the debate in this election year." This is also our hope and it is also our demand.



By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams

"KING DIED FOR JUSTICE IN THE WORKPLACE"

The rights of workers to form unions and bargain contracts with their companies are under attack in this country everyday.

The basic rights of American workers to organize unions and bargain fair contracts through unions have come under attack by punishing workers who exercise those rights. While the majority of contracts are concluded without a need to strike, the realistic possibility of a legally protected strike is what brings companies to negotiate in good faith.

Since the twilight Zone politics of Ronald Reagan in 1981, the corporate practice of firing legal strikers by giving their jobs to "permanent replacement" workers has undermined the collective bargaining system and slashed the bottom out of the right to organize. Over four hundred thousand workers have been fired for exercising their legally protected right to strike.

Also, automation, foreign competition and restrictive economic and labor policies have reduced union memberships to about 18 percent of the labor force, down from a high of 28 percent in the 1950's.

Although union-busting consultants and union-bashing politicians have led the

effort to weaken organized labor, they have had little success in influencing African-American workers, one-third of whom are union members. For African-Americans, who are over 17 percent of all trade unions, a union card is still the surest ticket to decent wages and working conditions.

In 1985 African-American union members had 46 percent higher earnings than non-union Black workers and 11 percent higher than non-union white workers.

Anti-union conservatives have urged African-Americans to avoid unions and concentrate instead on education as the best means for advancement. Certainly, education should always be the primary goal of any people seeking better living standards. The tragic fact still remains, that African-American college graduates earn about the same as white high school graduates.

In 1967 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. urged African-American youth to become more active in unions. "To play our role fully, we will have to strive for enhanced representation and influence in the labor movement," King said.

Since then African-American have made impressive gains within trade unions. Three African-American union leaders hold seats on the executive council of the AFL-CIO, while at the same

time, none hold executive slots in any Fortune 500 corporations. And African-Americans have done even better at the local union level, holding over 30 percent of key local union posts.

Here in Nevada, and throughout America, Unions have also taken a leading role in support of civil-rights legislation. Many believe the labor movement has moved more progressively and faster in supporting the African-American movement than any other institution in America.

In the years to come, African-American workers will, and should continue to join trade unions because their interests so often coincide. Full employment, safe working conditions, decent wages, retirement security, livable housing and quality education and training are priorities for both African-Americans and organized labor.

This belief was at the center of the dream of Martin Luther King Jr., who was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn., while leading a labor-union struggle.

King felt that the great unity of purpose between labor and the civil rights movement was not a historical coincidence. Our needs are identical with labor's needs. This is why African-Americans support labor's demands and fight laws which curb labor.

A. Philip Randolph, the great



Assemblyman
Wendell P. Williams

African-American leader of American labor and president of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, also saw the links between the labor movement and the Black movement for social and economic emancipation.

"At the banquet table of nature there are no reserved seats. You get what you can take, and you keep what you can hold.

If you can't take anything, you won't get anything; and if you can't hold anything, you can't take anything without organization."

Finally, violations of workers rights are violations of fundamental human rights. The fate of the civil rights movement and the fate of the labor movement are inseparably tied together. Without justice at work, justice for African-Americans will remain an exclusive, illusory dream.

This April 4th, marks the 24th Anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., lets not drop our heads only in sorrow, but instead lets use it as a time to pick our heads and hearts up and meet the challenges ahead. We can all do and get more by being organized than we can apart.

MINORITY REPORT

VIDEOTAPING IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS OF ELDERLY THURGOOD MARSHALL, OTHER LIVING BLACK HEROS URGENT FOR STUDENTS, SCHOLARS, & CITIZENS

By James E. Alsbrook

Would you enjoy and benefit from seeing the live, moving face and hearing the actual, sounding voice of W.E.B. Dubois? Carter G. Woodson? Frederick Douglass? Booker T. Washington?

Probably so, but their living bodies, moving faces and sound-

ing voices have been stilled by death.

Would you, your children, your friends and associates enjoy and benefit from seeing the live face, and hearing the actual voice and having a permanent record of Thurgood Marshall reviewing his life, ex-

(See Videotaping, Page 17)

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