

Point of View

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TO BE EQUAL

JOBS AND WELFARE REFORM

By John E. Jacob

The welfare system is in urgent need of reform. But I would be more optimistic about the prospects for sound reform if I didn't know that political leaders historically manipulated stereotypes about welfare and it's recipients.

Remember President Reagan and his remarks about "welfare queens?" Or the endless rhetoric about "welfare cheats?" Or the absurd myths about people having babies to get on welfare?

So reforming welfare carries with it the prospect of making the system more punitive and less able to assist poor people to become independent and achieve a decent standard of living.

In fact, welfare reform has been a synonym for cutting benefits, not for making the system work better for the poor and for the nation.

Over the past decade, wel-

fare payments have been allowed to fall far behind inflation, in effect, cutting benefits drastically. And more stringent eligibility requirements have forced many needy families off the rolls or denied them access to welfare.

But the numbers of people on welfare still kept growing, because poor people and minorities have been in an economic depression for over a dozen years.

Ideally, welfare reform would not just make changes in the way the federal-state welfare system operates, but would address the problems of all poor people, most of whom do not receive welfare payments.

There's general agreement that work is the answer to welfare. But someone once said that simple solutions are always wrong ones, and while work is the answer to some aspects of the problems with welfare, it is not the solution for all welfare

recipients.

Many are too sick to work. Others cannot work without day care for their children.

Study after study shows that people on welfare want to work. They do not because there are no jobs available for them, so real welfare reform has to include massive job creation.

That's the hard part. It's easy to pass laws saying that after two years people must leave welfare for work. But unless the jobs are there, that so-called "reform" becomes a cruel deception.

Some estimates suggest that 2.3 million jobs will be needed; other, more optimistic ones say

less than a million. Current work and welfare programs employ only about 30,000 recipients, so you can see how awesome the problem is.

Of course, government should spend whatever it takes to get people prepared, trained, and working. It's a sound investment in America's neglected human resources. But jobs shouldn't be sold as a panacea unless we're willing to make that investment.

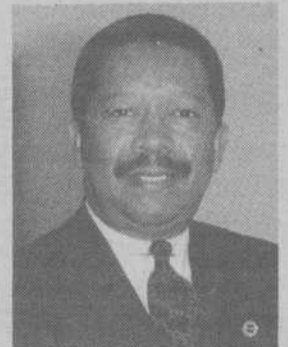
In addition to the costs of job preparation, monitoring and job creation, health insurance aid will have to be part of a welfare package that includes a work requirement or work incentives, since many poor people lose

their Medicaid coverage when they leave welfare for a job.

Then there's day care. By definition, recipients of Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) have children whose care is of paramount importance. If mothers are expected to work in low-wage jobs, someone will have to pick up the tab for day care.

There's nothing like work to give people feelings of dignity and self-worth, and to help them to escape the trap of welfare dependency.

But we need to be clear about the fact that the real problem in America today is a lack of jobs. That's why so many people are



JOHN E. JACOB

poor, and why many are dependent on welfare.

If the Administration and the Congress are really willing to invest in our people and in jobs for all, then welfare reform has a chance to succeed. Otherwise, it will just be more rhetoric.

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL

CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY MONTH

By Bernice Powell Jackson

February is a very important time of the year for African Ameri-

cans. It is Black History Month, a time set aside for lifting up and celebrating the contributions of

African Americans to this country's rich and varied history.

Begun as Negro History Week nearly 70 years ago by Dr. Carter G. Woodson and the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History in Washington, D.C., it has evolved into a month-long period of study and focus. But for too many Americans, Black history Month and the many contributions of African American are still unknown.

Often we concentrate on those familiar names in African American history — names like W.E.B. DuBois, Booker T. Washington, Harriet Tubman and Mary McLeod Bethune. But there are thousands of others who have made history as well, often overcoming nearly insurmountable odds created by racism and sexism.

cism and sexism.

There are hundreds of African American inventors who have made our lives better and easier to live. Garrett Morgan invented the gas mask and the traffic light in the early decades of this century. In 1881, Lewis Latimer invented the first incandescent electric light bulb with a carbon filament and later supervised the installation of electric lights in the cities of Philadelphia, New York, Montreal and London. African American women were inventors also — Sarah Boone invented the ironing board and Sarah Goode invented the folding cabinet bed, both in the late 1800's.

There are African American physicians who have made enormous contributions to the (Civil Rights Journal, Page 4)



POLITICAL POINTS

By Assemblyman Wendell P. Williams



"SEVEN WHOLE DAYS"

They shoulda' done this. They shoulda' done dat. They shoulda' talked to Charlie first. They shoulda' talked to dis, dat, that, and the pussycat! Those are just a few of the weak-minded excuses that people are making to allow them to think they can ignore the plight of the locked-out sanitation workers of Silver State Disposal.

In the meantime the young children and families of the locked-out men are steady counting and marking each day that no paycheck come into the house, no extra money for basic things that growing children should have and deserve.

Even the creator used seven days to create the heavens and the earth; so you can imagine how grueling seven whole days on a

child can be. Having to worry about school work, no lunch money and the general negatives that come usually within an environment that includes the stress that come with conditions such as unemployment. Not just any unemployment, but unemployment that came about because daddy was locked-out of his job. Its hard for the families and young children to understand for they are as harmless as a meadow lark. While at the same time, Silver State is being as inflexible as a marble pillar and as unemotional as a baseball empire. Don't they know that seven whole days is too long a time for people to suffer, solely because someone thinks the way to run a business by displaying the attitude that you have people wrapped around your finger, talking kinda' cocky like you have it goin' on. While at

the same time, Silver State will soon realize that things are getting shaky knowing that you're wrong, dead wrong; how can we let you go on. We won't!

Only seven whole days ago we found out that Las Vegas is still the fastest growing city in the U.S. With growth we must realize that in order to continue to strive and grow, we must adopt to the changing times and changing conditions. We don't make this transition by treating people as if this is 1804 instead of 1994. Buildings and companies do not make real communities, rather real people make real communities. Arrogance and resentment are not the type of things that build good community relations. Finding and building common ground is the way that human beings should be treated and the way real human beings think and act.



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Moreover, in 1992 Silver State Disposal grossed sixty-four million dollars. You would think that any company making that kinda' dough would show more sensitivity toward the people that collect their garbage opposed to treating them like garbage. Maybe the State Legislature should explore more restrictions and regulations on these types of companies.

Silver State and the policy makers that allow them to operate this way must realize that we've gone through too many "seven whole days" with not a word from you. No longer should workers have to suffer for unnecessary reasons. No longer will they be the stepping stones to (See Political Points, Pg 26)

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