

CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL MONEY AND MEANNESS OVER MATTER

By Bernice Powell Jackson

The death knell has been sounded for health care reform during this session of Congress. The Senate majority leader has pronounced it dead and the Republican leadership has danced over the grave. It's a sad day for the United States.

It means that money and meanness has triumphed over substantive reform of a health care system which is on the critical list. It means the health of many Americans remains in jeopardy. In the words of Senator Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, "What killed health care? I think the unholy mix of money, power

and politics."

Money, power and politics. By money, Senator Wellstone was referring to the the medical lobbyists and by others who felt that they would be adversely impacted by changes in health care. Says Representative Jim McDermott, "Insurance companies took premium dollars and went out and advertised against the best interests of their patients."

Some of these dollars were used to put advertising on television which scared the American people about health reform. The result was that the American people, who had

supported health care reform, began to question if they would have to give up too much themselves in order that we might all be covered. The result was that Americans began to believe that they would lose their right to choose their own physicians, although the proposed legislation did not do that. They began to believe that the quality of medical care would be undermined, although there is no reason to believe that to be the case.

Some of these dollars were given directly to members of Congress for their campaigns this fall. Millions of dollars were given to political action committees and one must question whether there could ever be no strings attached to such gifts.

The power that Senator Wellstone was referring to is related to the money and implies, I believe, the enormous power of lobbyists in the United States today. With the thousands of lobbyists in Washington today representing business, labor, trade and professional associations, special interest groups and others, it is a miracle that any legislation at all gets passed. Combined with the fact

that too few of us — too few ordinary citizens — exercise our privilege to vote and then to hold our government representatives accountable, the power in Washington is not accountable to the American people.

The politics that Senator Wellstone referred to are the missteps made by the Clinton administration in putting together viable legislation and the obstructionist actions of the Republicans. Instead of being "holed up" for months secretly putting together a comprehensive plan, maybe the administration should have involved both Democrats and Republicans and religious and other groups committed to health care reform in the initial writing and selling of the legislation.


Instead of Republicans using health care reform as a way of showing their ability to stop the Clinton administration while denying any need for reform, perhaps they should have listened to the 39 million Americans who are uncovered or to those who cannot change jobs because of a pre-existing condition or those who have been dropped by their insurance company because they become ill or to those who have lost homes and savings because of catastrophic illnesses.

The reality is that Congress was too mean-spirited and too politicized even to work on stop-gap legislation which would provide health coverage for every American child and every pregnant woman. The reality is that for people of color, whose communities face health crises which more closely parallel those of Third World countries, the death of health care reform may mean additional hardships and unnecessary deaths.

Write to your Congressperson and your Senator and let them know you favor health care reform.

Have the members of your church, of your block club, of your fraternity or sorority, of your labor union or social club let Congress know that we expect better from them, and America deserves more.

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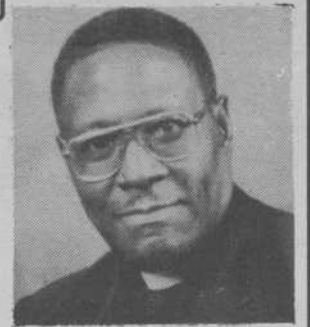
SOME-WHERE, OUT-THERE BY GENE REDDEN



THE NAACP AND YOU



Rev. Jesse D. Scott
President
Las Vegas, NAACP



The Las Vegas Branch, NAACP proudly announces that the principal speaker for it's "Freedom Fund banquet '94" will be Dr. Dennis Watson, the Executive Director, Chef Executive Officer of the National Black Youth Leadership Council, located in New York City.

Dr. Watson is acclaimed by many to be a dynamic motivational speaker.

Dr. Watson has been described as a speaker to be a cross between Bill Cosby and Rev. Jesse Jackson. His messages have been delivered to more than 2,000 high school, college and university students.

Dollars and Sense Magazine recently selected him as one of America's Best and Brightest Young Business and Professional Men. Upscale Magazine cited Dr. Watson as a 1991 Role Model for addressing problems of drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, gang warfare, self esteem, empowerment and leadership training of young black males.

Our speaker has received five White House Citations for his work with black youth as well as special recognition from the mayor of the following cities: New York, Los Angeles, Atlanta, San Francisco, San Diego, Denver and Miami, Florida. Dr. Watson received his education from Harlem Preparatory School, Fordham University, Page University and New York University.

local merchants are being asked to purchase tickets for the

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talking about thousands of people and millions of dollars. Think what would happen if these programs were suddenly successful.

Imagine if the police department actually did take a bite out of crime. Then we wouldn't need to foot the bill for an additional 1,500 from every graduating class at the police

banquet to be given to community youth so that they can hear this wonderful speaker.

The thesis of Dr. Watson speech will be in a harmony with the banquet's theme: "Passing The Torch — Preparing For A Better Tomorrow."

Today the Las Vegas Convention Authority approved a package of \$175,000 to host the NAACP National Convention in Las Vegas, NV, July 12-16, 1997. The NAACP delegation from Las Vegas will meet the National Planning Committee of the National Board of Directors of the NAACP in Baltimore, Maryland Thursday, October 13, 1994.

If Las Vegas is successful in winning the bid for the 1997 convention over Pittsburgh, Pa. this will be the first time the National NAACP has ever met in Las Vegas.

There will be approximately 25,000 delegates, alternates and observers attending this week-long convention and these conventioners will spend between 16-20 million dollars.

You can support the NAACP in all these efforts by taking your annual membership today.

Also by sacrificing one hundred dollars per person and attend it's fund raising banquet which will be held at Caesar's Palace Friday, October 21, 1994, 7:00 p.m.

Tickets for the banquet are available at the branch office, 1100 Martin Luther King, Blvd from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call 646-1662 for more information.

academy.

The numerous gang task forces were to actually take street gangs off the streets. Then there would no longer be a need for these numerous task forces. The same holds true for all those organizations aimed at helping the poor. If any of them were to have anything other than marginal paper successes they would automatically eliminate the need for themselves. And in doing so, would eliminate a hefty portion of the local budget. The same budget that justifies the raising of our taxes. We've all heard from our local politicians (and national) that we need more jails, more police officers on the streets, more programs to help the poor get off of welfare, more programs to keep at-risk kids (See Letters to Editor, Page 5)

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