

**THIS WAY FOR BLACK EMPOWERMENT**

**Fair elections are a part of the black agenda**

By Dr. Lenora Fulani  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

As regular readers of this column know, I ran for President of the United States twice as an independent, becoming (in 1988) the first woman and the first African-American to appear on the ballot in all 50 states. One of the things that I demonstrated in that campaign (and the many other independent campaigns I have run or supported) is that the cards are stacked against independent campaigns and independent parties. The American electoral system has a structural bias in favor of the two major parties. And as third party options become more important to the evolution of black politics, eliminating these biases becomes an important part of the black agenda.

State legislatures, controlled by Democrats and Republicans, have passed laws that erect incredible barriers to independents. Take ballot access, for example. Independents have to collect many more signatures, in a shorter period of time and face many more hyper-technical requirements than do major party candidates running for the same office. When black and



DR. LENORA FULANI

Latino insurgent candidates for public office are thrown off the ballot by the party machine, they often turn to independent candidacies. This often means having to negotiate prohibitive ballot access requirements.

The Fair Elections Bill was originally written by *Ballot Access News* publisher Richard Winner and Gary Sinawski, my national elections attorney and one of the foremost ballot access lawyers in the country. Congressional Black Caucus member John Conyers (D-Michigan) was the first to introduce the bill in 1985. Former Congressman Tim Penny (DFL-Minnesota), a good friend of the independent political movement, sponsored and championed the bill in the 101st and 102nd Congress (1989-93). I applaud Ron Paul for carrying the banner this year.

The political balance of power is beginning to shift in American politics, as new independent parties come onto the scene and begin to impact. The Reform Party, for example, which ran Ross Perot for President last year garnered enough

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**Iverson**

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like someone was using the toilet," the affidavit said.

While he was sitting on Sherrice he began to masturbate so he could obtain an erection, the suspect told police.

Strohmeier said he then noticed Sherrice's breathing "was labored," the affidavit said. Thinking she was brain dead and not wanting her to suffer, he attempted to break her neck, police said.

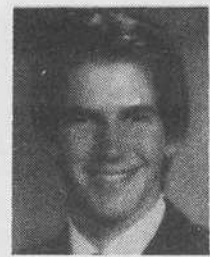
He put one hand behind her head and one hand under her chin and snapped her head like "he had seen on TV."

Strohmeier heard a loud cracking sound but saw the girl was still breathing, so he snapped her neck again harder and at that point she stopped breathing.

Police said they are attempting to find evidence that Strohmeier was a user of child pornography and they are also investigating any possible connections to white supremacy groups or their ideology.

David Cash Jr. - another teenager and friend of Strohmeier who was with the suspect at the casino during a gambling trip with Cash's father - peered over the bathroom

stall during the rape but did nothing to stop the attack, police said. Cash, also 18, will not be charged unless evidence can be gathered that he knew about the attack in advance.



STROHMEIER

Failure to stop a crime in progress is not a criminal act, police and prosecutors said this week. "It may be a crime in the eyes of God, but not in the eyes of the Nevada Legislature," Clark County District Attorney Stewart Bell told local reporters this week.

The affidavit said Cash told investigators Strohmeier confessed to the killing.

Strohmeier pleaded "not guilty" to allegations he is a fugitive from Nevada authorities Tuesday in Los Angeles Municipal Court. He is fighting extradition to Clark County.

Strohmeier's defense attorney is Leslie Abramson, the Los Angeles lawyer who represented Eric and Lyle Menendez, the brothers who were convicted of brutally murdering their parents.

**Carl Rowan's Commentary**

Special to Sentinel-Voice

"Educational Genocide" is too inflammatory a term to describe what has happened so far, but the outlook is somber and frightening.

I'm talking about the impact on the education of minorities that is being reported in states where wars on affirmative action are in full sway.



CARL ROWAN

In California and Texas, where the anti-affirmative-action passions have run highest, in some law and medical schools there has been a decline of up to 81 percent in black enrollment and of more than 50 percent in Hispanic admissions. This is being applauded by some who argue that blacks and Hispanics have been getting admission slots that properly belonged to Caucasians or Chinese.

But social tragedy lurks behind this assumption that educational opportunities belong first to those who have been privileged historically, or who post the highest test scores.

The health care of millions of Americans, already at a shameful state, will deteriorate if such drastic numbers of minorities are denied the chance to become doctors. The quality of justice in America, already under worrisome criticism, will become more indefensible if the numbers of black and Hispanic lawyers are greatly reduced.

The doors are being slammed out of some mistaken notion that minorities are seizing educational opportunities that ought to go to whites. The facts are that for 18- to 24-year-olds, 82 percent of whites have the equivalent of a high school diploma, compared with 77 percent of blacks and less than 60 percent of Hispanics.

Forty-three percent of white high school graduates go on to college, compared with 35 percent of both blacks and Hispanics.

As for college attainment, according to the American Council on Education, 26 percent of whites have finished at least four years of college, compared with 15 percent of blacks and 9 percent of Hispanics.

These discrepancies make it clear that white America is not under siege because of "reverse discrimination."

But these discrepancies will continue, or worsen, if the current mood of America prevails. There is no sign whatsoever of any positive change among those who believe that affirmative action means "cheating whites," or requires one set of admissions standards for whites and an easier set for minorities. So the reductions in minority admissions are likely to deepen, and the consequences could be tragic.

"The effect is going to be devastating," says Michael Sharlot, dean of the University of Texas law school. I seem to hear a majority in the state legislatures and on the U.S. Supreme Court saying: "So what?"

**Step**

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waste dump. During his inaugural address, the President made several references to race and his intention to deal with this vexing problem. But, it's going to take much more than a well-

orchestrated, sound byte-laden performance to achieve real results.

As I watched the recent ceremony, I experienced mixed emotions. On one hand, I was happy that the survivors of this sinister work were able to come

to Washington, D.C. and display the resilience of African-Americans. On the other hand, I wondered if any of the perpetrators are still alive and why their names have been scarcely mentioned?

There is no question that we need a national dialogue on race relations. Unfortunately, it's going to take a lot more than warm words from the Rose Garden to make things better.

If the President really wants to make things better for a group that has endured prolonged hardship and suffering, he should announce his support for a bill authored by John Conyers (D-MI) that calls for a closer examination of reparations for African-Americans.

Amazingly, this group's voice is not heard though others have received payment for atrocities committed against them. Yet, years of free labor, poor housing and the consistent denial of opportunities should have some monetary value.

Apologizing for the Tuskegee Experiment was a good gesture. However, it was just a mere appetizer. The main

course hasn't been touched. As more and more information is available, it becomes abundantly clear that the quality of life for too many African-Americans is declining as a result of several policies which have emanated from the White House. Most notably, the so-called welfare reform legislation and the crime bill which seem to imply that a jail cell is better than a job.

And as the furor over the alleged link between the CIA and the trafficking of crack cocaine in inner city communities continues to swirl, many wonder when an apology will come for the devastation created by the dumping of tons of that lethal substance into our communities.

At the risk of being the "skunk at the garden party," I must observe that the President's apology comes a little late and was incomplete. Listening to it, I am reminded of a song by the Temptations in which the late David Ruffin crooned, "Sorry is a sorry word after all you've done to me."

**Hawkins**

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particular about him playing football, it's a rough sport."

When football proved Hawkins' passion, Miller supported him wholeheartedly. She is thrilled at her son's induction and will join him during his enshrinement.

College Football Hall of Fame nominees become eligible 10 years after their last collegiate season. The must have been first-team All-Americans, completed their professional careers and excelled athletically and civically.

In 1991, Hawkins bucked tradition politically by winning a seat on the Las Vegas City Council. He was the first black elected to the council. His district was majority white.

"It was a most difficult job," he said. "I had a diverse district and had to be everything to all people."

After an unsuccessful 1995 re-election bid, Hawkins slipped from the political scene, also resigning from his seat

with the Las Vegas Housing Authority Board of Commissioners to focus on his marketing and consultation firm, Hawkins & Colleagues and running the local NAACP Community Development Resource Center.

After the election, Hawkins said he overheard a reporter say, "Frank Hawkins didn't lose, West Las Vegas lost and Las Vegas lost."

He agreed. "The people lost an advocate for their rights."

Hawkins won't foray into politics anymore. "Leaving politics was like leaving football," he said. "I have no desire to go back and play again, (besides) my grandmother made me promise not to get involved with politics anymore." Hawkins has hedged a bit on that promise.

"I won't get into politics again, but I will be politically active," he said. "I understand the necessity of politics and what it can do positively or negatively to affect a community."

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