

NEWS CLIPS

MEEK, MILLER INTRODUCE CENSUS IMPROVEMENT ACT

U.S. Rep. Carrie Meek, D-Fla., and Rep. Dan Miller, R-Fla., recently introduced the Decennial Census Improvement Act of 1999, a bill to allow people on public assistance to work as temporary census workers without losing benefits under federally-financed assistance programs. "The improvement we are aiming for in our bill is a much more accurate census count in poor, minority and immigrant communities, which have been traditionally undercounted," Meek said. "Our bill is based on the theory that people in these neighborhoods will be much more likely to talk to their neighbors than to strangers. "We can't afford not to pass our bill, which will make it easier for the Census Bureau to hire enumerators who actually live in the communities in which they work," she said. "Neighbors will be able to count neighbors. It means that a poor mother receiving food stamps or Medicaid or other social services can take a census job and work in her own neighborhood without losing her health care or other benefits. It means that college students and retirees can work a temporary census job and not have it count against their Pell Grant or Social Security benefits." In the past, the Census Bureau has had difficulty attracting workers as temporary assignments in poor neighborhoods because individuals could not earn additional income without exceeding the income limits on federally-financed assistance programs, such as welfare, food stamps, housing and health care. The bill provides that pay for temporary census positions not reduce benefits from social services.

JUDGE IN LENARD CLARK BEATING CASE BEING THREATENED

Death threats against Judge Dan Locallo, who sentenced Frank Caruso, Jr. to an eight-year sentence for the racial beating of Lenard Clark, were called "despicable" and "sickening" by Illinois State's Attorney Dick Devine. Joining him in his outrage were Mayor Richard Daley, Jr. and Police Superintendent Terry Hilliard, who said the threats are being investigated on the city, county and federal levels. "I was absolutely outraged at anyone who'd make such a threat against any law enforcement individual... and the sight on TV watching a judge being escorted to his house by sheriff's deputies is absolutely sickening," Devine said. Last November, Locallo was the subject of a voter boycott by Black activists who passed out posters denouncing him for letting "two Whites boys go free from Bridgeport's 11th Ward," but giving Caruso an eight-year sentence. Hilliard said the FBI is investigating the threats and said his men are involved in the bodyguard detail at the judge's home.

COUPLE SUES HOMEOWNER'S ASSOCIATION OVER HARASSMENT

Shirley Dunbar and Muhammad Doka and the Fair Housing Council of Greater Washington filed a suit in U.S. District Court for the state of Maryland earlier this month against the Greencastle Lakes Community Association, Inc.; the Management Group Associates, Inc. and John S. Turna for racial harassment. The suit charges that despite knowing about the extreme harassment perpetuated against the Dokas and their children in their Burtonsville, Md. community by neighbor, Turna, neither Greencastle nor Management did anything to help the family. Homeowners' associations like Greencastle Lakes have an obligation under the Fair Housing Act to take all reasonable steps to stop racial harassment within their communities," said John Relman, director of the Washington Lawyers' Committee's Fair Housing Project. "We believe that Greencastle Lakes' failure to take any steps to protect the Dokas violated the requirements of the federal fair housing laws."

Shooting widens divide between minorities, NYPD

By Lisa Vives

Special to Sentinel-Voice

NEW YORK (IPS/GIN) - The killing of an unarmed West African by New York police officers has sparked new charges of police brutality against minority residents and widened the gap between the city's administration and Black community leaders.

Amadou Diallo, 22, a street vendor from Guinea, died Feb. 4 in a hail of bullets fired by four police officers from the "Aggressive Street Crimes Unit."

The officers said they shot at Diallo because he was behaving suspiciously and refused to stop when ordered to do so. "I am deeply sorry for everything that's occurred," one officer was

reported last week to have said.

Diallo, who was unarmed and had no criminal record, had been standing in the vestibule of his apartment building at 12:45 a.m. when the police fired 41 shots, hitting him 19 times. The officers said they thought Diallo had a gun, according to their attorney.

Weeks later, anger over his death among African-Americans and immigrants alike has showed no sign of abating.

"People back home — the entire African continent — are following this case," said Aoubacar Dione, first consul at the Guinean U.N. mission. Referring to the police officers involved, Dione said Africans "don't

understand why these four are still free."

Amnesty International, local African community groups, the American Civil Liberties Union and the NAACP have all demanded an investigation by federal officials and that Attorney General Janet Reno appoint a special investigator.

"This distressing incident once again underscores the urgent need for New York City authorities to take effective action," Amnesty executive director William F. Schultz commented, "including the appointment of an independent inquiry into allegations of lethal force, deaths in custody and policy brutality.

"The families of Amadou Diallo and those of other

victims of police shootings deserve no less," he said.

Schultz pointed to a 1996 Amnesty report on the New York Police Department that found "the majority of victims of police brutality and excessive force are unarmed, not criminal suspects and are from ethnic minorities."

Much of the anger over Diallo's death has been directed at New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who has resisted calls for a police review board composed of civilians but has made being tough on crime a cornerstone of his administration.

This zero tolerance policy, while causing a precipitous drop in New York City's crime rate, has led to numerous charges of policy

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Illinois white supremacist seeking law license

EAST PEORIA, Ill. (AP) — In three years of law school, Matt Hale made decent grades, participated in student groups and played violin in two orchestras. He also helped revive a white supremacist group that advocates a racial holy war.

Hale graduated last May, passed the bar exam and was hired by an Illinois law firm. But he never got his law license, snubbed by a state committee that reviews the "character and fitness" of prospective attorneys.

The panel, comprised of two lawyers and a judge, cited his racist leanings.

Hale is "free ... to incite as much racial hatred as he desires and to attempt to carry out his life's mission of

depriving those he dislikes of their legal rights," panel members wrote in their 2-1 opinion in December.

"But in our view he cannot do this as an officer of the court."

Miffed by the vote — all but 25 of more than 3,000 applicants last year were approved — Hale has appealed to a separate state committee that could overturn the decision.

"The idea that I can't be a lawyer because of my views is ludicrous," he said, sitting in a home office where an Israeli flag serves as a doormat, swastika stickers decorate the walls and the flag of Hale's group, the World Church of the Creator, hangs from a window. He is

27. Hale's effort to gain a law license has attracted some unlikely supporters, including the Anti-Defamation League and renowned attorney Alan Dershowitz, who said he may help in Hale's appeal.

"Character committees should not become thought police," Dershowitz said. "It's not the content of the thoughts I'm defending, it's the freedom of everybody to express their views and to become lawyers."

As a boy in East Peoria, Hale immersed himself in books about Nazis and formed a "Little Reich" group at school. In high school and at Bradley University he attended "white power" rallies and sent letters filled

with racial slurs to newspapers.

He also had brushes with the law, including a citation for littering after trying to distribute racist newspapers to homes. He was elected head of the World Church of the Creator while attending Southern Illinois University law school.

The church, founded in 1973 in Florida, espouses a racial holy war against Jews and blacks. One group member is serving a life sentence for killing a black sailor in Florida in 1991.

The church, which foundered for a few years, has thrived under Hale's leadership, according to the ADL. Hale's claim of as many

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