

NAACP may boycott a television sweeps week

WASHINGTON (AP) — The NAACP and other minority groups are considering boycotting one of the four major television networks during a coming sweeps week, the civil rights organization's president said Friday.

"We are looking at trying to find a way to have a precision, laser-like strike," Kweisi Mfume said in a speech to the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters. "If you're talking about seven or eight days,

that is possible."

"We're looking at sweeps week," Mfume said. "We've formed a coalition, so if they thought it was just black people they will be sadly mistaken."

No specific group or particular time period has been selected, he said. Sweeps are coming up in November and February, months when viewership numbers are used to set advertising rates. Local stations across the country design programming specifically to attract viewers

during sweeps.

The NAACP and several other groups, mainly Hispanic, have condemned the networks for putting up virtually an all-white slate of series this fall. Mfume said the groups also are gathering data on network hiring and promotion as well as philanthropic records.

Minority organizations — led by the Hispanic advocacy National Council of La Raza — have called for a "brownout" of ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC through Saturday

to mark the first two weeks of the new season. By targeting a sweeps period, the coalition of groups would take aim at one of the most competitive and ratings-crucial periods for networks.

Mfume, whose National Association for the Advancement of Colored People recently became a shareholder in all four networks, said the NAACP also will soon open a Hollywood office to monitor the situation.

Jackson: Network boycotts wreak only minimal damage

WASHINGTON (AP) — Media ownership is more effective than boycotting television networks, a longtime civil rights leader told black broadcasters last week.

"It's not enough to talk about the image on TV. We've got to get behind the question of ownership and control," the Rev. Jesse Jackson said as the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters

opened their fall conference.

Jackson said minorities need a voice because the media can "control character and minds, who is friend and who is enemy."

This month, the National Council of La Raza, a Hispanic civil rights organization, asked minorities not to watch the four major networks — ABC, CBS, Fox and NBC — because the group found just one leading Hispanic role



JESSE JACKSON

among the 38 shows premiering this fall. Other

organizations, including the NAACP, also are pressuring the networks to feature more minorities in prominent roles.

Gloria Tristani, a member of the Federal Communications Commission, is among the boycotters participating in the "brownout" that is to run from last Sunday through Sept. 25.

"Television is a powerful force, especially when it comes to our children, who are still trying to figure out

how they fit into the larger society," Tristani said in a statement.

La Raza spokeswoman Lisa Navarrete agreed with Jackson, saying the brownout is part of an overall strategy.

"We want to increase Latino ownership. We want to talk to advertisers," she said. "We are not in decision-making roles."

Jackson said the solution is to increase minority ownership of media outlets,

roles that he said have historically been held by white men.

"How does Ted Turner get CNN? He bought up the networks that we couldn't finance" because banks would not give blacks loans, Jackson said.

He sees mega-mergers, such as the CBS-Viacom marriage announced Sept. 7, is a threat to minorities and wants the FCC to hold hearings.

Democrats leading Republicans for crucial Hispanic vote

WASHINGTON (AP) — Both major political parties have made clear that the nation's fast-growing Hispanic population is an important voting group, and a new poll suggests that Democrats have the early edge in the 2000 campaign.

Two-thirds of Hispanics say they would support a Democratic presidential or congressional candidate, according to the new bipartisan poll that also indicates Democrats have an edge on many key issues.

A Republican consultant whose firm helped produce the poll says the GOP can learn some important pre-election lessons from the poll's results.

"Republicans know that Hispanics have been pivotal in many elections," said Michael Deaver, a GOP consultant and former senior aide to President Reagan. "If ever there were a group that Republicans need to spend time with, it is the Latinos."

The results of the poll by Deaver's firm, Edelman

Worldwide, and Democratic pollster Mark Penn were presented Friday at an event on Hispanic voters sponsored by Univision, the Spanish language television network.

Hispanics, by a 4-1 margin, were optimistic about their future in the United States and believe their personal economic situation has improved, the poll indicated.

And they approve of the job President Clinton is doing by more than a 5-1 margin. Hispanics believe Democrats would do a better job of handling many key issues from health care to education to taxes, the poll indicated.

"On every issue including Medicare, health care, welfare, education, affirmative action ... we scored much higher than Republicans, with more than 50 percent of the Hispanic community's approval," said Rep. Loretta Sanchez of California, a general co-chair of the Democratic National Committee.

Presidential candidates

Two-thirds of Hispanics say they would support a Democratic presidential or congressional candidate, according to the new bipartisan poll that also indicates Democrats have an edge on many key issues.

from both parties are making a concerted effort to appeal to the rapidly growing Hispanic population. By the end of 2004, Hispanics could be the country's largest minority, according to census estimates.

"The two front-running candidates speak to crowds in Spanish," Deaver said.

"The assimilation process is working. ... I'm not quite clear who is assimilating whom."

Vice President Al Gore

announced more than 500 Hispanic endorsements early last week and occasionally addresses Hispanic voters in Spanish.

Aides with the front-running GOP campaign of Texas Gov. George W. Bush note that he got almost half of the Hispanic vote in his 1998 re-election campaign, according to exit polls. And the governor sometimes addresses Hispanic crowds in their native tongue.

"Governor Bush is

actively reaching out to the Latino community and working hard to earn their support and broaden the base of the Republican Party," said Scott McClellan, a Bush spokesman.

The poll indicated:

— The three most important political issues for Hispanics were crime and drugs, education and the economy.

— Four-fifths of Hispanics say welfare must be replaced with an

employment system that will funnel welfare recipients into the work force.

— Hispanics support Democrats in Congress by 66 percent to 24 percent, disapproving of Republicans in Congress by 50 percent to 39 percent.

The poll of 502 Hispanics in five major cities — Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, New York and Houston — was taken Sept. 2-9 and has an error margin of plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

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