

Flag flap

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open debate on the measure next Tuesday.

But many newer civil rights leaders and the NAACP say the appropriate place for the flag is a museum. Proposals to move the flag to a less-visible monument, include it in a circle of flags or encase it in glass at a monument have all run into opposition.

"The flag promotes the Confederacy's existence and white supremacy," said Kevin Gray, 43, who heads the Read Street Freedom House Project in Columbia. "Placing the flag on the Statehouse grounds is simply a slap in the face."

Gray said the NAACP's tourism boycott of South Carolina, which officially began Jan. 1, should continue until the flag is out of sight.

"Older black legislators are tired of the fight or believe they need to work in the spirit of comity and civility, that they need to bend over backward for their white colleagues," he said.

But Sen. Robert Ford, a black Democrat who grew up in the shadow of Jim Crow laws, said it is unrealistic to think the flag would be removed from the Statehouse entirely, because the state was the birthplace of the Confederacy.

The "whippersnappers don't know what's going on and don't care," said Sen. Kay Patterson, 69, a black Democrat who has fought to remove the Confederate flag from the Statehouse since he was elected to the House in 1975. House Minority Leader Gilda Cobb-Hunter, a 48-year-old Democrat who is among the most prominent in the new wave of black leaders in the House, shrugs off Patterson's whippersnapper remark.

Some black legislators' leadership style "is go-along, get-along, as opposed to some whose style is less of a willingness to settle. That one word, settle, describes the difference," Cobb-Hunter said.

But Lowery worries that younger lawmakers may be reaching for the flag as a rallying point when they should be embracing more important economic issues.

Fighting for government contracts and opening job advancement opportunities, "is not as emotional and visible as the flag. It's not glamorous like a lunch counter," Lowery said.

A recent telephone poll showed 56 percent of South Carolinians questioned favored the Senate plan, and support was as high as 60 percent among blacks.

The poll by KRC Communications Research for three TV stations was conducted April 28-30 and had a margin of error of plus or minus 5 percentage points.

Similar divides have appeared in Alabama and Georgia, where the Confederate symbol that is part of the state flag is generating controversy again.

Alabama Rep. Alvin Holmes of Montgomery was arrested 27 times during civil rights fights, but he said that kind of in-your-face activism is less necessary now that blacks have legislative power.

"Many young people don't understand the sacrifices made to get them where they are today," Holmes said.

Georgia Rep. Tyrone Brooks of Atlanta, who joined King's staff when he was in his early 20s, sees the difference between young and old, militant and moderate, in a group of about 750 elected black officials he leads.

"You have to respect that young energy," Brooks said. "You have to respect those young ideas."

Republicans

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that they are not for everyone, that they are exclusive and for African-Americans, we are definitely not welcome."

The publishers reaffirmed their support for Hispanic media, saying they would not allow people of color to be divided by the Republican Party.

"Black and Latinos and minorities will always have a lot of issues in common," said Swain-Ross. "If they think a few dollars in the Latino community will separate the minority segment from their base issues, then they are wasting their time and their money."

"I hope they do get the money," she continued. "It's important that all voters hear all sides."

Said Jones: "We need to get together with the Hispanic community and demand change across the board."

Crime

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community policing for which Clinton won federal funding. But he highlighted a GOP-sponsored law he said has induced 27 states to impose longer prison terms to get more federal money to build prisons.

Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said the results "were largely due to the leadership at the state, local and federal level of Republicans committed to arresting, prosecuting and incarcerating violent criminals." GOP-backed legislation has provided \$700 million a year for prison construction, Hatch noted.

Clinton said further progress could come from passing his remaining gun-control measures, like child-safety locks and background checks on gun buyers at gun shows. Hatch, reflecting GOP opposition that has blocked those measures, noted the crime reductions came without enacting Clinton's remaining gun proposals.

Academic experts credited both parties' favorite anti-crime nostrums but also a wider range of factors, including some beyond the control of politicians, such as the aging of the baby boomers past crime-prone years.

To that list, Fox added "evaporating crack cocaine markets

and the violent crack gangs that drove the numbers up in the 1980s, smarter policing, increased interest in prevention down to the grass roots, and a better economy giving cities more to invest in crime control" and providing jobs for some who might otherwise turn to crime.

The FBI figures come from more than 17,000 U.S. police agencies and extend back to 1960.

Graduates

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The keynote speech will be given by Thomas N. Todd, a noted civil rights attorney who's passed the bar in three states.

NFL Keyshawn Johnson, Curtis Conway, Willie McGinest and Darrel Russell along with UNLV men's basketball coach Bill Bayno and football coach John Robinson co-sponsored the celebration.

"They have experienced it," Henry said of the professional athletes, all of whom went to USC. "They wanted UNLV students to experience it also."



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