

# Institute to research reparations for Black Americans

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Harvest Institute, a nationally recognized think tank, announced that it is embarking on a national fact-finding mission to identify who and how black people were economically exploited, physically abused, and culturally crippled by centuries of slavery and Jim Crow segregation.

The Institute will develop the legal theories, financial justifications, and facts to support reparations. The Institute's fact-finding mission is predicated on the belief that the American system of social democracy is obligated to deliver justice to those who society has treated unjustly.

The Harvest Institute has support from black elected officials, community organizations, black chambers of commerce, and business groups.

It is seeking sources of information about specific instances in which private parties, businesses, and various levels of government supported and directly or indirectly profited or otherwise benefitted from the laws and public policies of full black slavery and Jim Crow semi-slavery.

Those laws and policies denied the natural rights of black people to enjoy life, liberty, pursuit of happiness and the fruits of their own labor. The Institute intends to identify individuals with historically documented links to slavery and Jim Crow, collect primary

research materials, and hold public hearings. The Institute's findings will serve as a legal-moral basis for black people's reparations claims.

According to Dr. Claud Anderson, President and CEO of the organization, "Reparations for black people is no longer a far-fetched issue for parlor room discussions. It is now a necessity.

Black Americans are a forgotten, non-competitive people. They are on the verge of becoming a permanent underclass. Four centuries of slavery and Jim Crow mal-distributed nearly 100 percent of this nation's wealth, income, resources, businesses, and controls of all levels of government into the hands of the majority white society.

Blacks do not own nor control a sufficient amount of anything to be a competitive group, in a competitive society. This nation has systematically forced them to practice capitalism without the bonafide of capital. Black Americans are ill-equipped to compete and survive in the 21st century.

Anderson held the rank of an assistant secretary in the U.S. Department of Commerce under President Jimmy Carter. He is a popular lecturer and author of the best-selling book *Black Labor, White Wealth: A Search for Power and Economic Justice*, which broadly outlines the legal and economic case for black reparations.

Widely recognized as one of America's

most influential intellectuals, Anderson has drawn the nation's attention to the issue of race and the advantages of redeveloping and industrializing black communities.

Anderson argues that the wounds inflicted on Black Americans by the legacies of slavery and Jim Crowism are so deep that neither integration nor civil rights can repair the damage.

According to Anderson, "It is nonsense to talk about equal opportunity for black people in a society in which racial monopolies guarantee that each succeeding generation of Whites inherit approximately 98 percent of this nation's wealth and resources at birth. The amount of wealth that blacks own has been frozen.

It was one percent on the eve of the Civil War and it remains approximately one percent 140 years later. Similarly, on the eve of the Black Civil Rights Movement, blacks earned 54 cents to the dollar.

Today, half a century later, they earn 57 cents for every dollar that a white earns. These inequalities exist in a society in which wealth and income shape opportunities."

Anderson says, "It is one thing when blacks have difficult lives because of poor individual choices. It is quite another to have to live in a system that imposes inequities because of color. The wealth and income inequalities created by slavery and Jim Crowism have never been corrected and are the pri-

mary causes for the offspring of black slaves bearing six to eight times the burden of poverty, homelessness, unemployment, broken families, dysfunctional schools, poor health, drug abuse, self-hatred, and other pathologies. Without the resources of reparations, neither the social pathologies nor structural racism can be cured."

In this research project, The Harvest Institute will seek to specifically document and financially quantify the injury from both slavery and Jim Crow as two separate but related forms of slavery.

It will quantify both specific injury and the disadvantages imposed on 17 generations of blacks while enriching and establishing advantaged lives for whites. These findings will be used for educational and policy purposes and to develop legal theories for reparations similar to those made by Volkswagen and Mercedes-Benz to Jewish Holocaust victims. Jewish victims have received over \$52 billion from Germany.

Making restitutions for damages is rooted in our legal system and has been used by industrialized nations as a mechanism for apologizing and correcting institutional wrongs. Restitutions have been made to nearly every group that has claimed injury but black people.

White indentured servants received freedom dues. The U.S. allocated \$14 billion to (See *Reparations*, Page 7)

## Redistricting

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whether to use raw and sampled numbers when redrawing state legislative and Congressional district lines.

"I don't see a reason to do sampling," said state Rep. Con Bunde, a Republican who represents suburban Anchorage and surrounding rural areas. "We are a very mobile population. Anchorage is the largest city in the state and we frequently have people moving in from rural areas and moving out again."

The current law "undermines minorities and rural Alaska. What this does is make the urban-rural divide even greater," said state Rep. Mary Sattler Kapsner, a Democrat who represents remote areas of southwest Alaska.

## Census

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back a year later and say 'Sorry. We made a mistake,'" Miller said.

He also questioned whether the Census Bureau would have enough time to accurately produce the sampled data. Unadjusted population figures, are due to President Clinton by Dec. 31.

Sampled numbers are due to be released in groups of roughly 10 states per week beginning in March 2001.

"I believe that the 2000 census may well be the best, fairest and most accurate census ever," countered Rep.

Carolyn Maloney of New York, the subcommittee's ranking Democrat.

"Those who oppose the use of modern scientific methods in the census would ensure the millions of people missed in the census are left out permanently, and the millions of people counted twice are forever kept in," she added. "That is fundamentally unfair and must stop."

On a related note, Prewitt said half of the 42 million households which did not return a census form had now been contacted in the current phase of the census. Census-takers will try to reach the other half by early July.

## Flag

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Sen. Darrell Jackson, a black Democrat, tried to support the NAACP's position.

In the end, he parted with the NAACP and gathered with about 20 lawmakers in Hodges' office for the signing. He said he was satisfied that he delivered on a promise to his sons to remove the flag. "I can say to them, with the help of my colleagues in the General Assembly, 'We did it.' And now, I think it's time for the healing to begin."

The bill went to Hodges' desk after Republican House Speaker David Wilkins and Lt. Gov. Bob Peeler, who presides over the Senate, met Tuesday morning to put their signatures on the bill. "It's big. It's historical and it felt good," Wilkins said.

Hodges was elected in 1998 to a four-year-term with the help of Confederate flag supporters who said he violated a promise that he wouldn't take a leadership role in the flag debate.

The political importance of the speech was evident as Hodges practiced his remarks earlier in the day with a television camera accidentally piping the signal into the Statehouse press room.

At one point, Hodges said to advisers that he wanted to "distance myself as much from the debate" as he could. "I know I can't do it entirely," he said.

Spokesman Morton Brilliant said Hodges was trying to emphasize that he did not want to be seen as the center of the solution.

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