

# Study: Blacks appreciated Clinton

BOSTON (AP) — President Clinton paid attention to issues important to the nation's blacks and, not surprisingly, that accounts for his popularity with them, say researchers at Harvard and the University of Chicago.

"I think he's given enormous credit for standing up for things that mattered for people whose voices aren't often heard," said Lawrence Bobo, a Harvard professor who was one of the principal researchers.

A random sample poll conducted by Bobo and co-researcher Michael C. Dawson, a University of Chicago professor, sought opinions from 605 black and 724 white adults.

When the black adults were asked to pick three important reasons they liked Clinton, 72 percent cited his willingness to pay attention



President Bill Clinton (R) claps as historian James Holmberg (L) and sculptor Ed Hamilton hold up the certificate making William Clark's personal slave York an honorary sargent for his work with Lewis and Clark in the White House in Washington on Wednesday.

to racial issues; 51 percent listed his handling of the economy; while nearly 40 percent listed his "comfort with black people in black

settings" as important.

The poll found that 77 percent of blacks rated Clinton's overall performance in the White House as

"extremely favorable," while only 31 percent of whites gave him that rating.

In addition, 30 percent of (See Study, Page 5)



Rap star Sean 'Puffy' Combs and his mother arrive at court in New York City for the first day of jury selection in Combs' trial on charges of gun possession and bribery, stemming from a 1999 shooting at a Manhattan nightclub.

## Puffy

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they'll each face 15 years behind bars. In addition, Combs could get a maximum of seven years for the bribery rap.

New York Supreme Court Judge Charles Solomon kicked off the proceedings by denying a request by Combs' attorney, Benjamin Brafman, to postpone the start of the trial by a week. Brafman had asked for the delay because of the intense media publicity the rap star's trial has garnered, which the attorney argued could bias potential jurors.

However, Solomon sided with the district attorney and ordered the trial to move ahead as scheduled, saying potential jurors would be questioned as to their fairness and impartiality toward the defendants, as is routine in very trial. (The jury had already been delayed two weeks from its original January 2 start date.)

While the judge slapped a gag order barring both sides from talking to the media, Combs' publicist said the rap mogul was hoping for a fair trial amidst all the hoopla.

"We're looking forward to a fair and unbiased trial," says Puffy's rep, Dan Klores.

Combs and company got into this mess on December 27, 1999, when an early morning shoot-out erupted at Club NY, a Times Square hotspot. Puffy and gal-pal Jennifer Lopez fled the scene, running at least 10 red lights. When police finally stopped the rap mogul's SUV, they found a loaded gun on the floor of the front seat; they also recovered another gun that had been tossed out the window.

While Lopez wasn't charged, Combs was subsequently arrested and later got himself into deeper trouble when he was indicted for allegedly trying to bribe his driver with \$50,000 (and offering Lopez's diamond pinky ring as collateral) to claim the gun in the car belonged to the driver, not the Bad Boy Entertainment mogul.

Joining the rap star in court will be his bodyguard, Anthony "Wolf" Jones, and protégé Jamal "Shyne" Barrow, who was charged with attempted murder after allegedly shooting a man who insulted Combs in the nightclub.

All three have pleaded not guilty. (The incident has also launched a series of lawsuits against Combs, including ones filed by his former driver, the shooting victim and the owner of Club NY, who says the shooting caused business to slack off. Those cases will take place in civil court, possibly later this year.)

In the meantime, police are investigating a possible connection Combs and Jones may have to a murder that occurred five years ago in Atlanta at a party they attended with executives from Combs' Bad Boy Entertainment record company, according to the Los Angeles Times.

Authorities reportedly interviewed an off-duty Atlanta policeman working security at the Platinum City Club who said Jones pulled the trigger that took the life of a rival record company employee. The officer said the murder stemmed from an argument between Puffy's entourage and some of their West Coast rap rivals at Death Row Records (whose cofounder, Marion "Suge" Knight, is currently serving a nine-year sentence for violating probation).

## Snake pit for Ashcroft, love fest for Powell

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON - John Ashcroft walked into a snake pit and Colin Powell basked in a love fest in separate Senate confirmation hearings on Wednesday.

Ashcroft took a second day of grilling by Democratic members of the Senate Judiciary Committee over subjects ranging from abortion rights and school integration to gun control and voting rights.

Even before he could get a word in, committee chairman Sen. Patrick Leahy raised

questions about a statement Ashcroft made on Tuesday about school desegregation in Missouri, where he served as attorney general, governor and a U.S. senator.

Noting Ashcroft's testimony that Missouri had done nothing wrong and there was no evidence of a state violation of civil rights law, Leahy read from a ruling by the federal appeals court that found such contentions "wholly without merit."

Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah, a Republican who will chair the committee after Bush is

in the White House, intervened, calling for the regular order of speaking on the committee, and the partisan slugfest began.

Sen. Edward Kennedy, who had teed off against Ashcroft's record on school desegregation on Tuesday, revisited that topic after Republican Sen. John Kyl of Arizona accused Kennedy of misrepresenting Ashcroft's stance.

"I know that the senator was asked about state involvement in the desegregation cases, in the voluntary

cases in St. Louis, and he has responded yesterday and he responded today, and he's wrong," the Massachusetts Democrat said. "Plain, simple wrong."

Sen. Joseph Biden prodded Ashcroft on an interview he gave to Southern Partisan, a neo-confederate magazine, and while Ashcroft said he repudiated racism, Biden was not satisfied.

"I wish you were able to be more direct in your condemnation of things that you know now to be mistaken," (See Confirmation, Page 17)

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