

NEWS BRIEFS

CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION APPLAUDS FLORIDA VOTING REFORM

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights said it commends the Florida voting reform legislation signed into law by Gov. Jeb Bush last week. In a statement released before the signing, commission chairwoman Mary Frances Berry said the legislation is admirable. But, she added, "we are all cognizant of the fact that not all areas are covered," such as language and special needs assistance. "This legislation can only be effective if implemented," she said. "Otherwise the problems will continue." The commission held several investigations in Florida last January and February to examine voting irregularities in the state. Blacks claimed they were harassed at voting booths and that their votes were not counted during last November's presidential election.

JOHN LEWIS NAMED FOR JFK COURAGE AWARD

Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., the Civil Rights Movement veteran who rose from a Southern farm to the halls of Congress, will be honored with a special "Profile in Courage Award for Lifetime Achievement" next Monday by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation. Lewis, who is scheduled to receive the award from Caroline Kennedy, JFK's daughter during a ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum in Boston, is being recognized "for a lifetime career marked by extraordinary courage, leadership, vision and commitment to universal human rights," said foundation officials. The award is being given in honor of the 40th anniversary of the Freedom Rides, a protest against interstate segregated travel led by Lewis and other Black leaders. Lewis—who served as president of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the footsoldiers of the Civil Rights Movement—was among the Freedom Riders badly assaulted by White mobs. The Georgia congressman also was one of the principal organizers of the 1963 March on Washington. Lewis, in a statement, said he was "deeply moved" by the award because "John F. Kennedy was a true hero and has been an inspiration to me throughout my life...I hope that this award will inspire others—and especially young people—to make our nation a better place for everyone, to express themselves by standing up, speaking out and speaking up."

THIRD 'UNITY IN DIVERSITY' DAY IN D.C. HELD ON MALCOLM X BIRTHDAY

The third annual "Atonement/Reparations Mobilization For Unity In Diversity Day" took place Saturday, Malcolm X's 76th birthday, in Washington, D.C. on the National Mall. This year's theme was "Atonement and Reparations for Global Healing," said organizer and event founder Ayo Handy Kendi. The founder and director of the African American Holiday Association, Kendi said the day is designed to encourage people of all races to "come together in a global demonstration to spiritually connect and celebrate the human race." The event included a "Diversity Healing Expo," which included diversity training and social justice workshops, including one on reparations for African-Americans, as well as a special Malcolm X birthday salute.

MINORITY YOUTH QUICKLY TRANSFERRED TO ADULT COURT FOR DRUG CRIMES

Nearly all young Cook County, Ill. Blacks and Hispanics arrested for a drug crime are automatically transferred to adult court, and nearly all of them imprisoned for drug crimes than are non-Whites, according to a recent study commissioned by the Justice Policy Institute. More than 99 percent of the 393 youth automatically transferred to adult court are Black or Latino, said the study, which analyzed data from state criminal justice agencies in Illinois and national corrections databases. The state has an automatic transfer to adult courts for drug offenses, even if the accused is as young as 15. There was only one White youth drug offender automatically transferred to adult court last year out of 259 such transfers, the study said. Study author Jason Ziedenberg, senior policy analyst with the Justice Policy Institute, said in a statement that the policy "does not affect suburban or rural White youth in a way even remotely comparable to the way it affects urban minority youth."

Shooting suspect called racist

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The parents of a man convicted of killing five people in a racially motivated shooting spree called him a "racist" during a phone conversation and faulted him for signing autographs for other inmates.

Jurors heard a tape last week of portions of a March 2 conversation between Richard Baumhammers, then at the Allegheny County Jail, and his parents, dentists Inese and Andrejs Baumhammers.

"You're stupid. Signing your name like you're some

big honcho or something. What is this?" Inese Baumhammers told her son after learning he had signed newspaper articles about the Confederate flag and a cross burning. She later called him a "racist" and said he was wrongly acting like a "hero."

Andrejs Baumhammers told his son: "You killed five people and you maimed one who is in worse shape than you'll ever be. You should hang your head in shame the rest of your life, not, not be proud."

A jury convicted Richard

Baumhammers, a 35-year-old former immigration lawyer Wednesday of killing five people in a shooting spree last year in which he drove through the suburbs calmly selecting nonwhite victims.

Baumhammers also was convicted of eight counts of ethnic intimidation in the rampage that left a sixth victim paralyzed. The jury took three hours to convict him on five counts of first-degree murder in the April 28, 2000, shootings.

He displayed no emotion as the verdicts were read. His

father said later that he would not comment on the verdicts.

Baumhammers, who is white, shot his Jewish neighbor, two men from India, two Asian men and one black man as he drove his Jeep through suburban Pittsburgh, stopping twice to vandalize synagogues.

Prosecutors said he was trying to make a statement against nonwhite immigration.

Baumhammers could receive the death penalty.

His attorneys admitted (See Shooting, Page 5)

Texas Gov. Perry signs hate crimes bill

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — After refusing for months to say where he stood, Republican Gov. Rick Perry signed a hate crimes bill Friday that strengthens the penalties for offenses against minorities, gays and others.

The James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Act was named for the black man who was dragged to his death from a pickup truck in 1998 by three whites.

Perry's predecessor,

George W. Bush, had refused to support the measure two years ago, saying all crimes are hate crimes.

"With my signature, Texas now has stronger penalties against crimes motivated by hate," said Perry, who had been noncommittal until Friday's signing. "This law sends a signal to would-be criminals that if you attack someone because of their religion or race or gender, you face stiffer penalties."

As Perry signed the bill, he was surrounded by Byrd's parents and lawmakers who had pushed for the legislation.

"You've endured unimaginable pain that no Texan should have to endure. I hope you can find some peace in knowing that his death was not in vain," Perry told Byrd's parents.

Byrd's mother, Stella, with tears in her eyes, said the law gives her "something

good to remember from his death. This is the best Mother's Day gift that I've ever received."

Since Byrd's death, the parents said that each month they have had to clean his grave of racist notes and placards.

They said hooded members of the Ku Klux Klan have posed for photos at the cemetery and "left a placard there saying, 'We've been (See Hate Crimes, Page 7)

Denial

(Continued from Page 3)

Weekly asked. Not waiting for an answer, he repeated Michael McDonald's response at the time. "Absolutely not, Ward One is not having it," Weekly continued, quoting Michael McDonald. "Well, that's how Ward Five feels," he said.

"If you're going to come over here and do business, do the right thing," he advised

merchants in general. "It's time out for that," he said. "Just because it's been going on for over twenty-five years, it can't go on for twenty-six. It's enough."

The vote was 3-2 to deny, with Goodman and Brown dissenting again. But this time Michael McDonald, and Mack—who seemed not to have much stomach for the debate—abstained.

Later, Weekly, looking somewhat fatigued told the *Sentinel-Voice*, "The people have said 'we want better, we want an improved quality of life.'" What he had done, he said, was "to answer the people's call." He was reluctant to comment about the council members who held opposing views.

"Everybody is responsible for his own vote," said

Weekly. "Everybody's being put on notice, and it's time that now we all step up to the plate and do our part. It's long overdue."

"We've just got to go out and do the best job that we can," he said, "and try to convince the other council members—who also have votes—that we know what we're talking about when it comes to our neighborhoods."

Getting the Job Done

Join in with us and support the re-election efforts of John Rhodes

Hispanic Business Leaders
Women's Organizations
North Las Vegas Republicans Club
Religious Leaders
Culinary Union #226

VOTE ON JUNE 5th, 2001