

Commission seeks meeting with Ashcroft

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights wants to meet with Attorney General John Ashcroft to discuss Florida elections and is asking the Justice Department to investigate what the commission believes were widespread violations of the Voting Rights Act.

The commission approved a report Friday that said black voters' ballots were disproportionately tossed out in Florida's presidential elections. The commission's six-month investigation of the Florida vote found the election was plagued by faulty machin-

ery, problems with access to polling places, faulty purging of voter rolls and a lack of attention by state and county officials to evidence that growing numbers of voters would overwhelm outdated systems.

The commission adopted the report by a 6-2 vote, with both members appointed by Republicans voting no.

Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and Secretary of State Katherine Harris, the state's top election official, responded Friday that the commission report was the poorly handled work of a partisan group. Bush and Harris both are

Republicans.

Harris said the commission has recognized that "Florida has addressed many of the commission's concerns through landmark election reforms." Bush observed, "The time for meaningless and divisive finger pointing over last year's election is over. It's time to move on."

Commission chairwoman Mary Frances Berry said she hopes the report, which offered criticism of both Republican state officials and Democratic county officials, will spark a renewed interest in changing election

laws and procedures.

Justice Department officials said they hadn't received the request for a meeting but said the department has been investigating complaints about the Florida election for months. It is still examining about a dozen of these complaints but has dealt with the others, said Dan Nelson, a spokesman for the department's civil rights division. The two commissioners appointed by Republicans, Russell Redenbaugh and Abigail Thernstrom, said the report was not justified by evidence in the commission's Florida hearings.

Tapes: LBJ asked Marshall to take job

AUSTIN (AP) - On 18 hours of tapes released Friday, President Lyndon B. Johnson can be heard trying to persuade Thurgood Marshall in 1965 to accept the post of solicitor general.

Marshall, then a federal judge, took the job to become the first black to hold the position. Johnson named him to the U.S. Supreme Court in 1967.

The former president said he was offering the position to Marshall because he wanted to continue to further improve civil rights.

"I want to do this job that Lincoln started and I want to do it the right way," Johnson said.



THURGOOD MARSHALL

Marshall's responses could not be heard.

"I want the top lawyer in the United States representing me before the Supreme Court to be a negro and be a

damn good lawyer that's done it before. And you have those peculiar qualifications," Johnson could be heard telling Marshall.

Johnson argued that having a black solicitor general would be good for the image of the country.

On the batch of tapes, Johnson also can be heard talking about escalating problems in Vietnam which eventually led him to decide against running for the presidency in the 1968 election.

The president can be heard to ask Democratic Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield whether they should agree with the military's request to increase

the number of troops in Vietnam.

"Well, I hate to be the one to say it because you've said earlier it's 75,000, then it's 150,000, then it's 300,000. Where do you stop?" Mansfield was heard saying to the president.

"You don't," Johnson said. "To me, it's shaping up like this, Mike. You either get out or you get in."

The LBJ Library at the University of Texas in Austin releases presidential tapes about every six months in increments covering two to three months of Johnson's presidency, in chronological order. The latest release covered June to July 1965.

BET Awards

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Deadline

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think city hall wants to do anything for West Las Vegas." Nonetheless, two days ago, with some frustration, he followed through on the advice from City Hall.

"I called the governor this morning and they said fax them the information," he said, while issuing a stern warning. Said Current, carefully measuring his words: "After the fifteenth, it's over- no more negotiations. I don't want to talk to anybody, I just want to be concerned with that march."

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