

NEWS BRIEFS

SURVEY SHOWS PERCEIVED RACIAL DISCRIMINATION BY SHOPPERS

Jerome Williams, an associate professor at Penn State University, told reporters that statistics show more than 80 percent of Blacks complain of getting less service from store attendants than whites. "The bottom line is minority consumers no longer tolerate the same type of treatment as they have in the past. They are being more aggressive in seeking remedies," said Williams. "They are more likely to file lawsuits and less likely to decide to simply take their business elsewhere."

SUPREME COURT MINIMIZES CIVIL RIGHTS CLAIMS

(Special to the NNPA)—The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that those defeated in court after filing a civil rights claim can not recover attorney's fees. In cases where the defendant agrees to compensate the plaintiff on demand before trial, the Buckhannon Board and Care Home Inc. vs. West Virginia Department of Health and Human Services decision would stop the plaintiff from getting attorney's fees. However, this decision would not affect plaintiffs filing a claim against private employers. "It's hard to overestimate the impact of this case," Richard Seymour, New York's Lief, Cabraser, Hiemann and Bernstein partner told reporters. "The decision strikes at the engine by which civil-rights cases are fueled."

RESEARCH: DEATH PENALTY FAVORS NO RACE

Although research has shown that Blacks and Latinos face more death penalties than whites, the Justice Department disagrees, saying statistics on the state level show that there is no proof of racial bias concerning the death sentence. "My department's review of the study-commissioned by former Attorney General Janet Reno-didn't expose any evidence of bias," Attorney General John Ashcroft, a strong supporter of the death sentence, told reporters. However, he said this before Oklahoma City bomber Timothy McVeigh's and Texas drug kingpin Juan Raul Garza's executions. Most civil rights leaders, including Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), interviewed by the NNPA at the group's recent convention in Atlanta, disagreed with that view.

TAVIS SMILEY SIGNS UP WITH ABC, CNN, NPR

Tavis Smiley, former host of "BET Tonight," stormed back "big-time," inking a multi-million dollar deal with top news companies. Smiley will be appearing on ABC Network News, "Good Morning America," "Primetime Thursday" and probably on Disney's Buena Vista Television. Smiley will appear on "The Smiley Report" and friend Tom Joyner's morning show for ABC Radio. In addition, he signed up with CNN, National Public Radio (NPR) and book publisher Random House. "I'm delighted to have the opportunity to communicate with a broad base of Americans through a variety of media outlets, and I look forward to this challenge," Smiley told reporters.

UNITARIANS ELECT FIRST BLACK LEADER

CLEVELAND (AP) - The Unitarian Universalist Association elected its first black president in the denomination's 40-year history at its annual convention Saturday. The Rev. William G. Sinkford, 54, won by a 2-1 margin - 2,218 votes to 1,043 votes - over the Rev. Diane M.W. Miller, who would have been the first woman president. Sinkford succeeds the Rev. John A. Buehrens, who served two four-year terms. After a corporate career, mostly in marketing, Sinkford entered divinity school and was ordained in 1995 in Cincinnati. He said he would use his presidency to speak out on racial justice, gender equality and poverty. "The hurting world in which we live desperately needs our liberal voice," he said. "We can be, and will be, a transformative voice for justice in the world." For seven years, the Cambridge, Mass., resident has served as director of congregational, district and extension services for the Boston-based denomination. Miller, of Belmont, Mass., has been director of ministry since 1993.

Jackson denounces Vieques bombing

VIEQUES, Puerto Rico (AP)—The Rev. Jesse Jackson denounced the Navy's bombing of its prized Vieques firing range as the arrogant act of a colonizer, and the treatment of detained protesters as an effort to break their spirit.

Jackson said Saturday that he was lobbying Attorney General John Ashcroft for a meeting to air complaints that the U.S. government is trying to intimidate detainees, including his wife, Jacqueline, with excessive jail terms, fines and cruel treatment.

"It's gratifying to be here on Vieques, in Puerto Rico, where the people have met the challenge of those who try to break their spirit and have not given up," Jackson said when he arrived for a day on the outlying island of this Spanish-speaking U.S. Caribbean territory.

"To bomb Vieques is a

colonial act," he said, and "arrogant."

The Jacksons are the latest celebrities to embroil themselves in protests to force an immediate end to six decades of bombing exercises that activists say have harmed the environment and islanders' health.

Jackson charged that the bombing "has resulted in a high incidence of cancer, in a high incidence of asthma." Later he visited the Lujar neighborhood, said to have the highest cancer and asthma rates on Vieques.

The Navy says health studies on the island have been biased and unscientific.

Decades of subdued resentment exploded into island-wide protests after two stray bombs killed a civilian security guard on the range in 1999, which forced the Navy to stop using live bombs.

Protesters have taken to invading Navy land to pre-

vent sorties to drop inert bombs of up to 1,000 pounds. More than 100 protesters were arrested in the last exercises in April and May. Since exercises resumed Monday, at least 55 trespassers have been arrested, including Jacqueline Jackson.

Mrs. Jackson, 57, was jailed last Tuesday when she refused to pay \$3,000 bail. On Thursday, her husband said, she was put into solitary confinement for refusing to submit to a strip search.

A Federal Bureau of Prisons incidence report, supplied by the Jacksons' Rainbow/Push Coalition, quotes a prison officer as saying Mrs. Jackson stripped and complied until "I asked her to bend over and spread her buttocks. Inmate Jackson just stood facing me and told me 'No.'"

Protests have continued despite President Bush's announcement this month that

the Navy must withdraw from Vieques in two years.

Bush's decision was largely interpreted here as a move to win Latino votes and avoid embarrassment if Vieques islanders reject the exercises at a federally organized referendum scheduled for November. The referendum would give residents the opportunity to vote for the Navy to remain and resume use of live ammunition, or leave in 2003.

Puerto Rico's Gov. Sila Calderon is organizing a local referendum in July that offers the additional option of voting for an immediate withdrawal of the Navy, a position she reiterated Friday at her first meeting with U.S. Navy Secretary Gordon England. England, who flew to San Juan unannounced, repeated his position that the Navy was ready to withdraw, but only in 2003, Calderon said.

Poll depicts profiling as troubling

WASHINGTON (AP) - About half of all black men report that they have been the victims of racial profiling by police, according to a survey published Friday.

Overall, nearly 4 in 10 blacks - 37 percent - said they had been unfairly stopped by police because they were black, including 52 percent of all black men and 25 percent of all black women.

The survey was conducted by The Washington Post, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation and Harvard University. The Kaiser Foundation is an independent philanthropy focusing on major health care issues.

Blacks are not the only Americans who say they have been the targets of racial or ethnic profiling by law enforcement. One in five Latino and Asian men reported they had been the victims of racially motivated police stops.

But racial profiling is only one of many examples of intolerance that minorities say they continue to confront. More than a third of all blacks interviewed said they had been

rejected for a job or failed to win a promotion because of their race.

One in five Latinos and Asians also said they had been discriminated against in the workplace because of their race or ethnicity.

Overwhelming majorities of blacks, Latinos and Asians also report they occasionally experience at least one of the following expressions of prejudice: poor service in stores or restaurants, disparaging comments and encounters with people who clearly are frightened or suspicious of them because of their race or ethnicity.

The margin of sampling error for the overall results was plus or minus 3 percentage points. It was plus or minus 6 points for blacks, 7 points for Latinos and 9 points for Asians.

For the survey, 1,709 randomly selected adults were interviewed by telephone from March 8 through April 22. The sample included 315 Hispanics, 323 blacks and 254 Asians.

St. Paul takes steps to end racial stops

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) - In an agreement aimed at preventing racial profiling, St. Paul police will hand out their business cards to motorists and inform drivers who have been pulled over that they can refuse to allow their cars to be searched.

The federally mediated agreement was announced Wednesday by Police Chief William Finney and Nathaniel Khaliq, head of the St. Paul Chapter of the NAACP.

Under the agreement, the police department will also set up centers for citizens to file complaints against officers.

During a consent search, officers now will be required to tell a motorist that he or she has the right to refuse.

Officers will not need permission to search if there

is strong suspicion of a crime - for instance, seeing the butt of a gun jutting from beneath a seat or smelling marijuana wafting from the car.

The pact is aimed at preventing officers from pulling over motorists solely on the basis of their race.

A University of Minnesota study looked at 41,000 traffic stops in St. Paul between April 15 and Dec. 15 and found that blacks, who make up about 10 percent of the city's adult population, accounted for about 26 percent of the stops. About 40 percent of the drivers searched were white, though whites make up more than 70 percent of the adult population.

Black leaders said officers who are doing their jobs properly should have no fear of handing out business cards.

Stuart Burke, head of the said he supports the agreement. police officers' union, ment.

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