

BUSINESS

Democrats plan to bridge partisan schism

By Tim Shorrock

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (IPS) - Congressional Democrats will shortly unveil trade legislation proposals designed to bridge the labor and environmental divide separating themselves from President George W. Bush and the Republicans. They run the risk, however, of alienating U.S. anti-free trade activists and developing countries opposed to a "social clause" in trade agreements.

The legislation will include labor and environmental provisions thus far opposed by Republicans, says Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.), chairman of the Senate Finance Committee who is working on the proposals with leading Democrats in the House of Representatives.

Their efforts to strike a compromise with the Republicans are strongly opposed by labor unions, environmental groups, and economic nationalists that have lobbied against the free-trade agenda.

These groups fear that, in order to gain Bush's support and win favor with a majority

in Congress, the proposals on both labor and the environment would be too loose to have significant effect.

"We're trying to discourage Sen. Baucus from taking this approach," said Gary Hubbard, a spokesman for the United Steelworkers of America.

By drafting a broad proposal, the Democrats hope to force the Republican leadership in the House to end their opposition to including labor and environmental provisions in Trade Promotion Authority legislation.

Bush is eager to win negotiating authority so he can begin a new round of trade talks that will "ignite a new era of global economic growth," as he told the World Bank last week. He has also been pushing free trade and the need for TPA at the Group of Eight (G-8) summit in Genoa, Italy.

To forge a "real bipartisan trade policy," Baucus said, the administration must begin negotiating with the Democrats in earnest by early September.

The legislation the Democrats hope to push will include provisions requiring coun-

tries entering trade agreements with the United States to provide "assurances" they will not lower their labor or environmental standards to gain a competitive advantage; and that they will allow countries to restrict trade in goods made by forced or child labor, and propose the creation of a multilateral agreement incorporating environmental issues in trade.

Also under consideration for inclusion in the TPA is a provision, passed in the Senate Finance Committee, which renews and strengthens a U.S. Trade Adjustment Assistance program that provides training funds to workers displaced by imports and shifts in the global economy. The current program expires in September.

Democrats may also add provisions to strengthen U.S. ability to protect industries hurt by import surges under Section 201 of the 1974 Trade Act, as well as language that would expand Congress' role in trade by removing limitations on how such free trade agreements are debated in the legislature.

Many developing countries oppose the inclusion of labor or environmental language

in trade agreements.

Ruben Barbosa, Brazil's ambassador to the United States, said his country would have a difficult time participating in negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas if the United States insists on labor and environmental language.

"If TPA includes a reference to sanctions, as far as Brazil is concerned that would be a non-starter," Barbosa told IPS.

Brazil and other steel exporters are also opposed to the U.S. use of Section 201, which the Bush administration recently invoked in requesting the International Trade Commission (ITC) to investigate whether a recent surge in steel imports has damaged the U.S. domestic steel industry.

Section 201 is the U.S. version of the "safeguard" and "escape" mechanisms allowed under global trade rules when countries believe their domestic producers are being injured by imports.

Countries affected by ITC decisions, however, can take their complaints to the World Trade Organization.

Corporate blacks told to 'agitate, agitate, agitate'

By Hazel Trice Edney

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — The panelists for a forum called "Blacks in Corporate America: The next Frontier" were quite engaged in discussions about the diversity programs in their various corporations.

But Willie Brown of Houston, a member of the audience at the National Urban League Conference, just wanted the bottom line: "How do we keep African-American advancement on the front-burner" in an increasingly global America where "women and other minorities" appear to be taking precedent?

The three corporate executives on the panel, Jerome Adams of Shell Oil Co., Penny Joseph of Panasonic/Matsushita Electric Corp. of America and Westina Matthews Shatteen of Merrill Lynch Bank USA grappled with the answer Tuesday before it was finally stated in three words made famous as a phrase by legendary abolitionist Frederick Douglass.

"Agitate, agitate, agitate," said Shatteen, senior vice president at Merrill Lynch. She stressed employees being able to network with and communicate directly with corporate leaders about race are key elements to progress.

"But agitation is a lifetime process," chimed in Joseph, general manager at Panasonic/Matsushita. And agitation must be supplemented with educational training so that Black people will "have the required skills" to handle jobs from ground floor to executive level in order to compete globally.

The corporate forum was one of nine that were held simultaneously with prime topics that included literacy, foundation giving, community empowerment through technology, homeownership, faith-based initiatives and coalition building.

Brown's question, a high point in the corporate discussion, likely hit home as U.S. Census data has said Hispanics now outnumber African-Americans.

Adams, a general manager at Shell, ultimately resolved, "there are no easy answers."

But he said a key to progress in anything is longevity.

At Shell, "we measure what we do in the area of diversity," he said, adding Shell also has a Black employee tank that is able to call meetings with the chief executive officers to deal with racial diversity and other issues.

Husband, wife team open Emerald Pharmacy

Special to Sentinel-Voice

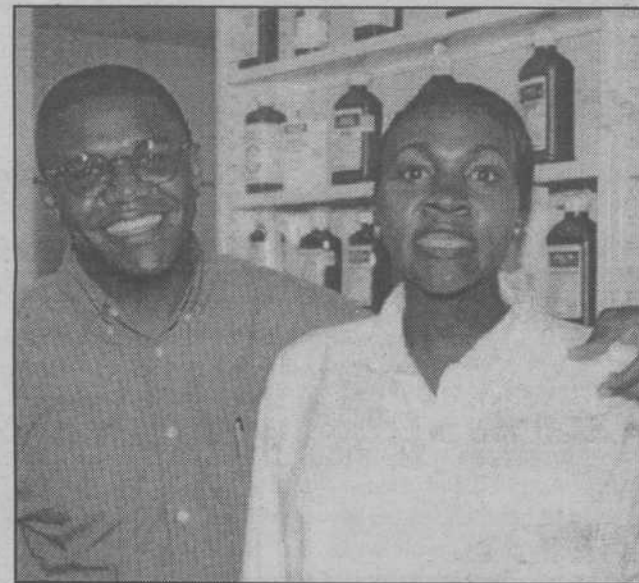
Marcel and Uzo Ezeoke, originally from Nigeria, have opened Emerald Pharmacy, 500 S. Martin Luther King Blvd. Both are licensed pharmacists who moved to Las Vegas from England.

"I wanted to be a doctor, but I changed my mind," said Marcel. "My wife's mother was a pharmacist," he explained, "so it passed along."

In a town cluttered with as many pharmacy chains as convenience stores, with compatible hours to boot, how do the Ezeokes plan to compete?

"Customer service...we're going to be stomping with service," Ezeoke said.

Competitive prices, home deliveries, immunizations and information about ill-



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy
Marcel and Uzo Ezeoke have opened their own pharmacy.

nesses that affect African-Americans are ways they plan to stay afloat in the pharma-

ceutical waters of Southern Nevada.

"We are family-owned and live in the community," Ezeoke said.

Hours of operation will be 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Monday through Friday, and from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. on Saturday.

Most insurances are accepted by Emerald Pharmacy.

The Ezeokes have been practicing pharmacists since 1990.

They have been married for three years, and have a two-year-old son and another child on the way.

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Saturday, August 18 - 10 am - 2 pm • Sunrise Community Center • 2240 Linn Lane

Saturday, August 25 - 10 am - 2 pm • Henderson Convention Center • 200 Water St

Wednesday, August 22 - 4 pm - 8 pm • CCSN-Boulder Campus • 700 Wyoming

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