

## Georgia redistricting plan cleared

ATLANTA (AP) - A redistricting plan drawn to help Democrats regain control of Georgia's congressional delegation cleared the state Senate Friday as Democrats successfully resisted GOP efforts to split them along racial lines.

Democrats have a slim majority in both houses of the Legislature, but only if blacks and whites vote together. They opened the current special session determined to avoid a racial split.

By and large, that coalition has held, but a split occurred this week when some black Democrats in the House joined forces with Republicans to pass a redistricting plan drawn by Rep. Ben Allen, a black Democrat who wanted to create a black-majority district that he could run for Congress from.

According to analysts, Allen's map would give the state four or five Democratic-leaning districts, with eight or nine GOP-leaning districts.

The Senate plan would create seven districts where a Democrat could win, and six where the GOP should win.

Next week, a House-Senate conference committee will meet to reconcile differences between the House and Senate plans.

Democratic Rep. Calvin Smyre, the House's highest-

ranking black, said he has talked to blacks who voted for the Allen plan and "they have seen the light" and will now support a plan that more closely resembles the Senate map.

Georgia has 11 congressional districts now, with eight seats held by Republicans and three by black Democrats. The state gains two seats because of population growth from 1990 to 2000. In the Senate plan, most Republican incumbents are inconvenienced to some degree.

The plan also creates a spidery district encircling much of Atlanta - a district denounced by white Republican Sen. Sonny Perdue of Bonaire as "the blood splatter from the entry wound through the heart of Georgia." The district would have a black voting population of 38 percent.

Republicans charged the plan dilutes black voting strength - an argument they hope echoes with the U.S. Justice Department, which must approve election law changes in Georgia and 15 other states to ensure black voting strength is not diluted.

But Sen. David Scott, a black Democrat from Atlanta, argued the plan is fair and "reflects the clear diversity of this state." Only one Democrat - a white lawmaker - joined the Republican side in voting against the Senate plan.

## Mayor hopefuls know Detroit politics

DETROIT (AP) - More than 20 candidates are vying to be the city's next mayor, but polls indicate the crowded field in Tuesday's primary will be led by the son of a former congressman and a former homicide chief who appeared in the comedy "Beverly Hills Cop."

State House Minority Leader Kwame Kilpatrick and City Council president Gil Hill have the most support among the 21 candidates, according to recent polls. The top two vote-getters in the nonpartisan primary go on to the November general election.

The next mayor of the nation's 10th-largest city faces a list of challenges. Neighborhoods are still scarred from riots more than three decades ago. A budget shortfall looms.

The U.S. Justice Department is investigating fatal shootings by Detroit officers, prisoner deaths and allegations that detectives illegally detained potential homicide witnesses.

"There's a perception that something is wrong," with the police department, said Hill, the former head of the city police's homicide division. "Perception in some

cases are reality to some people."

At 31, Kilpatrick is younger than most of the candidates but has experience. He grew up around politics - his mother is U.S. Rep. Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick - and he is serving his third term in the state House.

Hill, 69, has emphasized his experience, highlighting his years with the city police department and on the City Council. He has received union support, including an endorsement by the United Auto Workers. Hill also is known by some as having portrayed a police officer in

"Beverly Hills Cop."

The next mayor will replace Dennis Archer, who announced in April that he would not seek a third term. Archer became the city's second black mayor in 1993; Kilpatrick and Hill are black as are many of the candidates.

During his tenure, Archer ushered in new development: Three temporary casinos and a new baseball stadium are drawing visitors downtown; a professional football stadium is under construction; and a downtown business and retail development center is taking shape.

## Mixed Man

(Continued from Page 13) show. His observations portrayed us all as those with "confused" agendas who could jump the salty waters of racial strife at a moment's notice, complete the college application with profound ease and identify with Black as though it were only a matter of the music you listened to and the food you ate.

Focusing on the exact

point of where my roots lay, is by itself, difficult enough and immeasurably far reaching.

Such is the life of a child with two conflicting souls in search of peace, but is the child who symbolizes that final brink to total humanity. As a child I could sense that I was genuinely different from all the others-Black and White. That I somehow was

the piece taking up two mammoth spaces in the human puzzle. I had to decide early on to ultimately live a choice and then accept it as a necessity.

But I later found that it really wasn't even necessary. I had always been afraid of being myself and thought to do less welcomed imminent self-destruction by the distant voices banging at soul

and mind, the darkest scourges of a bi-polar being.

Therefore, the question of my existence is not in the misguided assumption that I am an odd combination of two conflagrate factions. No-I am who I am, not whom other people think I am. Therefore, I would hope it is where those factions soon discover a passionate commonality.

## Conference

(Continued from Page 13) Bush wants to be the "education president," he could begin by realizing that part of the route to better test scores is better schools, not just testing. Serious money-the General Accounting Office suggested as much as \$13 billion-could be spent on rehabilitating and building inner city schools to bring them up to standard with suburban schools.

It is the old issue of how Black children manage a Chemistry test when they have never seen a Bunsen burner. Every teacher knows that there are intangible factors to achievement, such as

whether students are proud of their school's facilities and appearance. Accountability also means delivering to children the best learning circumstances possible so that their natural talents can flourish.

Revitalizing Urban Policy. Bush doesn't have one, and his budget eliminated even the weak "new markets" approach of the Clinton administration. Furthermore, I don't see the funding for the Rep. J.C. Watts (R-Okla.) version of urban policy recently signed into law. Where's the beef, if Republicans want people to go to work, to have decent transportation, to have drug-free

environment and housing that is functional, and with serious economic opportunities for minority businesses? The billion of dollars it would take to deal with this modest agenda are not a Bush priority.

In these items and many others, we begin to see the real bill for slavery, internal colonialism and racism, and perhaps the reason why Bush did not want Powell to commit himself to go to Durban.

Nevertheless, whether or not the United States is officially a signatory to the final communique coming out of Durban, since it is represented there by thousands of Ameri-

can citizens and government officials like the Congressional Black Caucus, we inherit at least a moral mandate from this meeting to do something more profound to eliminate racism in this country.

Do I think that a Bush White House Conference on racism will happen?

No.

But that does not excuse the fact that eliminating racism is not a Black problem here or anywhere else.

Dr. Ron Walters, a political science professor at the University of Maryland College Park, is co-author of the book "African American Leadership."

## Democrats court labor in NYC mayoral race

NEW YORK (AP) - With nearly one in five likely Democratic voters still undecided three days before the primary, the Democratic mayoral candidates courted the party's traditional voting base Saturday - the labor movement.

Front-runners Mark Green and Fernando Ferrer were joined by Alan Hevesi and Peter Vallone at a Manhattan breakfast before the annual Labor Day Parade. The four mingled with the heads of the city's major unions at Tavern on the Green, then marched in the parade. Republican candidate Mike Bloomberg also marched.

Ferrer first joined the Rev. Al Sharpton for a campaign rally at the black activist's Harlem headquarters. Sharpton said Ferrer understands "the other city" - with residents such as schoolchildren who don't have access to the best education and parents who work in the health care industry but can't provide coverage for their children.

Ferrer said he was running for mayor to change the policies of the past eight years under Republican Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

"I grew up in the South Bronx. Don't give me lectures on crime - I've seen more!" he said, aiming his remarks at the mayor, who takes credit for cutting down crime. Ferrer said police achieved that by sometimes targeting innocent people from minority groups. Giuliani is barred by term limits from seeking re-election.

Both Republican candidates faced snags that did little to bolster their campaigns. While media entrepreneur Bloomberg marched in the parade, a copy of New York magazine on its way to newsstands left his staff searching for explanations.

The magazine reported details about a pamphlet of profanity-laced and politically incorrect jokes allegedly written or said by Bloomberg, and given to him as a birthday present in 1990. Among the quips: "If women wanted to be appreciated for their brains, they'd go to the library instead of to Bloomingdale's."

"You know what this says - it says somebody's desperate," his campaign manager, Bill Cunningham, said Friday.

Meanwhile, Herman Badillo's spokesman was explaining how he barely raised enough money - \$250,000 from city residents - to be eligible for matching funds. Last Tuesday, the Campaign Finance Board challenged \$50,000 of the contributions, refusing the matching funds.

## Ofari

(Continued from Page 13)

lic sentiment toward modifying, let alone eliminating, the three strikes law. Few politicians will run the risk of being tagged as soft on crime by calling for reform or elimination of the law. Such a call is regarded as a political death knell come election time. Even the widely publicized appeal in California a few years ago of Marc Klaas, the father of Polly Klaas (whose murder ignited public furor and propelled the passage of the three strikes law) to apply three strikes only to violent criminals fell on deaf public ears.

This was the right person to make the pitch. The three strikes law is supposed to apply exclusively to violent criminals, and if it must stay on the books, it should still only apply to them. But even this logical, but tepid reform, would face rough sledding. Crime is crime to much of the public. Few are willing to make any fine distinctions between someone who robs a bank or sells or possesses a small amount of cocaine. The perception is that the cocaine dealer or user today could be the bank robber or murderer tomorrow-better to get them off the streets before that happens.

These are the towering obstacles that prevent a much-needed overhaul of the law. Yet three strike enthusiasts and state officials sooner or later must confront a terrible reality. Three strikes needlessly imprisons thousands of persons who commit petty crimes. For a fraction of the cost of preserving three strikes, they could be better helped by more drug treatment and job and skills training programs. But, worst of all, the law criminalizes a generation of young Black and Latino males. This is much too steep a price to pay for keeping a hopelessly flawed law on the books.

Earl Ofari Hutchinson is a columnist and the president of the National Alliance for Positive Action. View its Web site: [www.natalliance.org](http://www.natalliance.org).