

# Student activism obvious at polls

By Makebra M. Anderson  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Young people voted in record numbers on Tuesday and efforts are already underway to make certain that enthusiasm does not fade with the counting of the presidential ballots.

"This election year we've seen record involvement from young people in the political process and most of these people understand that voting is the first step in becoming politically involved," Brian Richardson, spokesman for the College Democrats of America, says.

"The College Democrats of American and the Democratic National Committee plan on engaging young people throughout the year to help them get more involved in the community and national politics."

Instead of standing in line to register for the spring semester, college students across America choose to stand in line and vote this week.

In a pre-election survey of college students conducted by Harvard University's Institute of Politics, 83 percent of college students said they would definitely vote in this week's election.

"Young people, specifically minorities between 18-30 have the biggest increase in voter turnout," said Brandon Neal, director National Association for the Advancement

of Colored People's youth and college division. "Everything happens for a reason. In the past four years a lot of educating has been going on. People's eyes are open and they are concerned because what's going on in the world is affecting them."

Some youth say they get a bad rap on their voting habits.

According to the United States Census, in 2000, there were more 25 year olds who voted (1.25 million) than 75 year olds (1.07 million) and more 29 year olds who voted (1.25 million) than 69 year olds.

Neal says the key to getting young voters interested in issues.

"We're in the continuing process of educating young people of the issues. Each month we dedicate to specific issues like healthcare, education, economics," he explains.

Another group dedicated to educating young people on issues throughout the year is the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation (NCBCP).

"We have a project called Black youth vote that is not going away. It is an ongoing effort to train young people, who can train other young people," Melanie Campbell, NCBCP executive director, said.

"The sustainability of an upward movement has nothing to do with stopping at the ballot box, but continuing in the process. You  
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## Bush

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Michigan, which now operates an affirmative action undergraduate admissions program less rigid than last year's, Black student enrollment has declined in the wake of the court decisions. This year's freshmen class, the first admitted after the Supreme Court forced Michigan to change its undergraduate admissions policy, fell by 14 percent, from 410 in 2003 (7.4 percent of the enrollment) to 350 this year (5.8 percent).

Because of last year's ruling, some universities are eliminating or radically altering programs designed to increase Black enrollment.

Unless he makes a radical change, Bush will continue to circumvent legitimate African-American leaders, relying on Blacks with conservative credentials but no recognized standing in the larger Black community.

"Expect four more years of benign neglect," says Donna Brazile, manager of Al Gore's 2000 presidential campaign. "Expect four more years of a hostile relationship, four more years of not having anybody inside the White House to talk to. The White House has made it abundantly clear that if you're not with the president, you're against him, whether it's terrorists or Democrats in Washington. That's a sad position."

"We're not looking for any changes with George Bush

because George Bush has made it clear that he doesn't want the Black vote, he doesn't seek the Black vote and he doesn't seek any support from Black leaders. It's sad to think, but that's where we are."

When first campaigning for the White House in 2000, Bush addressed delegates to the NAACP annual convention. However, he has refused to speak at a convention while in office, the only sitting president in modern history to refuse an invitation. He has spoken to the National Urban League twice, where he felt he might get a warmer reception. Each time he was received politely, but not enthusiastically. Unlike his Democratic opponent, John Kerry, Bush also refused to be interviewed by the National Newspaper Publishers Association News Service, a federation of more than 200 Black newspapers, and Black Entertainment Television.

With authorized war and rebuilding appropriations for Iraq and Afghanistan now exceeding \$200 billion, coupled with a federal budget that went from a \$256 billion surplus when Bush entered office to a projected \$422 billion in fiscal 2004 and rising to \$2.7 trillion in 10 years, budget officials say domestic spending will dwindle during Bush's second term. On top of those figures, his tax cuts, that primarily benefit the wealthy,

are expected to cost the U.S. treasury \$1.9 trillion over 10 years.

The Washington Post obtained a White House Office of Management and Budget memo earlier this year that warned all federal agencies in charge of domestic programs to expect budget cuts.

"But the cuts are politically sensitive, targeting popular programs that Bush has been touting on the campaign trail," the Post reported. "The Education Department; a nutritional program for women, infants and children; Head Start; and homeownership, job-training, medical research and science programs all face cuts in 2006."

In accepting his party's nomination, Bush offered a series of programs that he wants enacted during his second term. However, the \$3 billion price tag makes it unlikely that many of them will be enacted.

Bush, the first president since Herbert Hoover to end a term with fewer people working than when he started, will be under pressure to create more jobs. The U.S. has 585,000 fewer jobs now than when Bush took office. Democratic National Committee Chairman Terry McAuliffe is already looking past Bush's second term.

"This party is stronger than it's ever been," he says. "We're beginning to build towards 2008."

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