

Bush says he broached CBC concerns in talk

By Roland S. Martin
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — As President George W. Bush left the House chamber Thursday night after delivering his State of the Union Address, he told Rep. Bobby Rush (D-Illinois) that he included in his speech some of the issues advocated by the Congressional Black Caucus.

Rush was one of 43 members of the CBC who met with Bush at the White House last week, where the caucus laid out a six-point plan that they will advocate on Capitol Hill.

Among those issues discussed, Bush touted in his speech plans to focus on community college initiatives,

increased funding for AIDS in minority communities, and dealing with at-risk youths.

"He whispered to me, 'That was a good meeting we had (last week). You see I included some of your issues and concerns into this speech tonight,'" Rush told the *Chicago Defender*.

Rush said he was a bit taken aback by Bush's comments.

"I was grateful that he said that," Rush said. "I thought that he listened somewhat to the concerns. He didn't have a lot to say; he didn't respond. But we asked him to include some of our concerns in his address and he wove some of it in what he had to say. Whether or not he's go-

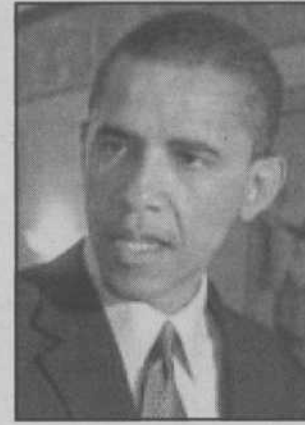
ing to make a commitment to put some of these initiatives into the budget, we'll have to wait and see."

While Rush was optimistic about working with the president on the issues mentioned, Rep. Danny Davis, (D-Ill), was a bit more harsh in his assessment of the address. "It was somewhat disconcerting and actually frightening, especially from a domestic standpoint," Davis said.

"It seems to me that there was a clear attack on social security. We don't know exactly how it's going to come, but we know it's there. It was frightening for me to hear the president say we're going to cut 150 programs that were

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— Sen. Barack Obama, (D-Ill.)



not working. I don't know what those programs are, but I have a strong feeling that they are programs that are very basic to the survival of low-income, poor and disadvantaged people" he continued.

Davis said Bush discussed at length on the Middle East, but "I didn't hear much about Africa; I didn't hear much about the Caribbean."

Sen. Barack Obama, (D-Ill.) said Bush offered broad outlines and little specifics to

many of his proposals, adding that the president didn't have the same level of passion for domestic issues as he did foreign.

"There wasn't a lot of enthusiasm [for the president] to borrow \$2 trillion to invest in the stock market and risk the stability of the Social Security system," Obama told the *Defender*.

"I was encouraged by the president's willingness to raise the issue of how we can keep our young men out of jail and encourage the programs at the local level that creates DNA testing that may free innocent men and women from prison."

Roland S. Martin writes for the *Chicago Defender*

NAACP: IRS has no 'legitimate' charges vs. group

By Makebra M. Anderson
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — The NAACP is refusing to turn over requested documents from the Internal Revenue Service, charging that the agency does not have a legitimate reason to investigate the nation's oldest civil rights group.

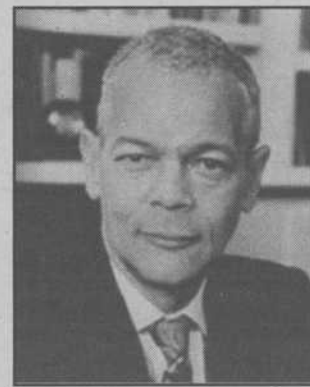
"After taking a close look, we determined that the IRS had not issued its summons for a legitimate purpose," explains Angela Ciccolo, the association's interim general counsel.

Last October, the IRS sent a letter to the NAACP complaining about Board Chairman Julian Bond's speech at the organization's annual convention the previous summer. The letter said that Bond "condemned the administration policies of George W. Bush on education, the economy and the war in Iraq."

The IRS claims that the speech violates the IRS tax code for tax-exempt organizations. Under section 501 (c)(3) of the code, "organizations that are exempt from federal income tax are prohibited from participating or intervening in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office..."

Bond says the speech wasn't critical of Bush, but of his policies. "In their original letter they never said that my speech was partisan," explains Bond. "They said I condemned Bush's policies and I thought every American had that right."

Ciccolo, the NAACP attorney, puts it more bluntly: "The NAACP has a long history of speaking out about



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— Julian Bond
NAACP Board Chairman

issues that affect African-Americans and other people of color. In this situation, we looked at what the IRS code says and expects, and we looked at what our activities have been and what Mr. Bond spoke about at our convention."

The NAACP's letter to the IRS, dated January 27, 2005 and signed by attorneys Marcus Owens and Lloyd Mayer of the Caplin & Drysdale law firm, charges that the agency's examination "was undertaken in direct response to the request of political figures who may very well have been concerned about voter registration and turnout by African-American voters."

The IRS has refused to identify those political figures, believed to be Republicans.

The IRS requested that the NAACP provide the name of the person or persons that authorized Bond's speech, the cost of the convention, the name of all board members at the time the speech was made and a description of similar activities conducted by the organization in other political campaigns.

In a letter to the Exempt Organization Division of the

IRS, the group also accuses the IRS of prematurely launching an investigation: "It is our position that by initiating the examination before the NAACP's return for the 2004 tax year was even due, the IRS has failed to meet at least two of the foregoing requirements."

"First, the summons was not issued for a legitimate purpose... Second, for the same reason, the Service can not claim that all required administrative steps have been followed," the letter says.

The IRS focused on Bond's convention speech in Philadelphia. Addressing the delegates, Bond said, "...The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 marked the beginning of the dependence of the Republican Party on the politics of racial division to win elections and gain power. By playing the race card in election after election, they've appealed to the dark underside of democracy and equality. They preach racial neutrality and practiced racial division."

NAACP attorneys assert that Bond was merely exercising his First Amendment right to free speech. "We are

writing to inform you that our client respectfully declines to respond to the summons for the reasons discussed below," said the letter from the group's attorneys.

"Given that this is a case of first impression under section 6852 of the Internal Revenue Code and one that car-


ries with it significant First Amendment implications, it is especially important that the IRS be required to follow statutorily-mandated procedures," it further stated.

If the NAACP loses its tax exempt status, it could hamper its ability to raise funds.

"I can't put into words the effect it would have if they would revoke our status," Attorney Ciccolo says. "All I can say is, the NAACP does not believe it engaged in partisan political activity and this summons to us and notice of examination is not warranted."


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