

P O I N T O F V I E W

OUR VIEW

Sentinel Radio

You can call it a power move — or a Black power move, if you will. Griot Communications Group, Inc., owner of the very newspaper you're reading now (*Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice*) has officially expanded into radio. Every Friday from 9 to 9:30 a.m. on KCEP 88.1 FM, Sentinel-Voice publisher Ramon Savoy will host "Black Power," a radio talk show intended to inform, stimulate and educate, by covering the hot topics of the day, locally, regionally and nationally.

The marriage of print and broadcast journalism is a natural one, as evidenced by billionaire Rupert Murdoch's indefatigable media consolidation campaign of the past few years. The Australian mogul has snatched anything he could get his hands on. According to *Businessweek*, Murdoch publishes 175 newspapers, owns Twentieth Century Fox Studio, Fox Network and 35 TV stations that reach nearly half of America. (Such consolidation wouldn't have been possible without outgoing Federal Communications Commission Chairman Michael Powell, who eased rules on media companies owning products in diverse mediums. This has also allowed Clear Channel to snatch up a gaggle of radio stations — it has more than 1,200 — including several with African-American formats. Thanks for nothing, Michael). The result is that Murdoch, a staunch advocate of President Bush, has an omnipresent network through which to spread his conservative propaganda. Rampant consolidation has also served to mute other voices, especially those of African-Americans.

As much as anyone, Murdoch and Clear Channel are responsible for the slow death of Black radio. The talk radio programs that a generation of African-Americans grew up listening to and getting their news from have been bought up or hijacked by hip-hop and R & B formats. On most "Black" stations, music now trumps news by a wide margin, announcements for this weekend's parties outnumbering announcements of community events. In partnering with KCEP, the Sentinel-Voice hopes to fill some of that informational void by reporting and dialoguing on issues that affect the Black community and adding our perspective on events shaping this city, state, nation and world. "Black Power" radio will be a marketplace of ideas. We invite your brain to tune in.

Death to Penalty

This time, the conservative Supreme Court got it right. In abolishing the death penalty for juveniles who committed murder before the age of 18, on a 5-4 vote, the Supreme Court struck a blow for humanity. Justice Anthony Kennedy, writing for the majority, echoed as much: "The age of 18 is the point where society draws the line for many purposes between childhood and adulthood. It is, we conclude, the age at which the line for death eligibility ought to rest." The ruling follows logical legal moves made in 1988 when executions for those 15 and younger when they committed their crimes were outlawed — the current ruling also exempts 16- and 17-year-olds from being sentenced to death — and in 2002, when executions of the mentally disabled were halted. In the latter case, *Atkins v. Virginia*, justices ruled that executing the mentally ill violated the constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishment.

The ruling has already created a parting of the sea, so to speak, with some prosecutors and death penalty proponents predicting that, absent the fear of dying for committing crimes, violent juveniles will become even more so. Meantime, some defense attorneys and death penalty abolitionists are rejoicing in what they see as a step in the right direction for the U.S. criminal justice system. America, they say, can now join the rest of the civilized world in working on improving how justice is dispensed, ensuring that punishments fit crimes.

In truth, the reality is probably somewhere in between. With juvenile executions prohibited, (for now, at least) maybe both sides can work together on lowering the crime rate and increasing opportunities for young people. Wishful thinking? Let's hope not.



Bush's weapons of mass destruction

By Dora La Grande
Special to Sentinel-Voice

For the first time in a decade, President Bush is poised to initiate the first cut in overall education spending. He is proposing to cut the education budget by \$500 million and terminate 48 education programs.

Bush axed the low interest Perkins Loan program that helps students from lower income and middle income families pay for college. If these funds are eliminated, the students lose. They will be forced to take out more expensive private loans or not have access to funds at all, creating one more challenge to making college affordable.

The Perkins loan is the oldest form of federal financial aid, and Perkins grants provide administrators nationwide with money used to buy equipment and money for vocational schools. Last year, schools received about \$1.3 billion in Perkins grants for career education and \$66 million in Perkins loans.

The elimination of this program will have detrimental effects on career and technical programs all over the country. At a time when education beyond high school is practically required to earn a living wage, only one-third of U.S. students graduate from high school college-ready.

The remaining two-thirds, many of them low income and minority students, either drop out or are tracked into courses that leave them tragically unprepared.



ON THE RECORD
By Dora La Grande

Bush contends that Perkins loans duplicate Stafford loans. Perkins loans offer students money at five percent while Stafford loans offer students money at 3.3 percent interest.

The administration says that eliminating these programs would make it possible to increase the maximum Pell Grant awards, which low income students do not have to repay.

The problem is that fewer students would be eligible for a Pell Grant, but those who are eligible could receive as much as \$100 more each year for the next five years. While the increase would be helpful, it can in no way offset the amount of Perkins loans that schools were able to lend annually.

Also on the chopping block for education is the 40-year-old Upward Bound program, Talent Search and Upward Bound Math and Science that emerged out of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 in response to President Lyndon Johnson's fight against poverty. The main goal of each program is to increase the number of disadvantaged students enrolling in postsecondary education.

Nationally, the program serves 700,000 disadvan-

taged middle and high school students. Most of the children come from low income families in which both parents have not received postsecondary degrees.

Upward Bound provides mentoring, tutoring and information on postsecondary education to high school students. Upward Bound Math and Science provides intensive math and science training during summer programs. Participants are taught computer technology in addition to English, foreign language and study skills.

The Talent Search program provides academic, career and financial counseling to students from grades 6 through 12. In addition, the program serves high school dropouts by encouraging them to reenter the educa-

tional system.

These programs are part of a collective group known as TRIO (initially just three programs), a series of programs established by Congress to help low income Americans enter college, graduate and move on to participate more fully in America's economic and social life.

The programs are funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965. A mandate from Congress requires that two-thirds of students who participate in TRIO programs must come from families with incomes under \$24,000 where neither parent graduated from college.

Over 1,200 universities, colleges, community colleges and agencies provide TRIO programs.

Even though the President allegedly is making cuts to the TRIO group of programs to fund No Child Left Behind (NCLB), a program that focuses on the English language learner and has parents at the

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