

Cuts in Medicaid, not Gays, hurting Blacks

By Ron Walters
Special to Sentinel-Voice

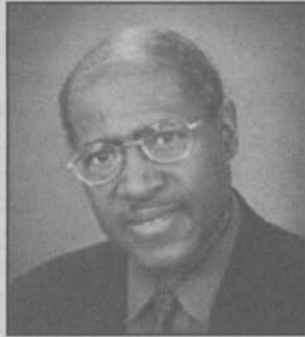
I wonder how all of those Blacks who voted for George Bush because he was against gay marriage would justify that action when one of his first acts after the election was make proposals for deep cuts in the Medicaid program that have now been ratified by the House and Senate. How is that morality consistent with the channeling of money to fund health services for the poor and elderly into the pockets of the rich?

Republicans in both Houses passed a \$2.6 trillion budget resolution that will be a guide to appropriations legislation, on a party-line vote, that reduces funding for Medicaid by \$10 billion over four years, while approving \$106 billions of tax cuts over a five-year period. Moreover, the total package of domestic program cuts amounts to \$35 billion, including \$6.6 billion in federal old-age pensions.

The Medicaid programs uniquely service the health needs of the poor and they are being cut, while the Defense budget will get a 4.1 percent increase largely because of the increase in spending on weapons systems and Homeland Security. In fact, the amount for defense and international programs is slated to receive a \$200 billion increase. At the same time, the spending for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are costing American tax payers tens of billions (\$81 billion in the recent request) that is not even included in the official budget.

As a result, the earnings of defense contractors are booming. For example, Raytheon Company and Northrop Grumman Corporation recently reported sharp increases in first-quarter earnings when Bush announced that he backed a 4 percent increase in defense spending. Raytheon, in particular, that developed the Patriot, Hawk and Tomahawk missiles, reported a 30 percent increase in profit in the last quarter.

Medicaid (and Medicare) spending are a problem because of the exploding cost of health care and the proposed cuts in the Medicaid budget over the next few years represent 1.1 percent of the total budget. But billions of dollars of cuts in health services for poor people while giving trillions of dollars back to the rich in tax money does not suggest that health care is a ma-



RON WALTERS

major priority or that America cannot afford the cost. Governors in many states are chafing at the cost of Medicaid because it is consuming up to 25 percent of their budgets, largely because they are not being financially supported by the federal government to the extent necessary. So, they are planning their own reductions and changes that may result in a more efficient delivery of health care services, especially in the area of pharmaceutical costs and long-term care.

These cuts hit home at the local level in places such as Kansas City, Mo., where on April 26 Gov. Matt Blunt signed a measure that eliminated thousands of people from the Medicaid program.

He did so, theoretically, on the basis that it would free up more money for schools; however, only two schools in Kansas City's Black community and none in St. Louis would benefit. On the other hand, of the 27,000 people who would lose their health care, the NAACP reported that thousands would be disproportionately Black.

The total impact of the cuts would affect approximately 100,000 of the poor, elderly and disabled who would have to decide whether to pay for ballooning gas prices for their heating or transportation, food or health care. This is a cruel set of options given to them, courtesy of the way in which federal, state and local taxes are being used politically.

In the meantime, I have seen Catholic Charities speaking out about the way in which George Bush and his colleagues at the state level are shaping these cruel choices for American citizens. The new pope has not yet found his voice on this, but did intervene to stop John Kerry from receiving communion. The new pope is and should be supported by voices of all those who voted for Bush and his governors in the last election.

This especially includes some Black pastors who placed gay marriage over the human needs of their parishioners and followers who are disproportionately poor, elderly or disabled. But then, most of those pastors are probably feeling a little guilty and somewhat betrayed right about now.

Ron Walters is a professor of government and politics at the University of Maryland-College Park.

Curry

(Continued from Page 11)

sources in 1998 were everyday people, down from 12 percent in 1992.

Given the excessive use of public officials and the limited use of progressives or activists, it should come as no surprise that the majority of views expressed over PBS are anything but liberal.

Compounding the problem is PBS' aggressive courting of corporate donors. Prohibited by law from running commercials, PBS circumvents this prohibition by offering corporate underwriting of its programs. Consequently, pro-business bias, whether intentional or not, finds its way into deciding who will appear on the airwaves. Rather

than shifting PBS farther to the right, a coalition of groups —Free Press, Common Cause, Consumers Union and Consumer Federation of America —has called for Chairman Tomlinson's resignation.

"Tomlinson insists that he's trying to restore 'objectivity and balance' to public broadcasting," said Josh Silver, executive director of Free Press. "But this top-down partisan meddling goes against the very nature of PBS and the local stations Americans trust. Let the future of PBS be decided by the people, not by the secret dealings of White House operatives."

George E. Curry is editor-in-chief of the NNPA News Service.

Kenneth Clark's work needs to be continued

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA)

The legacy of pioneering psychologist Kenneth B. Clark should inspire Black America to seek ways to develop and instill racial pride into African-Americans, especially young people, say Black psychologists and social scientists around the nation.

"We're in deep trouble. We have bought into the American standard of beauty. I look at some of the adolescents and young adults in Los Angeles; I can tell you, the last thing they want to be is Black," says Sandra Cox, director of the Coalition of Mental Health Professionals in Los Angeles. "You look at the front cover of everything but *Black Enterprise* and you see what's advertised—all of the blond Black women. And the whiter they look, the more they get on the front covers."

Clark, the psychologist and educator whose 1950 report showed how racial segregation destroyed the self-esteem of Black children, influenced the U. S. Supreme Court to hold school segregation to be unconstitutional in the 1954 case, *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas*. He died May 1 at his home in Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y., at the age of 90.

Clark and his wife, Mamie Phipps Clark, also a psychologist, conducted a doll study in Clarendon County, S. C., involving 16 Black children, ages 6 to 9. They asked the children their perception of a White doll and a Black doll. Eleven of the students spoke negatively of the Black doll, and nine spoke highly of the White doll over the Black.

At that time, Clarendon County public schools had enrolled three times as many Black students as White students. But White students were receiving more than 60 percent of the educational funding.

"Throughout his life, he (Clark) was a scholar practitioner. He wrote books, but he worked with Martin Luther King and the workers and leaders of the civil rights movement," says Eddie N. Williams, former president of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. "We need to create an enterprise



Kenneth B. and Mamie Phipps Clark in happy times.

that deals with the next generation. And I think that's where Dr. Clark would be if he were alive."

If the doll study were done today, it might produce even worse results, says Julia Hare, a psychologist in San Francisco. "We need an update. I think we need to do the doll study again," Hare says. Meanwhile, giving children dolls and other images that look like them is a powerful boost to self-esteem although some parents oppose it, Hare says.

"They think that if they give a child a doll that looks like them, they are teaching them racism. But, yet, they don't wonder why they don't see White children with Black dolls," Hare says. "And then we need to visit these schools. What pictures do they have on the walls? But much of this should start at home with Mama...Every night, Black children should have something from Black literature read to them."

Nathan Hare, a sociologist and co-founder of the Black Think Tank with his wife, Julia, supports a national campaign for better self-images. "We must return to the unfinished revolution of the 1960s," Hare says. "They need an upshot of the 'I'm Black and I'm proud,' 'Black Power' and 'Black is beautiful' that we had."

The key to children knowing how to respond to racial stereotypes and not allowing them to impact self-esteem is in knowing and understanding the root of racism," said Gail Wyatt, a professor of clinical psychiatry at the University of California at Los Angeles.

"We should be teaching

our children about Kenneth Clark and psychology and the doll study," Wyatt says. "They need to understand the influence of people's attitudes toward them, the color of their skin, the size of their nose, the size of their lips, the texture of their hair." Also, Black parents are still learning to deal with racism themselves, says Carl Bell, chief executive officer of the Community Mental Health Council and professor of psychiatry and public health at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

"They're now wondering when, where and how to fight racism and when where and how to let it slide," he says.

Bell says several years ago he was in the lobby of a Florida hotel wearing a three-piece suit after a successful lecture in front of more than a thousand people when a White woman approached him and asked him to carry her luggage to her room.

When he asked the woman what about him looked like a bellman, she apologized and added, "You people are so touchy. It was an honest mistake." Black people are dealing with the racial stereotypes in various ways, Bell says. "They have humor; they have aggression; some don't say anything," he said.

Parents should not take for granted that children know how to deal with racial differences without being affected, said Gloria Morrow, a clinical psychologist in Upland, Calif. If a child is already proud of his or her self-image, it makes it a lot easier when confronted and stereotyped, she said.

(See Clark, Page 14)