

## NAACP

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States will not grace us with his presence. He is the first president since Herbert Hoover not to speak to us," Bond stated. "The good news is that next year we'll meet right in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C., blocks from the White House, and, Mr. President, we're extending the invitation a year in advance. We want to see you, and we want you to see us — we want to know you think you're our president, too."

Bond also attacked Senators that failed to co-sponsor a resolution apologizing for failing to pass legislation outlawing lynching, even after the House had done so three times.

Giving a gruesome account of the 1918 lynching of pregnant Mary Turner in Valdosta, Ga., who was tied to a tree and burned before her baby was cut from her womb and crushed with the heel of a burly White man, Bond asked: "If a United States Senator, in the year 2005, can't apologize for that, what outrage is deserving of an apology? And who is deserving of a Senate seat?"

Bond also criticized Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, a medical doctor, who ordered a voice vote rather than a roll call vote that would have disclosed how individual senators voted on the resolution.

"The good doctor's tactic allowed eight Senators to dodge the apology, but they deserve a roll call here," Bond said.

He then named the eight senators: "Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, Thad Cochran of Mississippi, John Cornyn of Texas, Mike Enzi of Wyoming, Judd Gregg of New Hampshire, Trent Lott of Mississippi, John Sununu of New Hampshire and Craig Thomas of Wyoming."

Looking on from the audience was 91-year-old James Cameron, the only known survivor of a lynching, who also took a special trip to Washington on the day the Senate resolution passed.

"We salute you," Bond told Cameron, who organized three NAACP chapters in Indiana after his release from prison.

The NAACP's 96th annual meeting comes during a year of major civil rights anniversaries, including the 50th anniversary of the Montgomery Bus Boycott —

the event that propelled Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to the national stage, and the 40th anniversary of the passage of the Voting Rights Act.

Bond's speech came after a speech by U.S. Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.), Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, who promised to push for a 25-year extension of the Voting Rights Act as it is when it comes up for renewal in 2007.

Sensenbrenner described the Voting Rights Act as "profound legislation [that] pushed back against those unwilling to treat all citizens as equals and restored the dignity and equality that our Constitution is intended to preserve for all citizens."

Ironically, Sensenbrenner, who also said he would push for bipartisan support of civil rights issues, has received consistent F's on NAACP report cards.

Hilary Shelton, director of the NAACP Washington Bureau, and a Capitol Hill Lobbyist, said the NAACP will work with Sensenbrenner toward renewal of the act.

"He's going to move for a straight authorization, which may or may not be the best thing," Shelton said.

"We will look at whether it should be a straight reauthorization or whether we indeed need to make some amendment to see to it that we can have a stronger Voting Rights Act."

The Bush Administration has not said whether it will support the reauthorization of the law.

Asked about the extension by U. S. Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-Ill.) in a White House meeting in January, Bush indicated that he knew little about the issue and was not prepared to discuss it.

Referring to a report by the U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, Bond said the Bush Administration hostility to civil rights has been well documented.

"The report lists numerous examples of administration attempts to abolish affirmative action and its concentration on alleged voter fraud at the expense of voter enfranchisement," he said. "The president likes to talk the talk, but he doesn't walk the walk. The report documents that of his public pronouncements on civil rights, fewer than 20 percent have outlined plans for action. And of those, more than half per-

tained to so-called 'faith-based initiatives.'"

The commission's report was compiled under the Chair of Mary Francis Berry, whose term expired last fall. She was replaced by Gerald Reynolds, a former deputy associate attorney general in the Justice Department. Reynolds is also known for his association with Black conservative organizations, including the presidency of the Center for New Black Leadership and a legal analyst for the Center for Equal Opportunity.

Bond warned that such groups are among the most

dangerous enemies to civil rights because, he said, they are deceptive.

"The very names of these groups — the Institute for Justice, the Center for Individual Rights, the American Civil Rights Institute — are fraudulent, and their aims are frightening. Having stolen our vocabulary, they also want to steal the just spoils of our righteous war."

He saved his harshest criticism for Black conservatives.

"Like ventriloquists' dummies, they speak in their puppet master's voice, but we can see his lips move and

we can hear his money talk," Bond says.

"They've financed a conservative constellation of make-believe Black-faced front organizations, all of them hollow shells with more names on the letterhead than there are people on their membership rolls."

Because of the perceived stealth enemies to justice, the continued civil rights battles will be more difficult, Bond predicts.

"We know that in some important ways non-White Americans face problems more difficult to attack now than in the years that went

before. We believe these problems, old ones and new ones, have their root in race and racial discrimination," Bond said.

He said the NAACP will stick to its original goals: "To promote equality of rights and eradicate caste or racial prejudice among the citizens of the United States; to advance the interests of colored citizens; to secure for them impartial suffrage; and to increase their opportunities for securing justice in the courts, education for their children, and complete equality before the law." That remains our mission today.

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