

OUR VIEW Identity Crisis

Longtime radio-talk show host Larry Elder likes to refer to himself as the Sage from South Central, a catchy, alliterative moniker that's more bluff than truth. Instead of lending 'hood credibility, affixing "South Central" to his nickname strains his credibility as an arbiter on African-American issues. You can be from the 'hood, but not of the 'hood—and Mr. Elder is no longer of the 'hood.

The sage part? That, too, is questionable, never more so than in his Nov. 17 column on worldnetdaily.com, in which he laments President Bush's sagging support among African-Americans, then digs deep into history's well to blast the Democratic party's missteps on racial equality, as if Dems today should be responsible for the sins of their forefathers.

He begins the column: "So much for the Republican 'outreach' to Black voters, with only 2 percent of Blacks 'approving' of the president's performance. If only Blacks knew of the true history of the Democratic Party. 'Black History Month' has been observed for 29 years, yet many Blacks know little to nothing about the parties' respective roles in advancing or hindering the civil rights of Blacks. How many Blacks know that following the Civil War, 23 Blacks — 13 of them ex-slaves — were elected to Congress, all as Republicans? The first Black Democrat was not elected to Congress until 1935, from the state of Illinois. The first Black congressional Democrat from a Southern state was not elected until 1973."

Thanks for the history lesson Larry, but the point is....

But the sage has more: "Democrats, in 1854, passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act. This overturned the Missouri Compromise and allowed for the importation of slaves into the territories. Disgusted with the passage of this Act, free-soldiers and anti-slavery members of the Whig and Democratic parties founded the Republican Party — not just to stop the spread of slavery, but to eventually abolish it."

And this has what to do with anything? Because Republicans wanted to abolish slavery, we should forgive Bush for wanting to abolish affirmative action?

Elders asks: "How many Blacks know that Blacks founded the Texas Republican Party?"

To which we respond: How many know that Texas leads the nation in execution and many of those who've received capital punishment were Black?

Elders continues: "When Southern states balked at implementing the 14th Amendment, Congress came back and passed the 15th Amendment in 1870, guaranteeing Blacks the right to vote. Every single Republican voted for it, with every Democrat voting against it."

So how come the GOP launched a concerted effort to ruin the voting process for Blacks in the 2000 and 2004 presidential elections (hanging chads, forcing folks to produce multiple forms of identification, reducing the number of polling places)?

There's more: "Between 1870 and 1875, the Republican Congress passed many pro-Black civil-rights laws. But in 1876, Democrats took control of the House, and no further race-based civil-rights laws passed until 1957. In 1892, Democrats gained control of the House, the Senate and the White House, and repealed all the Republican-passed civil-rights laws. That enabled the Southern Democrats to pass the Jim Crow laws, poll taxes, literacy tests, and so on, in their individual states."

Funny, now it's the Republicans acting like Democrats once did.

What's in Store?

For more than a year, West Las Vegas residents have been clamoring for a grocery store to replace Vons that operated for 10 years on Owens and "H" Street.

After months of fits and starts, there's some good on news on the store front. DLC UrbanCore, a Tarrytown, N.Y.-based, company. Residents eager to hear about the proposal and provide input are encouraged to attend a meeting on Monday, from 6 to 8 p.m., at Doolittle Community Center, 1950 N. "J" St. Hosted by City Councilman Larry Weekly, the meeting will give folks a chance to ask questions and comment on a sorely needed project.



Child-care providers—unite

By Dora LaGrande
Sentinel-Voice

The number of children dying in Clark County is not only shameful but disgraceful.

Last week, a 3-month-old baby girl died because of a viral infection. She was born to an 11-year-old girl who had been sexually molested (little has been said about that). Subsequently, the baby was placed in the custody of Clark County Department of Family Services. The agency then decided to place the baby in a foster home.

Earlier this year, there was the death of 2-year-old Adacelli Snyder, who was found lying in her own excrement in a filthy trailer where she was starved to death.

In researching these incidents and viewing reports about the miscalculation of child abuse deaths in Clark County, some issues arise. It appears that the Department of Child and Family Services is taking the heat.

Now, should the blame be placed on the department? Should we in the community be outraged that the number of child deaths in the valley in four years has exceeded 1,000? Should we be outraged that from January 2001 until December 2004 there have been 1,041 child deaths in Clark County, an average of 260 per year? Eleven percent (114) of those has been attributed to maltreatment, and 79 more need to be reviewed further and re-cat-



egorized to determine if maltreatment occurred.

Currently, if an only child dies, it is regularly not categorized as abuse or neglect because there are no other children in the home to protect. So, if a child dies, and the child is the parent's or the couples' only child, it is not categorized as abuse or neglect. The parents don't get prosecuted or convicted; one child is dead, and they get to go and have another child to do it all over again? How stupid is that?

Abuse or neglect should not be predicated on whether or not there are some other children to protect. What about protecting the child before he or she is murdered? What about beefing up efforts to understand the contributing factors that lead to a child's death?

Originally, Nevada's rate of child mortality from maltreatment had been posted as one-quarter of the national average, but with the new Child Death Report, it appears that the true rate is much higher.

I posed the question of whether the Department of Child and Family Services should be blamed. I have several friends who are employees of this agency. They all

work late nights, three to four times a week. They work almost every weekend, and they all constantly complain about not being able to get caught up. When they have to be in the field all day, going to court, visiting clients at their homes and taking children into custody, they don't have time to get caught up with the paperwork associated with each case, so they have to do it after-hours or on the weekends.

The increase in the caseload is so staggering that the employees of Child and Family Services are severely overworked, understaffed and don't have enough resources to do their jobs adequately. They are too drained to be able to perform at their highest and best.

Hopefully, and with any luck, the legislature will take this into consideration when it comes time to review and fund the Child Death Report component related to prevention.

You can't blame an agency that gets the children after the abuse or maltreatment has already taken place or is about to take place.

In order to combat and mitigate the causes of child death by abuse and neglect, the communication gaps that exist among medical, law enforcement personnel and child welfare systems must be eliminated.

Instead of continuously developing expert panels, these agencies need to come up with some concrete strategies. While they've been at the table assessing and providing analysis since 2001, the rate of child deaths has increased year by year in Clark County alone. Imagine what the numbers are going to be when the other coun-

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Contributing Writers:
Chelsi Cheatom
Tanya Flanagan
Tasha Pope
Lés Pierres Streater
Photographer:
Isaac Sawyer

Ramon Savoy, Publisher, Editor-in-Chief
Parker Philpot, Copy Editor
Don Snook, Graphics
Ed & Betty Brown, Founders

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