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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

Study: Meth use low in most of U.S.

Drug not seen as epidemic

Associated Press

Methamphetamine use is rare in most of the United States, not the raging epidemic described by politicians and the news media, says a study by an advocacy group.

Meth is a dangerous drug but among the least commonly used, The Sentencing Project policy analyst Ryan King wrote in a report issued Wednesday. Rates of use have been stable since 1999, and among teenagers meth use has dropped, King said.

"The portrayal of methamphetamine in the United States as an epidemic spreading across the country has been grossly overstated," King said. The Sentencing Project is a not-for-profit group that supports alternatives to prison terms for convicted drug users and other criminals.

Overheated rhetoric, unsupported assertions and factual errors about the use of the drug — including frequent, misguided comparisons between meth and crack cocaine — lead to poor decisions about how to spend precious public dollars combating drug addiction, King said.

The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy did not immediately comment on the report.

The report cites statistics compiled by the government to make its case, including a 2004 survey that estimated 583,000 people used meth in the past month, or two-tenths of 1 percent of the U.S. population. Four times as many people use cocaine regularly and 30 times as many use marijuana, King said.

A separate survey of high-school students showed a 36 percent drop in meth use between 2001 and 2005.

The report acknowledged that methamphetamine is

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Motown feted by casino

By Debbie Hall
Sentinel-Voice

Las Vegas is the entertainment capital, but not always so when looking for Black entertainment on a consistent basis. One established casino has worked to fill that gap.

It is the second anniversary for Jerry's Nugget Casino's Motown Fridays, good news for fans of soul, R&B and old school, too. This Friday night's celebration in The Royal Street Theater at Jerry's Nugget marks two years of a chance that paid off mutually for a historic casino and a community often underserved in the local entertainment marketplace.

A hole in the soul-music fabric exists with recent show closings and apparent trends away from Strip shows and lounge acts featuring Black performers, such as locals' favorite Spectrum who ceased performing their soulful show at the Boardwalk when it was closed and demolished. A new controversial trend that has some gaming properties avoiding or canceling contemporary



Sho Tyme is among the entertainment acts that play Motown Fridays at Jerry's Nugget.

hip-hop and rap is also foreboding. The scarcity of major consistent running shows with an African-American theme — whether lounge or production shows — has often left Blacks and other fans of the genre to find entertainment hope in the neighborhood and local casinos for reminiscing and dancing to classic songs from the Sixties up through today's hottest songs.

Motown has left Detroit and settles in Jerry's Nugget Casino.

"It has been two years of Motown Fridays, and it just keeps getting better," said Cindy Ferris, Director of Advertising for Jerry's Nugget Casino.

"We like to showcase local talent from the Las Vegas Valley, as well as established acts that made Motown what it is today. We have had guest

appearances from the Coasters as well as other surprises," Ferris said.

"Motown Fridays has been a hit. We started [the theme] because we wanted something new and trendy for Jerry's Nugget — we've been doing Latin concerts for [such] a very long time that we wanted to diversify," Ferris added.

Founded in 1964 by Jerry
(See *Motown*, Page 4)

Some CBC members want Jefferson off committee

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Although the Congressional Black Caucus has publicly presented a united front in its support of embattled U.S. Rep. Bill Jefferson's right to maintain his committee memberships, some CBC members — including civil rights icon John Lewis (D-Ga.) — have assumed behind-the-scenes roles in getting Jefferson ousted from his coveted position on the powerful House Ways and Means Committee.

"Mr. [Mel] Watt certainly ably and with great distinction, speaks for the Congressional Black Caucus," said House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), who spearheaded the movement to force Jefferson from the

committee after he refused to step down voluntarily. "But, quite frankly, a number of members of the Black Caucus have given me moral support on this."

Some have provided more than that.

Among Pelosi's chief allies in the attempted ousting is Congressman John Lewis (D-Ga.) sources have confirmed. In a closed door meeting of the 50-member Democratic Caucus Steering Committee last Thursday, sources say that Lewis made the motion to have Jefferson stripped from his seat on the House Ways and Means, which has oversight on key fiscal matters, such as tax hikes, the minimum wage and military spending.

Because the session was private, some of those



"We are neither condoning, nor forgiving anything. All we're trying to do is have a consistent set of rules that will apply to everybody..."

— Mel Watts
CBC Chairman

present agreed to discuss the meeting with the NNPA News Service on condition that they are granted anonymity.

The sources say former CBC Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas) also spoke against Jefferson in the committee meeting. In addition, they said, Rep. Charlie Rangel (D-N.Y.), ranking member on the Ways

and Means Committee, accepted an earlier assignment from Pelosi to try to talk Jefferson into stepping down on his own, an overture rejected by Jefferson.

Ironically, Rangel first won his seat in the House when he defeated the late U.S. Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, who was under fire for alleged financial improprieties. The House leader-

ship had stripped Powell of his powerful Education and Labor Committee chairmanship and Rangel defeated him in the 1970 Democratic Primary.

Lewis' motion, seconded by Pelosi, passed by secret ballot.

The motion stated: "The Committee moves that Congressman William Jefferson's appointment to the Committee on Ways & Means be suspended, with his seniority intact, until such time as a further recommendation to restore him to the Committee is made by the Steering and Policy Committee under the rules of the Democratic Caucus."

The entire 201-member caucus was set to vote on the issue June 15. If the Caucus passes the motion for the re-

moval of Jefferson, the action will be taken to the floor for a full House vote.

Through their spokespersons, Lewis, Johnson and Rangel all declined to comment.

Conceding that some members have obviously defected, CBC Chairman Mel Watt (D-N.C.) vehemently defended the firmness of the CBC's position after the FBI raided Jefferson's congressional office two weeks ago, which marks the first time in the nation's history that the executive branch has raided a legislative office.

"I think she is trying to refocus this," Watt says, referring to Pelosi. "This is for her, I guess — since we're out here — this is about divide and conquer, as it al-

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