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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"



President Bush, center, signs legislation extending for 25 years the Voting Rights Act on the South Lawn at the White House in Washington on Thursday. A crew of conservative Republicans nearly derailed its reauthorization.

Re-up of vote act hailed

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Wade Henderson, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, standing behind a wooden podium at a hotel just blocks from the White House, offered a toast. Holding high in the air a half-filled glass of red wine, he said, "We had

the commitment, we had the expertise, we had the drive and we had the optimism of the most wonderful civil rights coalition — men and women — right here in this room." He smiled broadly as the racially mixed audience cheerfully applauded.

"We also had an incredible team of congressional leaders who were willing to

spend hours mastering the substance of these issues and working the politics... And it worked, better than we could possibly have imagined."

Everyone in the chandelied parlor of the Capitol Hilton Hotel had something to celebrate. The bipartisan bill to reauthorize key sections of the Voting Rights Act for 25 more years

had finally been signed by President Bush after months of anticipation and struggle.

Just as there were cheers on this night, there were also pervasive fears, a poignant reminder that, in the Shakespearean words etched above an old entrance to the National Archives a few blocks away on Pennsylvania (See Voting, Page 10)

Group touts money clout

By George E. Curry
Special to Sentinel-Voice

ATLANTA (NNPA) - After successfully eradicating legal barriers that prevented African-Americans from enjoying basic rights as U.S. citizens, the next phase of the Civil Rights Movement must focus on economic empowerment, says the head of the National Urban League.

"As we stand here today, this issue of economic inequality and poverty must be the new and defining issue of civil rights in the 21st century," said Marc H. Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League. "The fight to sit at a lunch counter was an important fight. The fight to be able to afford what was served at the lunch counter is an even more important fight today — and the fight to own the lunch counter in the 21st century."

The former mayor of New Orleans made an evangelical appeal in his keynote address to the organization's national convention here.

"So we must focus anew on income and equality and poverty," he continued. "We must focus anew on trying to close the wealth gap. I believe that for this generation, this generation of Americans — black, white, brown, yellow — it is indeed our calling. It is indeed what we have been anointed and asked to do."

Morial was still upbeat after Congress and President Bush moved to enact legislation extending key provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

"Because of your work and your advocacy, the Voting Rights Act extension got 390 votes in the United States House of Representatives with only 33 dissensions, and 98 to zero in the United States Senate. A significant accomplishment for civil rights in America," he said.

"Now, let me share this: This victory which melded together what I hope is going to be a new coalition for civil rights. It included Republicans and Democrats. It included the leadership of this nation's labor organizations, as well as the leadership of this nation's business (See League, Page 4)

Learning center reaches 50 years of service

By Debbie Hall
Sentinel-Voice

The Variety Early Learning Center opened its doors 50 years ago to provide childcare and other services to low-income families. Formerly called the Variety Day Home and Divine Providence Variety Day Home, the program will celebrate its 50th Anniversary on September 30 from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. The center is located at 990 D Street near Washington Ave. in the city's historic Westside neighborhood. Former students are invited to share in the celebration.

The home's history goes back to 1955 when the Vari-

ety Club of Southern Nevada local club Tent 39 built and sponsored the facility. It began operating in accordance with the mission of Variety Club national office, founded in 1927, to serve children in communities across the U.S. and abroad.

The local home's founders chose the Sisters of the Holy Family, a Catholic order of nuns, to operate the original Divine Providence Variety Day Home, which provided services for low-income families with children two to six years of age.

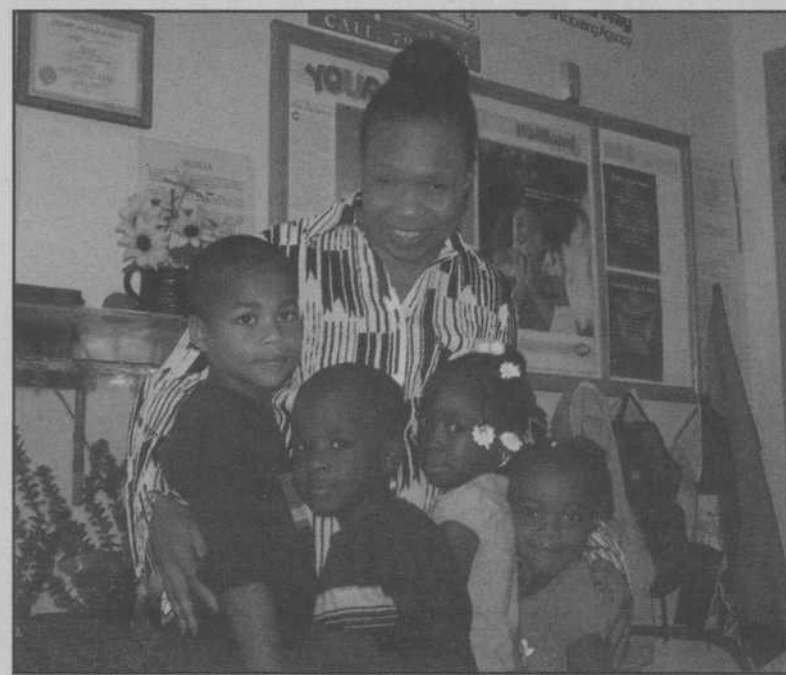
The sisters and staff provided a "home away from home" for over 200 children

a year. Currently, there are 24 teachers and 44 staff members serving infants starting at 6 1/2 months up to children age six.

Ruby Collins has worked there for over 33 years with experience in the classroom before becoming the executive director in 2000.

Collins recalled, "When the last sister left [in 2000], I took over. This is a wonderful place. The school is accredited [federally as a childcare agency] and by the United Way of Southern Nevada. We are not just a babysitting agency. We offer a development curriculum

(See Variety, Page 4)



Ruby Collins embraces an eager quartet of pupils at Variety Early Learning Center. Children pictured from left to right are Dante Green, Jayden Ireland, Nasharia Surlles and Latiani Richard. More than 200 children use the center each year.

Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy