

Mich. rights initiative fails tests

By Ron Walters
Special to Sentinel-Voice

The misleading wording that Ward Connerly, the Black Republican who opposes affirmative action, has used in his Michigan Civil Rights Initiative ballot proposal is an attempt to confuse some supporters of affirmative action into voting for it. That tactic worked well in California when his organization worded the California Civil Rights Initiative similarly, and now affirmative action has been banned in that state. But fortunately, many Michigan voters see the damage and patent immorality a yes vote would promote.

The latest poll in a *Detroit Free Press* Poll (October 18), indicates that those who want affirmative action retained in the state (the no vote) are leading 44 percent to 41 percent, a result that is strongly supported by Blacks who oppose the ban, 83 percent to 15 percent.

Nevertheless, this is a national issue because there is so much media outside of Michigan that influences what goes on inside the state and so many relatives, analysts, etc. who will be attentive to this problem when the final results are announced. Then, if the initiative succeeds (the unthinkable yes vote) and affirmative action is banned, Ward Connerly has vowed to take his campaign

national to other states as a strategy to obtain a national ban, since Republicans were unable to get it passed in the U.S. Congress.

As with most surveys on affirmative action, this one shows that there is a gender difference. White males strongly support the ban and so, can be projected to vote yes overwhelmingly for the initiative. But 47 percent of all women oppose the ban, while only 36 percent support it. The latter, no doubt, is because women have been known to be the major beneficiaries of affirmative action. Other groups have benefited, also.

Most of those (51 percent) surveyed in the *Free Press* poll believed that minorities had benefited from affirmative action and even though they may not have benefited more than White women, felt that the good it has done "makes up for the bad."

What puzzles me is the logic of White males, who oppose the statement that affirmative action should be retained "to compensate women and minorities for centuries of oppression." Either they don't believe that there was such oppression or that there should be no attempt to make up for the past. Given



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that the inequalities of the past still govern the present, one would think that their position is either the result of skewed logic — "personal responsibility" will make up for past disadvantages — or that they desire to maintain their own privileges in the racial hierarchy. I think that, perhaps, both of these reasons are playing out here.

So, while I understand the position of White males who stand atop American society and want to retain power, this position and their view of the initiative flies in the face of morality. How moral is it for White males to want to oppose or prevent programs and social mechanisms that are designed to distribute public resources fairly, such as seats in higher education, employment, government contracts and other goods?

The depth of the immorality is illustrated, for example, when White males in a given university control 95 percent of the top administrative jobs, 85 percent of the faculty positions and 75 percent of the student body, for most of them to argue that there should be no program to open up these resources amounts to their desire for them to possess as near to 100 percent as possible.

Neither can they argue that all of the Whites there are "qualified," since at every level, there are incompetent Whites and more qualified and effective Blacks who are prevented from access. It is ultimately a racist position.

But where is the interrogation of this position by White churches in Michigan, the moral arbiters of society? Should they be reminded of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s scolding them for "remaining silent behind the anesthetizing security of stained glass windows"? This led him to ponder: "Is organized religion too inextricably bound to the status quo to save our nation and the world?" Although he went on to hope that the church would indeed meet the challenge of injustice in the Birmingham of April 1963, his message rings down through history to interrogate the moral silence of the church in Michigan today. King's detractors spoke of allowing time for it to work. But as he replied, there is no right time to confront injustice and so today, Michiganders must take the opportune time of this election to affect a massive turnout of voters that will turn back the tide of injustice once again.

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Limited choices: Evil of two lessers

By James Clingman
Special to Sentinel-Voice

It's really a shame to say this, but because Black people — and everyone else for that matter — are faced with voting for "choices" made by the inner circle of powerbrokers, once again, many voters will have to punch the card or touch the corrupted Deibold computer screens while holding our noses. I hear a great deal of talk about voting for the lesser of two evils but, in many of the races, it's really a matter of voting for the evil of two lessers.

In what is billed as a precursor for the 2008 presidential election, if Bush doesn't cancel the election that year, Black people are again being touted as the group that can determine the outcome of the 2006 election, thus, having the ability to change the face of government from Republican rule to Democratic rule. We will see on November 8, but based on who we have in office now, I am not too optimistic.

First, on the national scene, we have an obstinate "resident" who has proved his incompetence to the world. He still refuses to

admit even one mistake during his administration and continues to sacrifice the lives of our young men and women in a war based on lies and deceit. He claims to care about the soldiers but supports cuts in their benefits. His actions belie his words, but we continue to acquiesce to his antics and those of his minions.

Waiting in the wings is his brother Jeb. Yep, another Bush — a member of the Project for the New American Century and the one who participated in the 2000 Florida election debacle — is being touted as the future "resident." And get this: Rudy Giuliani tops the list of prospective candidates for Republicans, followed by John McCain. The outrageous thing is that George Allen, the Senator from Virginia who has a checkered past when it comes to his comments about Blacks and other ethnic groups, is also on the Republican short list.

On the other side, we have Hillary Clinton and whoever is in second place for the mo-



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ment — John Kerry, John Edwards, Al Gore, et al. I am sure there will be others moving to the forefront by 2008, but whoever is "chosen" will result in a Hobson's choice for the rest of us, which is really no choice at all.

Bush, Rove, Cheney, Rumsfeld, and Rice are making every attempt to scare the electorate into submission, to

keep us on edge about their impending new war with Iran, which just might be our 2006 "October surprise," and their saber-rattling, paper-tiger, emperor-with-no-clothes posture with North Korea.

They are playing us for chumps, while they pile up the dollars and euros in their coffers and those of their friends. Remember the words of Dwight Eisenhower: "Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals, so that security and liberty may prosper together." We can clearly see who is prospering in this war economy, can't we?

On a local level, we have candidates running for Congress in both parties who can't wait to get in front of a microphone to say how supportive they are of Israel, which seems to be a litmus test for anyone who is running, even Black candidates. Isn't it funny that none of the candidates, Black or White, are ever questioned by anyone or ever express their support for Africa, a continent in which you could place 1,000 Israels? Why is Africa not held up as a litmus test, especially for Black candidates, but in general for all candidates?

Voters are faced with Hobson's choices in state, county and city races this year. Describing many of the races as a vote for the lesser of two evils, I have heard quite a few

people say they're just not going to vote for either candidate.

Since several Black candidates are running for high office this year, some would have us believe their races are based on "race." It's not a race issue; it's a party issue. Politicians, Black or White, who do nothing for Black people should not get your vote, the color of his or her skin notwithstanding. But candidates and their handlers are playing the so-called "race card" to whip Black voters into an emotional frenzy rather than deal with us intelligently by engaging in relevant dialogue.

The simple truth is that we are faced with voting for the evil of two lessers in many cases, and we should be politically sophisticated enough to see through the rhetoric and the smokescreens. After all, haven't we heard and seen it all before?

When I see a J.C. Watts defending George Bush and his regime, saying Bush is "protecting American lives," while I simultaneously see thousands of American lives being lost in Iraq and Afghanistan, I want to throw up. When I hear Dick Cheney spout off about how "well" things are going in Iraq, it just makes me sick. These actions alone show you how low politicians and ex-politicians will stoop to keep their game going. Wake up, Black folks! Don't vote for anyone connected to or supportive of the Bush regime.

And, since we are so hung-up on political parties and have to vote for the evil of two lessers, let's throw all of the Republican bums out and bring in a new crowd of bums. That way, at least we won't be bored to death for the next two years, listening to and watching the same rubber-stamp, out of touch, do-nothing Congress, trashing the Constitution and heeding Bush's call to "stay the course."

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the Black Diaspora. Haiti is being set up and doesn't see it coming.

We are going to Capitol Hill this week with the Kenya Chamber of Commerce to expose the sad history on these actions and to express our dismay. We need to let those who want to hear the truth understand just what damage is being done and how real Black folk deserve a better deal. If it weren't for the love of money — quick sinister money — we would not have to do this.

Sometimes I want to scream and cry at the same time. We have to go and find White folk who will be fair-minded and step up to do the right thing, Black folks who should

be in the vanguard of the opposition. Associations that claim to be focused on Africa are actually brain-dead when it comes to economic empowerment and financial freedom. We will win this fight but it is going to take some serious calling out and unfortunate confrontation with people of my own color.

Ignorance is not bliss, and someday we will be able to school our own to do the right thing.

Please remember: There is nothing slier than for-hire Negro lobbyists selling out their own people for a few crumbs off the table (or under it).

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