

# CBC

(Continued from Page 12) hour-long meeting with Sen. Hillary Clinton in October, had lunch with Sen. Barack Obama two weeks ago and has had recent conversations with former vice presidential nominee Sen. John Edwards three or four times.

But Clyburn said it wouldn't be as much the intra-politicking between Democrats that will win in 2008 as it will be how Democrats as a party handle the crucial issues at hand and getting out the vote.

Clyburn, a former chair of the CBC, applauds Kilpatrick as the right person for the moment.

"We all see her as having the right attitude as far as outreach and taking the message out of the beltway," Clyburn said. "She's been speaking that language for a long time. I look forward to working with her because I think she will maximize, not just the involvement, but the effectiveness of the Caucus."

CBC leaders perceive that part of that effectiveness will be the funding of the Help America Vote Act, which Conyers has said will be among his top priorities on the Judiciary.

"I think the more that we make the voting process fair, open and transparent, the better off we are as a nation," said Clyburn.

"If people don't have confidence in the integrity of their ballot and the effectiveness of it, they tend to drop out of the system. The biggest we need to do is to make sure people's voting rights are protected."

Dealing with domestic issues that mean something to Black people may not be as easy as it appears, said University of Maryland Political Scientist Ron Walters.

"Kilpatrick is going to be a second majority whip because, as chair of the Congressional Black Caucus now, she's going to be in charge of 42 votes," he said. "But she's also going to be in charge of getting the agenda together that represents the interest of the African-American community, which will be difficult because she's going to have the Blue Dog Democrats to deal with."

The Blue Dogs are conservative Democrats who frequently vote with Republicans. Their clout increased from 37 to 44 in the November election.

Even so, that's just one member more than the CBC. And incoming House

Speaker Nancy Pelosi is trying to straddle both ideological camps.

Kilpatrick says she realizes there are schisms in the party but says she is optimistic they will work out.

"In the long run, we will agree on more than we disagree on. I think you'll see that as in any family," Kilpatrick says.

Shoring up young voters will also be a part of the CBC agenda, says Kilpatrick,

whose son, Kwame Kilpatrick of Detroit, was elected the youngest mayor of any major U.S. city in 2002 at the age of 31.

Kilpatrick says the CBC will make a concerted effort to recruit and galvanize constituents between the ages 18-40.

"We will work closely with young leaders around America so that they might be educated about what's going on and how they can

get involved politically, how they can set agendas for their own community," she said. "It's the young people who set the trends. I believe in getting them involved early. Then, our communities are better, our families are stronger; the body politic runs better."

Kilpatrick says that the way the Democratic Party handles key issues will determine whether the party reclaims the White House in

2008. One of those key issues is the war in Iraq.

"Five-hundred billion has been appropriated; \$400 billion has been spent. Those are dollars that we needed in our communities," she said. "And by the way, where is all that money? So, we've got a lot to deal with."

Having just lost the battle for affirmative action in Michigan, Kilpatrick says Democrats must also find ways to counter affirmative

action-foe Ward Connerly.

"Ward Connerly told us that he'll be in five or six other states in 2008. So, again, our job is to educate," she said.

"My job is to coordinate and to work with and to get out into America and to mobilize and to educate our voters so that they know and so they will engage. So, all of that will be happening over the next two years of my tenure."



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