

# African-Americans march against war

By James Wright  
Special to Sentinel-Voice  
WASHINGTON (NNPA) - Blacks were active participants in the anti-war demonstration that took place on Jan. 27 at the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

An estimated 100,000 people from across the country came to Washington to protest the Bush administration's escalation of the war in Iraq. The protestors said that the war was wrong, the troops should come home and if the troops do not come home, Congress should cut off funding.

The march was facilitated by the New York-based United for Peace and Justice. Its mission is to educate the American people about the war and to demonstrate how social change can take place within the context of democracy through protest, education and activism.

"Bring home the troops," Rev. Graylon Hagler told the crowd. "We aim to be heard by the Congress of the United States and by George Bush. We are going to push to end



African-Americans joined 100,000 people protesting American wars on Jan. 27 at the National Mall in Washington D.C.

this war."

Hagler, a candidate for the Ward 4 position on the D.C. City Council and the pastor of Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, said that people are outraged by the loss of life and the administration's casual attitude toward the death of Americans and the Iraqi

people.

Felicia Eaves, president of Black Voices for Peace, said that Bush has shown little regard for life in the past.

"When Bush gave his State of the Union, he did not mention Katrina at all," Eaves said. "That should tell you that George Bush does not care for Black people. We

have to stop this war. We have to."

Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.) said that the Congress needs to be pressed to cut off funding for the war.

"We are going to push, push, and push to keep the debate going," Waters said. Speaking to the protestors, she said, "You have come here to save your country and you are the real patriots."

Waters made it clear that she is not afraid to speak out against the war.

"My name is Maxine Waters and I am not afraid of George Bush," she said. "I am not intimidated by Dick Cheney. I worked to get rid of Donald Rumsfeld. Condi Rice (Black secretary of

state) is a neo-con and she does not represent me. George Bush said that he was the decider," she continued.

"He is not the decider, he is a liar," Waters stated.

Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) said that a group of progressive Democrats in the Congress will attempt to stop the funding of the war in the Congress. Conyers said that the president is off track.

"Bush fired his military leaders when they told him he was wrong," Conyers said. "Cheney said that we cannot do anything about the war. That's not true, we can fire Bush and we need to remember that."

Rev. Jesse Jackson, president of the Rainbow-Push

Coalition, said that "peace is possible" and "peace is imperative."

"Today we march for the soul of our nation, to preserve our nation's honor," he said. "The war in Iraq is causing a war on the poor at home. Money needed for the working poor, the aged and the young, are being sacrificed for this misadventure."

Jackson said that the war in Iraq is part of a larger problem in the country.

"We need more than new leaders; we need new direction, new priorities, and a new way for a new day," he said.

The speakers throughout the rally encouraged the protestors to support the bill, Bring Our Troops Home and Sovereignty of Iraq Restoration Act of 2007 sponsored by Waters, Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.) and Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.). The bill calls for an immediate withdrawal of troops from Iraq and mandates that the administration allow the Iraq government to function by itself.

On Jan. 29, the protestors took their case to the members of Congress on Capitol Hill.

They lobbied the lawmakers to stop the war by cutting off funding by visiting their offices and talking to the members or high ranking staff members.

James Wright writes for Afro-American Newspapers.

## Gangs

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against what he called "the ethnic cleansing of Blacks by Latino gang members."

And while officials are focusing on the Harbor Gateway area, they also are reviewing the Advancement Project report.

Civil rights attorney Connie Rice, the co-director of the Advancement Project, a nonprofit legal consulting group, told the city council's ad hoc Committee on Gang Violence and Youth Development last week that officials must find ways of keeping kids from joining gangs.

"You close the entrance ramps to the gangs and you get robust exit ramps," Rice said. "You can't ask a kid whose whole identity ... is with a gang because there's nothing else and nobody else in his family, you can't ask him to leave that gang if you don't have something else for him to leave to."

The committee also heard testimony from Bratton, Baca, City Attorney Rocky Delgadillo, County Supervisor Yvonne Burke, Los Angeles Unified School District Superintendent David Brewer, religious leaders and community members.

Students need safe ways to get to and from school, and activities that keep them busy

from the time school gets out until they go to bed, Brewer told the committee.

"We cannot educate our children under those conditions," Brewer said of the violence witnessed by students. "We will solve this problem. If you get them stabilized, stabilize the community, I will educate them."

Betty Sweet, a teacher whose son Jason was killed by gang members in 2004, said she sees children in the city's worst schools who cannot learn because they are so traumatized by the violence.

"They don't have anybody to talk to," Sweet said. "They need healing before they can learn. They need to be healed. When they lose a sibling, they not only lose a brother or sister, they lose their mother because she is in so much pain."

In her presentation, Rice said youths need to be given more job opportunities.

"Nothing stops a bullet like a job," she said.

Though she was resistant to the idea, Rice said the city may also need to create a separate department or appoint a "gang czar" to gather data and coordinate efforts, because "traditional bureaucracy cannot do this."

The hearing came a day

before the announcement of the crackdown in the Harbor Gateway area.

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