

Earmarks moratorium could weaken Blacks

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn, a Democrat from South Carolina, says a proposed moratorium on so-called congressional "earmarks," unlimited amounts of money designated usually for local projects, could severely hurt programs in the Black community.

"There's a big move going on in this country that we as African-Americans have got to be very, very careful of. And that is this whole thing of killing earmarks. They're trying to stop congressional earmarks," Clyburn told Black publishers representing the National Newspaper Publishers Association.

"If you cut out Congressional earmarks, you're going to see a screeching halt to lots

of the programs that our community benefits from. Our communities cannot afford high-powered lobbyists. They cannot afford very highly sophisticated grants writers. And they're going to miss out on this federal funding," said Clyburn.

Questioning whether some of the funding is "wasteful government spending," U.S. Sen.

Robert C. Byrd, a Democrat from West Virginia who chairs the Senate Appropriations Committee says he aims to place a moratorium on earmarks until the process for getting them is reformed.

If Byrd, an ex-Klansman now known as a conservative Democrat, follows through with a bill that passes both Houses, programs such as Boys and Girls clubs and Call Me Mister, which provides enticements to Black men to teach in public schools, could be severely affected, says Clyburn.

Earmarks, specifically designed to win favor with constituents or assure reappointments to the Appropriations Committee by satisfied colleagues, are often called "pork barrel politics."

"It's wasteful government spending when we earmark to the Boys and Girls Clubs or other programs, but it's not wasteful programs when they use this money to put in new water systems for their [posh] communities," said Clyburn.

The nonpartisan Office of Management

and Budget has not released the number and cost of earmarks since 2005 as expected by Congress last week. Speculation among some members is that the White House may have asked the OMB to withhold the report to save face for high-powered Republicans who just lost control of Congress.

The earmarks issue was just one priority brought before the publishers on Capitol Hill for Black Press Week and the 180th Anniversary of the Black Press as nearly a dozen Congressional Black Caucus members and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi greeted the group representing newspapers that serve cities around the nation.

Pelosi, the nation's first female Speaker of the House, touted her record appointments of Black chairs, subcommittee chairs; plus

Lorraine Miller of Texas, the first African-American to serve as House Clerk.

"She's going to do a job even expanding diversity in the powerful position that she has," said Pelosi.

The CBC, chaired by Michigan Democratic Representative Carolyn

Cheeks Kilpatrick has 43 members, representing more than 40 million Americans in 26 states. CBC members serve as heads of five committees, 17 subcommittees. As majority whip, Clyburn is largely responsible for communicating the Democratic perspective on bills and issues so that his colleagues understand and vote accordingly.

Even when Democrats fall short of support for the vision of the CBC, the group of 40 voting members now wields more power than ever, points out Democratic Rep. Al Green from Texas.

"We really want to dispel this myth that the Congressional Black Caucus is the conscience of America because it's leading America," Green said. "You need 218 to get anything past here, but it's a very strong 40 votes that voted 100 percent on minimum wage, 100 percent on student loans."

From legislation to helping victims of Hurricane Katrina to healthcare to the "prison pipeline" (too many Blacks in prison) pointed

(See *Moratorium*, Page 13)



'PUBLIC' RECOGNITION

Sentinel-Voice by Ramon Savoy

The Las Vegas chapter of the National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) celebrated its 20th anniversary with the Marks of Excellence Scholarship and Awards luncheon at the Orleans Hotel-Casino. Mecklenberg County, N.C. County Manager and NFBPA national president Harry Jones, left and local president Tyrone Thompson, right, honors Dr. Barbara Jackson (director of the City of Las Vegas Leisure Services Department) as the public administrator of the year, deputy chief Eugene Campbell (City of Las Vegas Fire and Rescue) as the emerging public administrator of the year.

Florida governor: State should pay up in death

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) - Gov. Charlie Crist said recently that the state should give \$5 million to the family of a teenager who died last year after he was manhandled by juvenile boot camp guards.

Crist's comments came hours after prosecutors released an enhanced video of the beating of Martin Lee Anderson, 14, and more than 20,000 pages of evidence in the manslaughter case against seven former guards and a nurse.

The family had sued for \$40 million, but said in a letter to Crist that a \$10 million payment would be a fair resolution — half from the state and half from Bay County, which ran the camp.

"I think it's real important that the state do the right thing, and I think the right thing to do is honor their

more-than-reasonable request. Justice delayed is justice denied," Crist said in Tallahassee.

The payment would have to be approved by the Legislature.

After meeting with the boy's family, the governor's office said, Crist sent letters to the House and Senate urging them to approve the payment this session.

"We just think it's very courageous that he would take the leadership and go forward to get a resolution," said Benjamin Crump, the family's attorney. The family will still pursue payment from Bay County.

The newly released material included a NASA-enhanced video that more clearly shows the guards striking Anderson with fists, pinning him down and hold-

ing what appears to be a white cloth to his face at the now-closed sheriff's boot camp in Panama City.

Investigative reports said the nurse examined him early in the incident and said his vital signs were normal. The tape shows her watching, but she does not appear to give another close examination until about 27 minutes into the tape. At that point, guards had stopped hitting him.

Paramedics arrive about 35 minutes into the tape and load the teen onto a stretcher. He died in a Pensacola hospital the next day, starting a case that led to the dismantling of Florida's military-style detention system for young offenders and protests at the state Capitol.

An initial autopsy found Anderson died of natural (See *Boot Camp*, Page 13)

Hate crime nets 240 years

NEW YORK (AP) - A judge sentenced a man to 240 years in prison Wednesday for taking hostages in a bar and telling patrons that "White people are going to burn tonight."

State Supreme Court Justice Maxwell Wiley told Steven Johnson, 39, who is Black, that he had forfeited his "right to live in society."

Johnson, 39, was convicted March 1 of attempted murder, assault and other charges, including some designated as hate crimes.

Johnson invaded Bar Veloce, in Manhattan's East Village neighborhood, while nine men and six women were inside it June 16, 2002. He was carrying three pistols, a samurai sword and a container of kerosene.

He told police he had left the Brooklyn housing project where he lived and taken the subway to go look for "happy" White people to avenge the mistreatment of Blacks.

He shot and wounded three people, including a police officer, and sprayed kerosene on several customers and threatened to set them on fire.

Two women caught Johnson off guard and tackled him, and a policeman shot him.

About a dozen victims and their supporters were in the courtroom for the sentencing.

Johnson declined to speak. Defense lawyer Michele Galernt had asked the judge to consider Johnson's diagnosed mental disorders and the fact that he had been a sexually abused child.

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