

Organization holds convention and lays out urban policy agenda

NUL seeks 'commitment' from candidates

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) - National Urban League President and CEO Marc Morial, this week in the throes of the organization's national convention in St. Louis, says the main goal of the gathering will be to get presidential candidates committed to at least 10 urban policies that would revolutionize the pain and suffering being felt by America's poor.

"Urban policy has fallen off the radar screen," said Morial, in an interview with the NNPA News Service shortly after arriving in the 52 percent Black city for the convention that started this week.

"We are not partisan. We can't endorse a candidate. But what we can do is try to help frame the discussion... This is how other people operate. They go to candidates and they give them a set of proposals. They don't just walk in the door and say, 'What are you going to do for

me?' Our politics in our community has got to evolve."

Morial said he unveiled the proposed policies during his opening speech on Wednesday evening.

Though the candidates have discussion issues pertaining to African-Americans and urban life during Tavis Smiley's "All American Forum," as well as Monday's "CNN/YouTube Debate," there has been little discussion on actual policies to address those issues. Morial says policy must be the goal.

Four Democratic presidential candidates and two Republicans have confirmed that they will attend a convention forum set for this Friday morning.

Morial says each candidate will be given a set of urban policy proposals and will be given 15 minutes to respond to each one during a plenary session of the convention, which is expecting to draw thousands.

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paign. What people promise in campaigns is what they can be held accountable to. That's the political system," Morial said.

"So, on our side, whether it's mandatory childhood education, an expansion of children's health insurance, whether it's micro-financing for small businesses, [or whether] it's the creation of an urban infrastructure bank. Whatever it is, we want the candidates to commit to these things while they're running."

The candidates set to attend the convention are

Democrats Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, John Edwards and Dennis Kucinich. The Republican candidates who have confirmed are Mike Huckabee and Duncan Hunter.

They will receive a detailed list of principles and policy recommendations that the NUL calls its Opportunity Compact, aimed to, in part, "empower all Americans to be full participants in the economic and social mainstream of this nation," according to a description of the compact, released by the NUL.

The policy recommenda-

tions aim to "bridge the gap between conceptualization and realization of the American dream," according to the release.

Morial said the compact is the culmination of extensive research and policy analysis by the NUL Policy Institute and is "based upon the input of dozens of policy experts from academia, public policy think tanks, non-profit service and advocacy organizations, the business sector, and the Urban League movement."

Morial added, "A lot of time, energy and work went into this. We didn't just sit down and come up with this off the tops of our heads."

The 10 policy proposals are under four headings — children, jobs, housing and entrepreneurship — major areas in which African-Americans are disparately impacted.

The proposed policies include the following:

Children's opportunity to thrive:

1. Commit to mandatory early childhood education beginning at three years of age, as well as guarantee access to college for all.

2. Close the gaps in the health insurance system to ensure universal healthcare for all children.

3. Establish policies that provide tools for working families to become economically self-sufficient.

Adult opportunity to earn and have jobs:

4. Create an urban infrastructure bank to fund reinvestment in urban communities, including parks, schools and roads.

5. Increase economic self-sufficiency by indexing the minimum wage, so that it will increase with the rate of inflation, and expanding the Earned Income Tax Credit to benefit more working families.

6. Expand "second chance" programs for high school dropouts, ex-offenders and at-risk youth to secure a G.E.D., job training and employment.

Opportunity for homeownership:

7. Adopt the Homebuyers' Bill of Rights as recommended by the National Urban League.

8. Reform public housing to assure continuing national commitment to low-income families.

Opportunity to prosper through entrepreneurship:

9. Strongly enforce federal minority business opportunity goals to ensure greater minority participation in government contracting.

10. Build capacity of minority business through expansion of micro-financing, equity financing and the development of strategic alliances with major corporations.

"The opportunity to thrive, the opportunity to earn, the opportunity to own, the opportunity to prosper —

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More scrutiny likely in gun sales

CARSON CITY, Nev. (AP) - The state Legislature's failure to pass a bill may mean that the 25,000 Nevadans with concealed weapons permits may have to undergo a federal background check every time they buy a gun.

For years the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms has exempted Nevada permit holders from

paying \$25 and undergoing a check with each gun purchase. Now the government is threatening to scrap that exemption. Anyone without a concealed weapons permit must pay \$25 for a federal background investigation when purchasing a firearm. But those with permits have been exempted because they undergo background checks when they get their state li-

cense.

Frank Adams, executive director of the Nevada Sheriffs' and Chiefs' Association, said the federal agency was dissatisfied in the past with the checks made by local sheriffs, so the local law enforcement agencies beefed up the process.

But the federal agency wanted state law to conform to the local sheriffs' prac-

tices. AB21, backed by the sheriffs and chiefs, was aimed at satisfying the federal agency's wishes. But it died in the Assembly Judiciary Committee.

Adams said his association plans to ask the federal government for an extension because local sheriffs still conduct the checks, even though state law has not yet been changed.

Beverage labels fueling stereotypes

By Evan Barnes,
Kenneth Miller, and
Gregory Cleghorne

Special to Sentinel-Voice

LOS ANGELES (NNPA) - The liquid beverage is sweet and red, but the seal that covers the plastic container has left a sour taste in the mouth of the African-American community this week.

Renowned civil rights leader and *Los Angeles Sentinel* publisher, Danny Bakewell Sr., said about the images on the container, "One of the most offensive acts I've ever seen directed at Black people."

An op-ed columnist at the newspaper, Malik Spellman, showed the container in the office early this month.

It was a day for Spellman to celebrate his daughter

Malika's graduating with honors from middle school, but it turned into an event they would not forget.

After taking his daughter to the Watts Labor Community Action Committee to see an exhibit, Spellman then treated her to a cool drink at the Louisiana Fried Chicken stand on 91st and Central.

To his surprise, on the lid of the drink was a small image of three Black children dressed in jungle garb. It was reminiscent of the pickaninny figures from the Jim Crow Era, and it left Spellman in a state of shock.

"It made me sick to my stomach," he said. "I was offended and broke into a cold sweat of anger."

He did not show the image to his daughter but re-

tained the cup as the latest example of racist iconography to appear in the community.

The writing on the label of the beverage appeared to be in Japanese language and at press time the newspaper's researchers were working on translating the words.

A brief visit to a local Chinese establishment suggested that the language was either Japanese or Chinese, and when asked what it meant, the merchant reeled and responded, "It's nothing. You wouldn't understand it anyway," and shunned away.

"Being a community activist fighting against racism at the (L.A.) *Sentinel* for six years, it made me sick because I saw it in Watts," he said. "It's unacceptable to

sell it here in the United States, and there is no excuse."

Ironically, the exhibit they visited at the WLCAC featured similar figures among others as an opportunity to educate the community on how harmful and prevalent these images have been in the past.

Timothy Watkins, president and CEO of the WLCAC, added some perspective by describing how these images reinforce not only negative stereotypes, but Black people as a whole.

"These images completely exaggerate the African-American image," said Watkins. "They reinforce White superiority and Black subservience."

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Give the joy of life

About 95,000 people in the U.S. are waiting for a life-saving organ or tissue transplant. Every 14 minutes someone's dad or mom, son or daughter is added to the national waiting list. Each day 16 people die waiting for an organ or tissue. Save lives by becoming a donor. When you receive or renew your driver's license, get the heart logo placed on your license. The logo shows that you are proud to be an organ and tissue donor.

For information, call 702-796-9600 or visit giftoflife.nv.gov.
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