



## Incarceration at record high

NEW YORK (AP) — For the first time in U.S. history, more than one of every 100 adults is in jail or prison, according to a new report documenting America's rank as the world's No. 1 incarcerator. It urges states to curtail corrections spending by placing fewer low-risk offenders behind bars.

Using state-by-state data, the report says 2,319,258 Americans were in jail or prison at the start of 2008 — one out of every 99.1 adults. Whether per capita or in raw numbers, it's more than any other nation.

The report, released recently by the Pew Center on the States, said the 50 states spent more than \$49 billion on corrections last year, up from less than \$11 billion 20 years earlier. The rate of increase for prison costs was six times greater than for higher education spending, the report said.

The steadily growing inmate population "is saddling



For the first time in American history, incarceration figures alarmingly tops 2 million.

cash-strapped states with soaring costs they can ill afford and failing to have a clear impact either on recidivism or overall crime," the report said.

Susan Urahn, managing

director of the Pew Center on the States, said budget woes are pressuring many states to consider new, cost-saving corrections policies that might have been shunned in the recent past for fear of ap-

pearing soft on crime.

"We're seeing more and more states being creative because of tight budgets," she said in an interview. "They want to be tough on" (See Prison, Page 4)

## CDC: Problems likely at clinics

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON — An outbreak of hepatitis C at a Nevada clinic may represent "the tip of an iceberg" of safety problems at clinics around the country, according to the head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The city of Las Vegas shut down the Endoscopy Center of Southern Nevada last Friday after state health officials determined that six patients had contracted hepatitis C because of unsafe practices including clinic staff reusing syringes and vials. Nevada health officials are trying to contact about 40,000 patients who received anesthesia by injection at the clinic between March 2004 and Jan. 11 to urge them to get tested for hepatitis C, hepatitis B and HIV.

Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., met Monday with CDC head Dr. Julie Gerberding, and on a media conference call after their meeting both strongly condemned practices at the clinic.

Healthcare accreditors "would consider this a patient safety error that falls into the category of a 'never event,' meaning this should never happen in contemporary health care organizations," said Gerberding.

"This is the largest number of patients that have ever been contacted for a blood exposure in a healthcare setting. But, unfortunately, we have seen other large-scale situations where similar practices have led to patient exposures," Gerberding said.

"Our concern is that this could represent the tip of an" (See CDC, Page 4)

## Urban League: Black women's voices need amplifying

By Hazel Trice Edney  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Historic tragedies and controversies have marked the beginning of the 21st century: The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, the war in Iraq, Hurricane Katrina, the disparaging Don Imus remarks, the Jena Six debacle, the mortgage and subprime lending crisis, and the resurgence of noose threats, fueling marches and protests against social and criminal injustices.

Amidst it all, there is often the voice of the Black male that is publicized — too often overlooking the Black woman who is actually holding the pieces together, says Marc Morial, president and CEO of the National Urban League.

That is why, he says, this year's annual State of Black America is dedicated to "The Black Woman's Voice," with all responding essays written

by Black women.

The report is a stringent contrast to last year.

"Our 2007 State of Black America: 'Portrait of the Black Male' report examined the plight of young Black males faced with grim prospects," states Morial in the 254-page 2008 report, slated for release March 5, aptly during Women's History Month.

"This year's report explores the challenges encountered by the females within our community — the mothers, grandmothers, aunts and sisters who have been the backbone of the Black family. Women typically hold the family together, especially in the African-American community, where the marriage rate is lower than in other communities and where a higher percentage of single mothers are the heads of households." He adds, "These women

are the matriarchs and leaders of our community. They have risen to the challenge of maintaining the Black family unit in spite of trying conditions and limited opportunity."



Writing the foreword for this year's report is Dr. Dorothy I. Height, president emerita of the National Council of Negro Women.

"Too often, our needs, concerns, struggles, and triumphs are diminished and subordinated to what is be-

lieved to be the more pressing concerns of others," said the civil rights icon.

"But who better than us can understand and empathize with the very real challenges that our brothers, fa-

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— Marc Morial  
President and CEO of NUL

thers, husbands and sons face as they make their way in a nation that still has far to go to adequately address issues of race? And who better than us can understand the very real boundaries that all women face in navigating a cultural dynamic that still as-

signs roles and oftentimes limitations based upon gender. Yet, it is also true, that there are special, dual challenges intricately linked to Blackness and womanhood that we Black women face and navigate alone."

Height knows well the loneliness of Black women at the top.

A peer of the Big Six civil rights leaders — A. Philip Randolph, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Whitney Young, Roy Wilkins, James Farmer, and John Lewis — she was the only one not allowed to speak during the 1963 March on Washington.

"With no apologies, the time is now, to finally focus on us," she said. "It is Black women who face, most strikingly, a double disadvantage in the world of work. Our earnings, for example, are reflective of both a race and gender pay gap. Yet despite this double disadvantage, we

clearly understand what it means to work and work hard. Our participation in the labor force eclipses that of all other women, and by 2014, is expected to grow by twice the amount expected among White women," she wrote.

"Still, in spite of this effort, too many of us continue to live life on the economic fringe; Black women's poverty more than doubles that of White women and noticeably outpaces that among Latinas. And even with all of the employment struggles that Black men face, it is Black women who are, in the final analysis, most likely to be poor.

According to key findings outlined in the report's tables and essays:

- The economic sub-index for Black America is at 56 percent, meaning it is unchanged from last year. This means the economic standing (See NUL, Page 11)