

African immigrants sow seeds in U.S. democracy

By Wayetu Moore

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — This election year is different for Olufunke Okeanawi. The 23-year-old nursing student at Howard University speaks of the Democratic primary with excitement and opportunity, in a noticeably different tone and optimism than many students her age.

This bright perspective, this difference in Olu is because unlike many of her classmates, this will be her first year and chance to vote for a U.S. presidential candidate. It is also unique because though polls often discuss the great political influence of African-American and Hispanic citizens of the U.S., the nearly 1 million foreign-born Africans in the U.S. will also make an impact. For the most part, the concerns of Africans are just like everyone else, Okeanawi said.

"My decision is based on the candidate's platform and stance in the fields which I'm interested in, like healthcare reform," she said.

A Nigerian Immigrant and naturalized Bostonian, Olu is one of thousands of African immigrants that will join the nation in choosing its next leader; currently the most powerful political figure in the world.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, there were around 1 million foreign-born Africans residing in the United States in 2002. African immigrants make up 3 percent of the total foreign-born U.S. population, and the majority of them come from Nigeria and Ethiopia. One in every three African immigrants is a naturalized citizen, and, thus, qualify to vote. African immigrants are, however, largely neglected in the immigration debate, as candidates mostly focus on Mexican voters and other Hispanic groups.

Immigration is a major issue for Africans as well.

"I'm voting for Obama," Okeanawi continues, "but not because of the color of his skin or because he has an African background. I'm vot-

ing for him because of his credentials and what he represents. The world loves him."

Famatta Wilson disagrees. "I don't consider who is the most popular. What is usually the most important to me is the immigration opinion, which, in regards to Africa, I'm slightly unclear about. I guess amnesty would apply to all immigrants though," Wilson says. A Liberian immigrant and resident of Minneapolis, Minn., Wilson will vote in her second presidential election. Aside from Rhode Island, Minnesota has one of the largest Liberian populations in the U.S. "The first time I voted it was for Bush, because I felt that he cared for Liberia and the Liberians in America," Wilson continues.

President George W. Bush supported bills (HR1645) and (S656), intended to give thousands of Liberians permanent status in the U.S., after the question of deportation arose for many Liberians that were on a temporary pro-

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Youth voting to make change

By Simone H. Stephenson
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Some economists have lamented that in the near future, due to the rise in age of the "baby-boomers," Social Security may no longer be a facet of American society. With the economy arguably in shambles, healthcare may soon be an extreme luxury instead of a commodity. If more hybrid engine cars are not manufactured, driving may turn into a luxury, as well, with oil surpassing over \$100 a barrel, and gasoline well over \$3 a gallon in some parts of the country. The cost of higher education is seemingly rising daily, with some tuitions, such as Stanford University in California and Harvard University in Massachusetts, both nearing \$40,000 a year... while the

average American income is well below even that number. What does this mean for the younger generations?

The 18-29 demographic has been voting in record numbers for this season's presidential primary elections, well surpassing the expected turnout, based on past elections. Are they really voting based on issues?

In a *Time* magazine poll conducted last month reported that 83 percent of the 503 randomly selected 18-29 year olds polled believed that the results of the current Presidential election will have a great deal of an impact on the country from an issues standpoint. Of the same 503, 18-29 year olds polled, 46 percent believed that the Democratic Party understood the needs of "people

like themselves" more than the Republican Party.

On the other hand, some young voters associate their political affiliations with their parents without completing a thorough examination of what each party truly believes.

"I was raised as a Democrat. In other words, my parents are Democrats, so it's all I've ever known. I say I'm a democrat, and I vote as a Democrat. But truthfully, I don't really know what that means compared to a Republican or an Independent," says Lauren Kent, 22, of Chicago.

Kent says many young people gain their perceptions from what they hear — from family, the TV and society in general.

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Health

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are reporting their experiences and the results should be taken seriously."

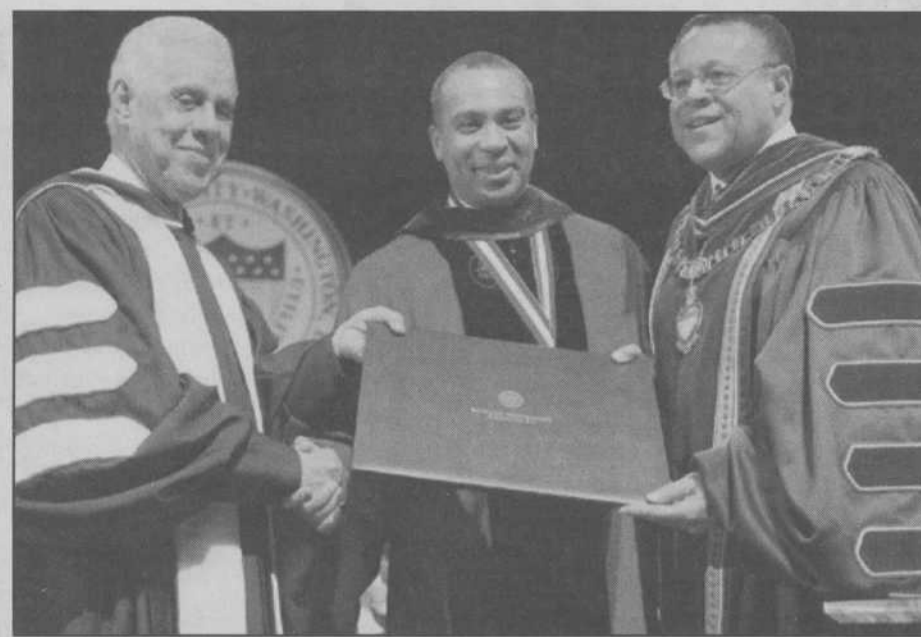
Beal said the Harvard study also showed that there are steps that health care providers can take to improve patients' perceptions, such as resolving language barriers.

She said healthcare providers should incorporate translation services into their practice. Even physicians who work in small prac-

tices or on their own can make use of phone banks designed to improve doctor-patient communications.

Beal said doctors now pay for that service out of their own pocket, but that service should be reimbursable through government health programs such as Medicaid and Medicare.

The report will be published in the journal *Health Affairs*.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Howard University

Former Virginia Gov. L. Douglas Wilder, Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick and Howard President H. Patrick Swygert during a ceremony celebrating the 141st anniversary of the founding of esteemed Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Lone Black U.S. governor honored at Howard Univ.

Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — Until he was 14, Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick shared a bunk bed with his mother and his sister, which meant every third night one of them slept on the floor.

By the time his daughter was 14, she had visited three continents and had experienced life in a way that he said he could have never conceived when he was her age, Patrick told hundreds last week during a ceremony celebrating the 141st anniversary of the founding of Howard University, the nation's premier historically Black university.

Such a change in circumstances in only one generation could only happen in America, said Patrick, the nation's second Black governor since Reconstruction.

"This is the American story," Patrick said, a story that he said he wants to make happen for more Americans as governor. Patrick, 51, a key cog in Illinois Sen. Barack Obama's presidential campaign, received an honorary doctorate degree from Howard University President H. Patrick Swygert. L. Douglas Wilder, the nation's first, post-Reconstruction, Black governor, currently mayor of Richmond, Va., helped bestow the honor.

Patrick was honored for his leadership

in business, government and law.

During his career, Patrick served under President Bill Clinton as assistant Attorney General for civil rights, the nation's top civil rights post. He also served on the Federal Election Reform Commission under Presidents Jimmy Carter and Gerald Ford. He worked as vice president and general counsel for Texaco and executive vice president and general counsel for Coca-Cola and later as corporate secretary for the company.

He was elected Governor of Massachusetts in November 2006.

Howard also bestowed honorary doctorate degrees on six of its graduates, CNN news anchor Fredricka Whitefield, Bermuda Premier Dr. Ewart F. Brown, U.S. Virgin Island justices Maria M. Cabret and Ivie Swan, former Howard Dean of the School of Architecture and Planning Harry G. Robinson and former Dean of the School of Engineering and Howard University professor emeritus M. Lucius Walker Jr.

The university was also celebrating the completion of its five-year, \$272 million fundraising campaign, the largest in history by any African-American organization. More than 30 Howard graduates gave the school \$1 million or more.

Kilpatrick defends her record

Special to Sentinel-Voice

DETROIT (NNPA) — Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick, chairwoman of the Congressional Black Caucus, has reacted sharply to criticism from former Michigan legislator Mary Waters who claimed the congresswoman is out of touch with voters and constituents.

Waters accused Kilpatrick of being a closet Hillary Clinton supporter and said the CBC boss should follow the steps of Georgia Congressman John Lewis who endorsed Barack Obama.

Waters said Kilpatrick, a super delegate, should follow the wishes of her constituents who overwhelmingly support Obama.

In response, Kilpatrick expressed outrage at Waters who works as deputy prosecutor for governmental affairs in the office of Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy, who is investigating the congresswoman's son, Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick, on perjury charges.

Kilpatrick also found it ironic that the Waters release

was sent out by political consultant Sam Riddle, a companion of Waters. She said she has not yet demonstrated any support to either presidential candidate.

"In my 30 years of public service, I have had a stellar record serving the people of the state of Michigan and the U.S.," Kilpatrick said.

"As chairwoman of the CBC and the only Democrat on the House Appropriations Committee, I have delivered more than half billion dollars to improve the quality of life of the people I represent."