

How will the Justice Department handle voting rights violators?

## Senate Judiciary Committee eyes voting trickery

By Jamisha Purdy

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WASHINGTON (NNPA) — In the presidential primary elections Keshia Anderson attempted to vote twice. After parking problems thwarted her first attempt, she returned after work and stood in line for more than two hours. She voted. But like many of the Chesterfield, Va. residents her vote didn't count. Her precinct had run out of democratic ballots. As instructed by election officials, Anderson wrote her candidate of choice on a torn sheet of paper.

These are the types of problems that the Senate Judiciary Committee says should be prevented by the Department of Justice.

The judiciary committee had one question for the justice department at a recent hearing: "What steps they are going to take before the elections to ensure that all eligible votes are counted and that voters are not disenfranchised?"

"I want to — again — ask the justice department if they have the tools necessary to combat deceptive practices in the upcoming election," said Sen. Benjamin Cardin,

D-MD.

### Primary Problems

During the primaries, Cardin said that there were widespread voting issues in minority neighborhoods. He also said that in an effort to try to diminish the importance of minority voters, "misleading information" was distributed in Maryland, New Jersey, New York and many other states.

"That goes well beyond what is acceptable in American politics," he said.

Cardin outlined some of the problems seen at last year's presidential elections.

"There was literature that was targeted at minority communities that gave the wrong date of elections," he said. There was information handed out in California to [legal] immigrant communities ... warning them that voting in a federal election is a crime that could result in incarceration and possible deportation. There was information given out giving the wrong voter date in my own state of Maryland."

Grace Chung Becker, acting assistant attorney general for the Justice Department, Civil Rights Division, defended the department saying

they are prepared. She cited many cases the department has filed against violators of the Voting Rights Act in their efforts to protect citizens' right to vote.

"The justice department is doing its part," said Becker. "We're fortunate to have a tremendously talented and hardworking team... and I'm proud of their accomplishments."

She continued: "Since 2006, we have filed seven cases under section 2 of the Voting Rights Act involving vote dilution and vote intonation."

Section two of the Voting Rights Act prohibits discriminant voting practices.

Becker added that the civil rights division "will take action" if any voting law is enforced in a discriminatory manner.

### Military Personnel

Residents like Anderson, aren't the only type of U.S. citizens the judiciary committee wants to have a fair chance to vote this November. Senators Tom Coburn, R-OK, John Cornyn, R-TX, Sheldon Whitehouse, D-RI, and Cardin all agreed that the percentage of votes received from military personal living abroad was "shameful."

According to the 2006 Election Administration and Voting Survey, only 5.5 percent of uniformed and overseas military voted.

Brian O'Leary, Capitolink director who served in the marines as an F8 hornet pilot, said this low turnout is because of the lack of information and a "burdensome" military voting process.

"I saw these problems first hand as a voting assistance officer in the marines," said O'Leary. "Our military

men and women serve around the world and risk their lives in defense of freedom and yet their own ability to exercise their fundamental rights are being obstructed."

O'Leary suggested that the "Department of Justice press the Department of Defense and state election officials" to ensure that overseas citizens are given enough time to receive and return their ballots on time.

Cornyn said that the department of defense has "failed to adequately educate" enlisted men and women about how to vote.

"Because they do much to protect our rights, I think justice demands that we do everything in our power to protect theirs," said Cornyn. "The department of defense has a legal duty to educate and assist our service mem-

bers in voting and the evidence has shown that the department of defense has failed."

He continued: "Far too often, these very same women and men who are wear the uniform of the United States of America and who are fighting to sacrifice, in some cases everything, to protect our civil rights, are themselves not able to exercise their right to vote."

Becker said that the department of justice is working with states to ensure that soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines and other overseas citizens have the "full opportunity" to participate in the presidential election.

"Last month I joined the Department of Defense in sending letters to all 50 states emphasizing the need to provide at least 45 days for ab-

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## AIDS

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moting prostitution, Worobey suggested. "Cities are kind of ideal for a virus like HIV," providing more chances for infected people to pass the virus to others, he said.

Perhaps a person infected with the AIDS virus in a rural area went to what is now Kinshasa, Congo, "and now you've got the spark arriving in the tinderbox," Worobey said.

Key to the new work was the discovery of an HIV sample that had been taken from a woman in Kinshasa in 1960. It was only the second such sample to be found from before 1976; the other was from 1959, also from Kinshasa.

Researchers took advantage of the fact that HIV mutates rapidly. So two strains from a common ancestor quickly become less and less alike in their genetic material over time. That allows scientists to "run the clock backward" by calculating how long it would take for various strains to become as different as they are observed to be. That would indicate when they both sprang from their most recent common ancestor.

The new work used genetic data from the two old HIV samples plus more than 100 modern samples to create a family tree going back to these samples' last common ancestor. Researchers got various answers under various approaches for when that ancestor virus appeared, but the 1884-to-1924 bracket is probably the most reliable, Worobey said.

The new work is "clearly an improvement" over the previous estimate of around 1930, said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in Bethesda, Md. His institute helped pay for the work.

Fauci described the advance as "a fine-tuning."

Experts say it's no surprise that HIV circulated in humans for about 70 years before being recognized. An infection usually takes years to produce obvious symptoms, a lag that can mask the role of the virus, and it would have infected relatively few Africans early in its spread, they said.

## Your Horoscope Says... October 2-8

### ARIES

Things are going your way in wonderful ways this week. Happy news may arrive from a distance, and on the home front, a romantic question may be answered. Friends are glad to be with you. All in all, a very pleasant week! Enjoy!

Soul Affirmation: Success is mine because I feel successful.

Lucky Numbers: 44, 51, 55

### TAURUS

Your social life gives big rewards during the week. However, give attention to email contacts. Don't be afraid as your mental horizon expands into new areas.

Soul Affirmation: You are gifted with the ability to give

Lucky Numbers: 9, 28, 39

### GEMINI

Your relationships can receive a big boost from a trip that beckons. Business is also highlighted. Your strong mental energy is sustained through the week. Work it out by talking it out.

Soul Affirmation: This week is the week the Lord has made. I rejoice in it.

Lucky Numbers: 31, 48, 52

### CANCER

Your vibes are calling to you this week to think fondly of all the love you are now giving and have given. Love itself makes you a better you. So act the fool and love with all your big sunny self. If things get stressful repeat your magic word to yourself: LOVE!

Soul Affirmation: Freedom of mind is the greatest gift for me this week.

Lucky Numbers: 8, 15, 33

### LEO

Get in touch with those who can help you achieve your goals. Place the accent on initiative. Romance, passion and work are singing in harmony this week and tonight.

Soul Affirmation: My love for myself is the most important love for me to have.

Lucky Numbers: 9, 35, 41

### VIRGO

Joy this week comes from love. You are especially attractive. Stage your week so that you spend time around people you want to attract. It is easy for you to bring harmony into your relationships. Your ability to communicate is greatly enhanced. Use it to your best advantage.

Soul Affirmation: The success of others is the investment I make in myself.

Lucky Numbers: 30, 45, 46

### LIBRA

Are you spending money with little or nothing to show for it? This is because you're looking for something that money can't buy. Now is a good time to spend some of your emotional currency, and don't be cheap. You'll create a situation in which people will work hard to please you.

Soul Affirmation: Friendships are shock absorbers on the bumpy roads of life.

Lucky Numbers: 16, 50, 52

### SCORPIO

You may like to go to war, but avoid an argument with a friend; it will slow down all the wonderful progress you've been making. Your patience will be tested this week, stay on task.

Soul Affirmation: I smile and trust in the powers beyond myself.

Lucky Numbers: 2, 20, 23

### SAGITTARIUS

Skip it! Don't sweat the small stuff, it'll only bring you down. Don't run around inside your own head this week. Focus your awareness outside on something beautiful. Compromise is a key idea this week.

Soul Affirmation: Jewelry reflects the beauty of my feelings about myself.

Lucky Numbers: 40, 43, 49

### CAPRICORN

Someone in the family is ready to give you something. Open yourself up to it. Home improvement — mental, physical and spiritual — is this week's best theme. Seek the simple pleasures from a neglected hobby this week.

Soul Affirmation: I love charming, positive head games.

Lucky Numbers: 18, 24, 36

### AQUARIUS

How efficient you are this week! Your busy mind is focused on productivity and achievement. Both come easily to you, so take your advantage and press forward.

Soul Affirmation: I see myself as a finisher rather than a starter this week.

Lucky Numbers: 11, 12, 53

### PISCES

Entertainment and companionship are high on your list of things to enjoy this week. Use your mental gifts to speed carefully through your work so that you'll have more time for fun this week.

Soul Affirmation: This week silence speaks loudest and truest.

Lucky Numbers: 5, 15, 31