

# Jackson positioned to be first Black EPA leader

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lisa Jackson is in line to become the first African-American to lead the Environmental Protection Agency.

President-elect Barack Obama announced Jackson as EPA administrator on Monday, as he continues to round out his top-level administration picks.

Jackson, a Princeton University-educated chemical engineer, would take the helm at the agency at a time of record-low morale and when it is still grappling with how to respond to a 2007 Supreme Court decision that said it could regulate the greenhouse gases blamed for global warming.

During the Bush administration, the White House has at times overruled the advice of the EPA's scientific advisers and the agency's staff on issues ranging from air pollution to global warming.

Supporters say Jackson, 46, has the experience to steer the agency down a new path.

She spent 16 years at the EPA in Washington and in New York before being hired at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in 2002, an agency that has been riddled by budget cuts and personnel shortages.

Jackson was named the head of the department in 2006 by Gov. Jon Corzine, overseeing environmental regulation in a state



President-elect Barack Obama nominated Lisa Jackson for environmental protection agency administrator.

plagued by pollution problems and home to the most hazardous waste sites in the country. She left earlier this month to take a job as Corzine's chief of staff.

In her short tenure, Jackson has worked to pass mandatory reductions in greenhouse gases, to reform the state's cleanup of con-

taminated sites and to establish a scientific advisory board to review agency decisions.

"In New Jersey, you're working on contaminated sites, you're working on open space, endangered species, clean water. New Jersey is the laboratory for environmental protection.

Whatever bad happens in the environment, it happens in New Jersey first. It is a good proving ground," said Jeff Tittel, executive director of the New Jersey Chapter of the Sierra Club.

Another New Jersey woman, former Gov. Christine Todd Whitman, headed the EPA for 2-1/2 years during President George W. Bush's first term. Whitman, a moderate Republican, found herself occasionally at odds with the Bush White House over environmental issues and became a lightning rod for the administration's critics.

Jackson also has her detractors.

A small but vocal contingent of environmental advocacy groups came out against Jackson last week, asking President-elect Barack Obama to drop her as a candidate.

In a letter to the transition team, the Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, a group that represents environmentally-minded state and federal employees, said it was "distressed" that Jackson was un-

der consideration.

The group said that while Jackson had "a compelling biography" — she grew up in New Orleans' gritty Lower Ninth Ward — her record at the Department of Environmental Protection did not warrant a promotion. As evidence, they cited an EPA inspector general report that found that New Jersey failed to use its authority to expedite clean-ups at seven hazardous waste sites.

The state also has been criticized by federal wildlife officials for failing to adopt standards for pesticides and other toxic chemicals that protect wildlife and for delays in meeting its greenhouse gas emissions targets.

DEP officials, in response to those allegations, said Jackson inherited many of the problems, and that in the case of global warming the state was getting back on track.

Other environmental groups who support her nomination but criticize some of her actions say that in those cases she was overruled by the governor.

"She is the best possible choice that President Obama could make," said Dena Mottola Jaborska, executive director of Environment New Jersey. "She has had a lot of situations where protections needed for the environment were politically difficult, and sometimes she didn't prevail and sometimes she did prevail."

## Homeless

(Continued from Page 3)  
ghastly activity known as "bum beating."

The propensity toward violence and mayhem in America's cities has found an outlet on those who are frequently maligned, misunderstood and vulnerable; in recent years, attacks on homeless people has increased substantially.

The National Coalition for the Homeless has documented 212 assaults against individuals who were homeless. There are several factors that contribute to the targeting of homeless people for violent attacks and murder. They are often stigmatized as worthless and parasitical, almost on a level with vermin. The homeless are also usually perceived as weak, abandoned and sickly, thus marking them as an easy target for small-minded, cowardly perpetrators and thrill seekers.

They are also thought of as unwanted and cut off from family connections, and they are frequently looked down upon with either disgust or apathy by law enforcement

personnel and even protective agencies.

In addition, the Darwinian survival-of-the-fittest mentality that permeates our society has established a mindset which encourages abuse and violence toward the weak, disadvantaged and the unprotected.

Statistics taken from 98 U.S. cities in 34 states show that while 89 of the assaults were non-lethal, 123 resulted in the murder of homeless individuals. The age of the victims ranged from a 74-year-old man to a four-month-old infant.

Many of the incidents of violence against the homeless are so brutal and callous, it makes one shudder to think that they are symptoms of a deep abscess festering in the heart of our nation. For the society that reduces millions of its citizens to homelessness — while setting the stage for violent elements which maim and kill with no compassion or human consideration — shares a large part of the guilt for the crime.

### Homelessness and Poverty in Black America

African-Americans have traditionally suffered homelessness and poverty in higher numbers than the general White population. According to the 21st edition of the Urban League's Report on The State of Black America, more than 40 percent of Black households in metropolitan areas are considered high-poverty neighborhoods. One out of three Blacks live in poverty, a rate three times that of Whites. And although Black Americans make up approximately 15 percent of the total population, they constitute 40 percent of those living in poverty.

Dora June Jackson, the Urban League's Urban Issues Group director said, "African-Americans still endure significant problems which are caused and exacerbated by poverty, lack of culturally competent healthcare providers, ineffective healthcare and racial discrimination."

The Bureau of Labor Statistics indicates the unemployment rate of Blacks is double the rate of Whites. And although Blacks make up roughly 15 percent of the U.S. population, they comprise a staggering 40 percent of America's homeless population. And according to U.S. Census Bureau figures, Detroit is the poorest city in America with a third of Detroiters living below the

poverty line. Also 47.8 percent of Detroit's children live below federal guidelines for poverty.

### Women and Children

Since the 1980s, the number of homeless women and children has dramatically increased throughout the urban areas of America. Women and children face a unique set of problems because of their vulnerability and the tendency of unscrupulous men to prey upon them.

Those who are addicted to drugs and alcohol or suffer from mental illnesses are also targeted to be turned out as prostitutes and manipulated into a variety of street hustles and scams by predatory males.

Children, our most precious and valuable resource, are sexually abused, brutal-

ized and neglected on the mean streets of our cities while many Americans view them from afar or through the windshields of shiny automobiles on daily commutes to sterile jobs, then soon forget that they exist. Or, as Robert C. Coates poignantly describes in his book:

### A Street is not a Home

"Suffering. Terrified. Walking all day beside the giants. Humiliated. Hungry and dirty. In real danger. Being abused. Skipping developmental stages. Losing the power to learn, losing pieces of the power to be human. Future voters. Future wards of society. The nation's hope: its very meaning being degraded, soiled beyond belief and, perhaps, beyond recognition by negligent leaders filled with rhetoric and ten-

derness for flags, but not for children being taken apart piece by piece, alive."

Apathy and neglect have traditionally been the bedfellows of poverty and homelessness.

Citizens often glance at the plight of those who are shelterless, jobless and hungry and perceive it as someone else's shortcoming or problem. But, as indicated by the statistics, regardless of how insulated people consider themselves, no one is immune to the sweeping vicissitudes of poverty. This is, perhaps, as true today as it has been in any period of this country's history.

Steven Malik Shelton is a journalist and human rights advocate who writes for the Michigan Chronicle and Front Page.

## Jackson

(Continued from Page 1)

fundraiser Antoin "Tony" Rezko.

Ali Ata, the former executive director of the Illinois Finance Authority, testified that Blagojevich spoke encouragingly about getting him a job in his administration after he personally brought him a \$25,000 campaign contribution. Rezko, who raised more than \$1 million for Blagojevich's campaign fund, was convicted of shaking down companies seeking state business for campaign contributions.



**\$100<sup>00</sup>**

**Tuition Discount**

Cosmetology • Hair Design • Manicuring • Aesthetics

**Now With Two Locations**

1911 Stella Lake St.  
Las Vegas

2225 Civic Center Dr.  
N.Las Vegas

**FINANCIAL AID AVAILABLE\***

**Night and Day Classes**

*Come in for a campus tour and receive a FREE service*

**702-636-8686**

*\*For those who qualify*