

CBC: Stimulus package timely, bold Obama win

By Hazel Trice Edney
Special to Sentinel-Voice
WASHINGTON (NNPA)

— Now that President Barack Obama has succeeded his first major political hurdle from the White House, the passage of the \$787 billion economic stimulus bill, the success is being met with strong applause from the Congressional Black Caucus.

“This package will help businesses create jobs and families afford their bills while laying a foundation for future economic growth in key areas like healthcare, clean energy, education and a 21st century infrastructure,” says U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., chair of the Congressional Black Caucus.

The extensive bill passed the Senate Friday night 60-38 only hours after passing the House 246-183 with clear party lines.

Though Obama appeared to try hard to win a bipartisan agreement, the result is clearly a defeat for past Republican policies.

“The disastrous economic policies of the previous administration — including irresponsible tax cuts for the wealthy and the war in Iraq and deregulation of the financial industry have left our nation in shambles,” Lee said in a statement.

“Millions of people are living in poverty, without health insurance, and unemployment is through the roof... Our communities of color have been especially hard hit — and it’s only getting worse,” she said, calling the bill “a positive step in the right direction for our coun-

try.” The president signed the bill in Denver on Tuesday.

House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn describes the new plan as “bold action that President Obama called for. It will create and save 3.5 million jobs, cut taxes for 95 percent of American workers and strategically transform our economy for years to come.”

But, the mission is daunting, he concedes.

“Our economy is shedding 20,000 jobs a day. Just last month nearly 600,000 jobs were slashed, marking the deepest cut in payrolls in 34 years. The unemployment rate in January reached 7.6 percent, the highest level in more than 16 years. Of the top 20 highest months of job loss in America’s history, five occurred in the last seven months. It’s time to turn those statistics around,” he said in a statement.

Among the primary focuses of Black legislators has been the Black unemployment rate, which is 12.9 percent and more than 14 percent for Black males.

Though Lee applauds the bill, she still questions whether it will be enough when President Obama has predicted possible double digit unemployment for all of America before it’s all over.

“Given the magnitude of the economic crisis, this bill could and should be much bigger — at least \$1 trillion,” Lee said.

“Additionally, it should have been enacted a year ago when my colleagues in the Progressive Caucus and I first called for a new stimu-

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— Barbara Lee

lus package to jumpstart our economy. But the previous administration refused to take action, letting our economy collapse before choosing to bailout their



friends in the banking industry.”

She not only applauded Obama, but also House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Clyburn for their part in

Lawsuit: University hid sex crimes

ALLENTOWN, Pa. (AP) — A state university in the Poconos was sued recently by five former students and one current student who claim they were sexually assaulted or propositioned by a top university official with a national reputation in higher-education circles.

The lawsuit said East Stroudsburg University and its president covered up the assaults and harassment by Isaac Sanders, the school’s vice president for advancement, in an attempt to shield him from liability.

Sanders, who had been the university’s chief fundraiser since 2000, left East Stroudsburg in October following an investigation by the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education. The state Human Relations Commission has also launched a probe.

The civil suit, filed in

Monroe County Court, names as defendants East Stroudsburg, Sanders, university president Robert Dillman, the board of trustees and others. A university spokesman had no immediate comment. A spokesman for the State System of Higher Education declined to comment. An attorney for Sanders did not immediately return a phone message.

The lawsuit said Sanders, who is Black, targeted emotionally fragile young Black men from broken homes who looked to Sanders as a father figure or mentor. He dangled scholarships and campus jobs, then either pressured students for sex or physically attacked them to commit sexual assaults, said the suit, which also alleged Sanders misappropriated university funds.

Sanders’ “inappropriate and unlawful sexual conduct

crafting the recovery package. Clyburn says the bill was carefully crafted to include relief in African-American communities.

“The last time our country faced an economic crisis of this magnitude, the government’s response in large measure omitted the communities that I represent and for which the NAACP advocates,” he says.

“As we crafted the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, we targeted our efforts on traditionally underserved communities and rural communities using census tracks and poverty

levels to direct the greatest need. I believe we met the challenge put forward by the NAACP for equity and fairness, and I expect this recovery package to deliver the hand-up that Americans so desperately need.”

Lee promises to remain vigilant in legislation to repair the damage.

“Although the American dream has turned into a nightmare for many during this economic crisis,” she concludes, “Many people have been living the nightmare for years. So we must continue to fight on their behalf, and we will.”

toward plaintiffs and other young African-American ESU students was blatant, open and notorious,” the suit said.

Dillman knew about Sanders’ conduct but obstructed an internal investigation and ignored complaints from Sanders’ own staff, the suit said.

“It’s a very, very bad situation that’s been going on there for several years with the knowledge of a lot of people,” said Albert R. Murray Jr., an attorney for the plaintiffs. “These were boys who were preyed upon because of the fact they were from single-parent households, they were looking for help, they were looking for mentorship. That’s one of the things that hurts the most,” he said Friday.

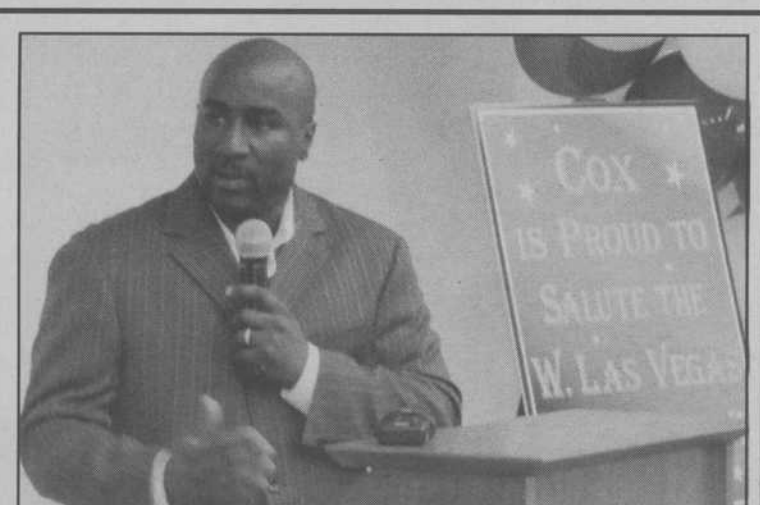
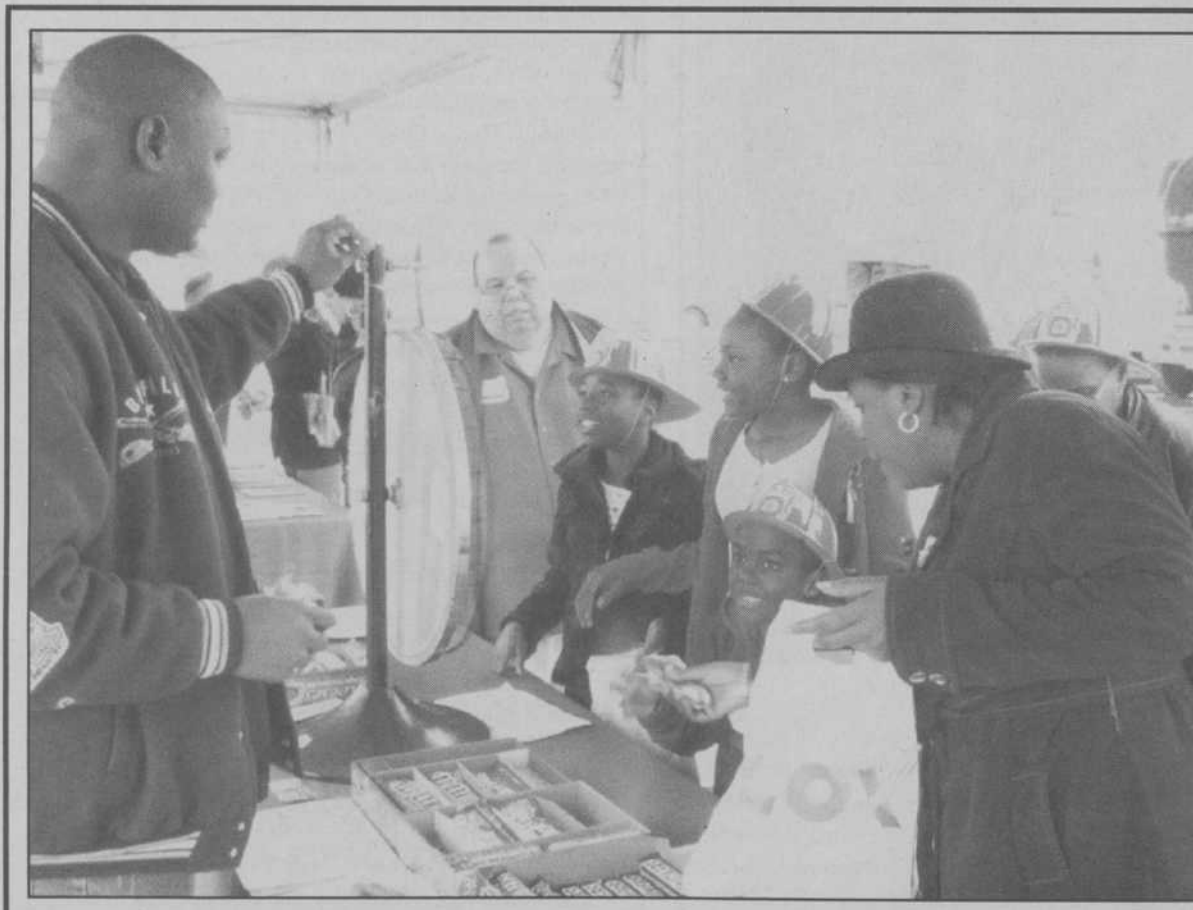
The Monroe County district attorney has launched a criminal probe into the alle-

gations, according to the *Pocono Record* newspaper.

Last year, the university paid a \$140,000 settlement to a former employee who raised questions about financial discrepancies in the university’s fundraising department, the paper reported.

Sanders has held executive positions at Stillman College, Tuskegee University and Alabama State University and has conducted seminars around the country on higher education administration and fundraising.

In addition to his job at the university, Sanders also served as executive director of the ESU Foundation, a private, nonprofit group that raised funds for East Stroudsburg. The suit said Sanders “repeatedly offered money to plaintiffs, in the form of foundation scholarships” and offers to pay the students’ expenses.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

COX IN THE COMMUNITY

Las Vegas City Councilman Ricki Barlow, who represents Ward 5, says congratulatory words during a welcome ceremony for Cox Communications-Las Vegas. The cable company opened its new Southern Nevada headquarters on Monday. Part of the festivities included a neighborhood celebration featuring games, prizes, refreshments and entertainment. The 187,000-square-foot building will house 900 employees. It is located on 1700 Vegas Drive, at the northwest corner of Vegas Drive and Martin Luther King Boulevard in the Enterprise Park zone. (Adjacent) Youth take part in the festivities. Police, fire and paramedic staff were also on hand.