

# LAS VEGAS Sentinel Voice

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"THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE"

## Castro eyes more dialogue

HAVANA (AP) — A "very healthy, very energetic" Fidel Castro asked visiting Congressional Black Caucus members what Cuba could do to help President Barack Obama improve bilateral relations during his first meeting with U.S. officials since falling ill in 2006.

Caucus leader Rep. Barbara Lee, a Democrat from California, said the ailing former Cuban president talked for nearly two hours with her and two other delegation members on Tuesday in a meeting seen as signaling Cuba's willingness to discuss better relations with the United States.

"We believe it is time to open dialogue and discussion with Cuba," Lee told a news conference in Washington upon the caucus members' return. "Cubans do want dialogue. They do want talks. They do want normal relations."

Lee said the group would present its findings to Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a fellow Democrat from California, and White House and State Department officials.

California Democratic Rep. Laura Richardson, who also met Fidel with Illinois Democratic Rep. Bobby Rush, said Castro "looked



Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif., front, reacts during a news conference in Havana on Tuesday.

directly into our eyes" and asked how Cuba could help Obama in his efforts to change the course of U.S. foreign policy.

Richardson said she had the impression that 82-year-old Fidel wants to see changes in U.S.-Cuba relations in his lifetime.

Lee said she found Castro "very healthy, very energetic, very clear thinking."

The surprise encounter came a day after the full delegation of six representatives spent more than four hours talking privately with Cuban President Raul Castro, his first encounter with U.S. of-

ficials since formally replacing his brother as head of state nearly 14 months ago.

And it comes as Washington discusses whether to warm up long-chilly relations with Cuba. Obama has ordered an assessment of U.S. policy toward the communist nation and some members of Congress are pushing to lift a ban on Americans visiting the island.

Fidel Castro has not been seen in public since undergoing emergency intestinal surgery in July 2006 and it was his first meeting in several years with American offi-

cial. Although he gave up his presidential duties after becoming ill, he remains an influential force in Cuba.

In a column posted on a government website late Tuesday night, Castro wrote about his meeting with the three U.S. representatives, saying Cuban leaders "weren't aggressors, nor did we threaten the United States."

"Cuba did not have any alternative but to take the initiative," he said in explaining why he sought the lawmakers' advice on what his country could do to help  
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## Gun crimes now American crisis

By Zenitha Prince  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

WASHINGTON (NNPA) — It is a staple on the six o'clock news: A man shot. A girl raped. A boy stabbed. A woman abused.

Violence is everywhere. But increasingly, experts said, the faces of these chilling tales—both victims and perpetrators, usually from minority communities—belong to the young.

"Every two days we lose a classroom full of children from gun violence," said U.S. Rep. Edolphus Towns.

Yet, the powers-that-be seem not to care, said Kenneth Barnes Sr., founder and director of Reaching Out to Others Together (R.O.O.T.), a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group.

"Gun violence is at epidemic proportions," he said. "It's the leading cause of death among African-American males in the United States of America, today. Yet, it's not even on the radar screen, even for our president."

Barnes had his own ordeal with violence in 2001 when his eldest son, a storeowner, was gunned down by a 17-  
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## Robinson in finals for mayoralty

Incumbent council members to face off in June 2 election

### Sentinel-Voice

Running on a campaign of fiscal responsibility North Las Vegas Councilman William Robinson survived the primary on Tuesday in his bid to become the next mayor.

Currently serving as mayor pro tem of the city, Robinson is trying to make city history as the first Black mayor.

Having edged out fellow Councilwoman Stephanie Smith, Robinson qualified for the general election in June, in which he will go



Marsha Kimble-Simms

against another councilwoman, Shari Buck, who was the top vote getter with 31 percent.

Smith took third, with 21 percent of votes. Ned Tho-



William Robinson

mas, a former North Las Vegas planning commissioner, got 16 percent. Street preacher John 3:16 Cook got 2 percent.

Another candidate run-

ning for office in North Las Vegas, Marsha Kimble-Simms, could also make history, as well, as the first Black judge.

Kimble-Simms will meet incumbent Municipal Court Judge Sean Hoeffgen who advanced to the general election.

Hoeffgen and Kimble-Simms both received about 36 percent of the primary votes.

The third candidate in the race, Christopher Cannon, received 28 percent of the vote.



Sentinel-Voice photo by Ramon Savoy

### THE PRINCIPAL

Actress Wendy Raquel Robinson was in Las Vegas on Tuesday to be a celebrity guest judge for Bill Bellamy's *Who's Got Jokes?* The stand-up comedy competition, now in its fourth season, was being filmed live at the Luxor. Robinson starred in "The Steve Harvey Show."