

Voice of the NAACP

by Ellis H. Casson

"VOICES FROM THE SENATE"

On Tuesday, May 1, 1973, I spent a full day in Salem watching and observing our elected officials "do their thing".

I found it very interesting, sad and somewhat disappointing.

What took me to Salem on this day? Two things, both of which are important to us as a race of people. First: The full Senate was to act upon Senate Bill 475 sponsored by Senator Keith Burns

and others. S.B. 475: Authorizes (cancellation or suspension of) Oregon Liquor Control Commission to refuse to issue, cancel or suspend liquor licenses when applicant or licensee refuses services and facilities on account of race, color, sex, creed or national origin, or engages in certain unlawful discriminatory employment practices. Prohibits commission from refusing to issue, canceling or suspending liquor license of applicant or licensee subject to designated provisions for enforcement of civil rights un-



less specified complaint and appeal procedure is complied with.

President Boe called upon Keith Burns to state his case and we were on our way. Then Senator Fred Heard from Klamath Falls got up and I knew we were in trouble. He started his remarks with the usual "Don't get me wrong about what I have for I was endorsed by the NAACP", trying to give the idea that "some of my best friends are ...", then he went on to "do it to us". He ended his Human Rights speech by moving to refer this bill back to the committee on Alcohol and Drugs, chaired by Senator Bill Stevenson of Portland.

Then Senator Ted Hallock of Portland, in his forceful way, spoke against the motion by stating what has been happening to Blacks, women, and other minorities in these so-called private clubs. He didn't get any Amens from his co-workers but he got a "Right On" from me.

Then Senator Tony Meeker of Amity joined the thinking of his co-worker Senator Heard (both come from Sun-Down law areas) and spoke in favor of the motion. After hearing comments by the Senator later in the day, I realized the well thinking, concerns people in his district are in trouble in the area of Race Relations.

Then Senator John Burns of Portland, whose name appears on the bill, voted against us. After the vote, Senator Burns wanted to explain his vote (I understand he's good at that). He said the contents of the bill is a "tricky issue" and calls for more study (this bill has

been around almost since the opening of the session. How much time do they need down there to do what's right and decent?)

So we lost - for the moment; but we'll be back again. Like it's been said, "You can kill the dreamer, but you can't kill the dream."

The second reason was to speak in behalf of S.B. 555 which was before the Senate Labor Committee, chaired by Senator Groener.

S.B. 555: Appropriates \$250,000 to Bureau of Labor for purpose of enforcing certain provisions concerning employment discrimination on basis of sex. Requires bureau to plan and initiate an affirmative action program to insure that employment by state or its agencies is equally available and equally compensated as to both sexes.

I wish I had time to share with you comments made by certain members of that Committee. I ask when will "Human Rights" for some quit being a joke. Why must we keep bragging and pleading for "rights" and opportunities that belong to all of us regardless of race, color or sex.

All I can say to both members of the House and Senate that "Human Rights", "Equal Opportunity", "Affirmative Action", whatever you call it, is here to stay.

I say to us as Black people - we better get concerned and show an interest as to what's happening to and for us in Salem.

This is where it's happening, not on Williams and Union Avenues. And the so-called "Blacks" who are supposed to be speaking for us better find their way to Salem. I was the only Black to speak to S.B. 475 and S.B. 555 regardless of the fact, it's been said, the NAACP doesn't do anything.

Well, if we're not, "Who is?"

Caucus studies cuts

The Congressional Black Caucus has announced that its Annual Dinner will take place in September. This event has proved a great success in the past and the Caucus appreciates the support of its many friends.

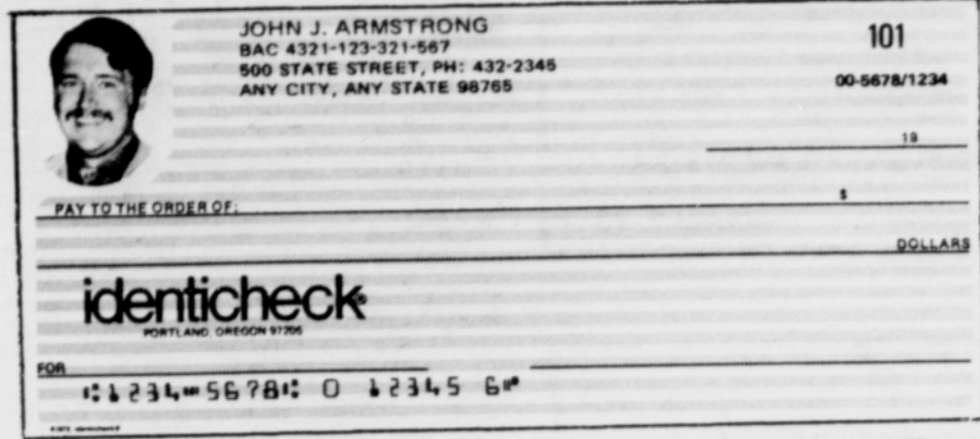
The Congressional Black Caucus Dinner has traditionally been held in June. However, this year the members of the Caucus have decided to change the date for two primary reasons. One reason is that June is usually one of the busiest months on Capitol Hill. The other reason centers on the particular challenges facing the Caucus this year.

Proposed Administration budget cuts have seriously threatened programs that promote the welfare of Black people. Some members of the Caucus will be continuing hearings in their districts on the effects of the proposed cuts. On April 11th a federal judge ordered the Nixon Administration to cease dismantling the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), an agency specifically created and funded by Congress. Despite this order, it appears that OEO director Howard Phillips will continue his demolition of the agency. The Caucus is determined that this agency not be killed by executive action.

The members of the Caucus feel that legislative matters must take priority in the coming months. The House of Representatives has yet to act on important legislation in the areas of education, health insurance, minimum wages, manpower and housing and community development. Legislation authorizing the major education and manpower programs already in existence is due to expire June 30th.

In order to devote the complete energies of the members to the tasks mentioned, the Caucus believes that the Annual Dinner would best be held later in the year.

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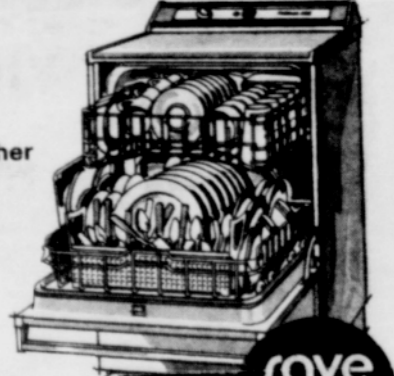
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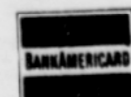
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