

EDITORIAL/OPINION

U.S. Senate Should Reject Rehnquist's Nomination as Chief Justice

The U.S. Senate should reject President Reagan's nominee William H. Rehnquist for Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Rehnquist, who was appointed to the nation's high court by former president Richard M. Nixon in 1970, is totally unfit to serve as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Throughout his tenure as a jurist on the high court, Rehnquist has repeatedly demonstrated that he is "an extremist" with a long record of opposition to individual rights.

Mr. Rehnquist's views are narrowly guided by two basic propositions: conflicts between state and federal authority should be resolved in favor of the states; conflicts between the individual and the government should be resolved against the individual.

Rehnquist has written several opinions that overturned broad remedial orders issued by lower courts to correct problems, such as mistreatment of civilians by the police, abuse of the institutionalized retarded and overcrowding in the federal prisons.

Equally important, Rehnquist has dissented from most of the court's decisions affirming various remedies for racial discrimination, from affirmative action to busing. Rehnquist was the lone dissenter in the 1983 case that upheld the federal government's policy denying a federal tax deduction for Bob Jones University, a school that adhered to racially discriminatory policies.

Justice Rehnquist's insensitivity to the aspirations of minorities is evident. During the 1960's, Rehnquist harassed and intimidated Hispanic and African-American voters in Phoenix, Arizona when he was a poll-watcher. As a Supreme Court law clerk, Rehnquist wrote a memo saying that the 1896 decision in Plessy vs. Ferguson, which upheld separate but equal facilities for blacks and whites, was correct.

A person who is a judicial activist for a reactionary viewpoint, an enemy of civil rights, and views African-Americans and other minorities as chattel at the mercy of white males, shouldn't sit on this nation's highest court, let alone be nominated as Chief Justice.



Along the Color Line

by Dr. Manning Marable

Dr. Manning Marable is professor of sociology and political science at Purdue University. "Along the Color Line" appears in over 140 newspapers internationally.

"The Great White Hope for 1988"

Every four years about this time, a bizarre political spectacle begins to unfold. A strange white tribe, speaking gibberish few can comprehend, roams the countryside seemingly without reason. Tribal members make promises to strangers which they knowingly cannot keep. They distribute strange, poster-like images of their highly touted political demigods. They collect millions of dollars from corporate heads and affluent special interest groups. But cultural anthropologists have no reason to study this primitive and cult-like phenomenon. It's only the beginnings of the Republicans' search for a Presidential candidate for 1988.

As always, the culmination of this process will produce a candidate with three essential characteristics which are required by the tribe's ancient traditions: a white male who is ideologically conservative. In short, a "Great White Hope" for the American political system is required, a politician tough enough to keep Blacks, Hispanics, the unemployed and women in their collective subordinate places while perpetuating the grand illusion of political equality and democracy. An anti-Communist demagogue who is insane enough to bring us all to the very brink of world war, but astute enough to espouse the rhetoric of peace.

This year's Great White Hope rituals include a large number of would-be candidates. Last month's precinct delegate races in Michigan were projected as an important early showdown between the leading GOP candidates—Vice President George Bush, New York Congressman Jack Kemp, and television evangelist Pat Robertson. Instead of clarifying matters, all three men were wounded in the political fray. Bush, the acknowledged frontrunner, was forced to spend over \$1 million to maintain the lead. Reaganite conservatives have never forgiven him for running against the old patriarch of their cult back in 1980, and are desperately looking for alternatives. But Kemp polled poorly in Michigan, despite lobbying in the state for over one year. Although Robertson did better than many expected, no one seriously believed that his rigid evangelical base is broad enough to capture the presidential nomination. Moreover, Reverend Robertson disturbed many political experts recently by revealing some extremist views on

both the law and gender relations to the Washington Post's editorial board.

Robertson insisted that as president, he would only enforce those Supreme Court decisions in which he was in agreement. Robertson asserted that Biblical teachings require all "wives to be submissive to their husbands in all aspects of life." He also claimed that "the concept of separation of church and state" does not really appear in the U.S. Constitution, but "is an essential part of the Soviet Constitution." Such rhetoric, if implemented by any president, would lead to legal anarchy, at best. GOP officials, including many ultrarightists, shudder privately at the prospect of Robertson at the head of their 1988 ticket.

If Bush falters in 1987, as many expect, look for Kansas Senator Robert Dole to pick up most of his followers. Dole has some obvious strengths. As Senate majority leader, he has media visibility; he has directed the Reagan administration's reactionary agenda through Congress. Dole also acquired some national campaign experience back in 1976 as the GOP Vice Presidential candidate. Some Democrats are more fearful of Dole's potential candidacy than that of any other Republican, because of his reputation as a "compassionate conservative." But this reputation is more illusion than reality. Last month, for example, Dole wanted to support a liberal amendment which would have given \$62 million in unexpended Pentagon money to senior citizens' programs. But when the roll call showed a narrow vote, Dole shelved his principles by voting no. The necessity to be viewed as heartless in the search for a Great White Hope was more important than the material needs of the elderly.

But if all of the above run into difficulties, other Republicans are waiting hungrily in the wings. In late August, Reaganites in the western states met in Oregon to plot the presidential campaign of conservative Republican Senator Paul Laxalt of Nevada. Other lesser Reagan epitomes with presidential ambitions include Delaware Governor Pete du Pont, former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, former Senator Howard Baker of Tennessee, and Colorado Senator William Armstrong. All desperately want the opportunity to become America's next Great White Hope.



Healthwatch

by Steven Bailey, N.D.

"Grass Roots"

The Oregon Health Care Coalition is undertaking a task which is long overdue in Oregon. This "grass roots" coalition of private individuals and numerous public interest groups is attempting to end insurance discrimination in Oregon. While we often pride ourselves as having a progressive state, Oregon is in the extreme minority as still allowing private insurance companies the right to refuse reimbursement to licensed providers of services covered in their policies. In other words while you have an insurance policy that covers laboratory test "x", your company may require you to pay out-of-pocket for this test if you have it performed by a state licensed provider whose profession is not covered in the language of the policy.

The fuel for this coalition has come out of years of discriminatory practice in Oregon. Consumers have found time and again that while they thought they were fully covered for their choice of care, they had to pay out-of-pocket when seeing a chosen specialist in a given area such as optometry, chiropractic and naturopathic medicine, podiatry, psychotherapy, hypnosis, etc. Now that the Oregon Health Care Coalition has emerged, there is a constructive avenue of redress available to all Oregonians. This avenue is the coalition's support and endorsement of Legislative Counsel (LC) draft 556, which is a recently drafted Bill for an Act which would revise the Insurance Code of Oregon to eliminate discrimination.

The initial part of this act reads:

Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon: SECTION 1. Section 2 of this Act is added to and made a part of the Insurance Code.

SECTION 2. Whenever any individual or group health insurance policy provides for payment or reimbursement for any service that is within the lawful

scope of service of any health practitioner licensed under state law:

(1) The insured under the policy shall be free to select and shall have direct access to the appropriate health practitioner licensed under _____ without supervision or referral by any other health practitioner...

(2) The insured under the policy shall be entitled to have payment or reimbursement made to the insured or on the insured's behalf for the services performed. Such payment or reimbursement shall be in accordance with the benefits provided in the policy and shall be the same regardless of which licensed health practitioner rendered the service.

As you can see, this act does not require any additional coverage by the insurance company, but only allows the consumer unobstructed choice of which licensed provider they choose for their personal health care. With no new mandated services being required in this act, there should be no additional costs to the providers or the consumers and should, as in the case of free market systems, actually decrease the total costs of health care.

While this may seem like a logical and appropriate change in Oregon law, there has been much opposition to similar changes in the past. As one of fewer than 10 states that still permits this form of consumer discrimination, the power of self-serving lobbying interests in Salem becomes all too clear. Now is the time to make a change. Contact the coalition at P.O. Box 10943, Portland, Oregon 97210 for a copy of the act, information and time of the next meeting. All are welcome to these open meetings. Find out how your legislative candidates feel on this issue. While many races in Oregon have opposing candidates who both support this legislation, you may find a clear choice between candidates in your individual districts.

Letters to the Editor

BUF And Others Are Community's Greatest Assets

It is unfortunate that individuals such as Mr. Paul McCoy, who call for "unity and cooperation", "for the cheap shots in the press and back-stabbing to stop", would use these very tactics to promote their own perspective and agenda. The behavior should solicit questions from thoughtful persons. What was the real objective of Paul McCoy's vicious attack on three prominent Black activists, and on one of the most important and valuable Black organizations in the Portland community, the Black United Front? We are giving him the benefit of the doubt and assuming that this violent and wrongful attack on BUF, Ron Herndon, Reverend John Jackson and Herb Cawthorne, in a letter to the editor two weeks ago was merely "an emotional reaction" to the fact that the Black Leadership Conference did not endorse his mother, Gladys McCoy, in her current bid for the Chair of the Multnomah County Commission seat. In his youthful zeal to defend his mother, he made petty and vindictive attacks on every prominent individual and organization which he understood to be affiliated with the Black Leadership Conference.

The Black Leadership Conference is far more diverse than BUF, or the Urban League, or the Albina Ministerial Alliance are singularly. It is a combination of these forces and many others such as the Northeast Business Boosters and State Representative Margaret Carter's Office. It is a cross-section of community activists, business people, social scientists, non-profit and government employees; people who are concerned about the "challenge of activism and community mobilization," and more importantly about the lack of a unified approach on issues affecting the Black community.

Ironically, the Black Leadership Conference did exactly what young McCoy charges community organizations to do; there were no stabs at his mother in the press, no attempt to drag out the dirty laundry and rehash it at a time that would be inappropriate—there was a simple reporting of the fact that the Leadership Conference as a body could not agree upon an endorsement: a painful position for the Conference to find itself in but one which had integrity and was representative of the body that debated the issue among themselves for two and a half hours before making a decision. Paul McCoy and any other individuals who believe that this decision was merely an extension of some long-standing vendetta against Gladys McCoy for past policy disagreements could have learned something about community process and consensus building by observing the thoughtful and balanced debate the body went through before ever taking a vote on the McCoy endorsement issue.

It is far too simple-minded to assume that the Black Leadership Conference is merely another name for BUF. Ron Herndon doesn't need another vehicle

through which to express his valuable political views; he already has one. Herb Cawthorne doesn't need an organization such as the Leadership Conference as a mouthpiece; he already has a platform from which to promote his unique vision for the community. And Reverend Jackson can promote his ideas regarding community activism in front of his congregation every Sunday.

The history of the Black Leadership Conference is simple and straight-forward. It was organized to provide a forum where the diverse approaches and strategies for solving the problems of the Black community and its representation could be debated, and a unified agenda could be developed. Some seventy-five people representing a variety of interests, organizations, and political persuasions within the community hammered out position papers this past winter on issues such as economic development, youth, education, housing, health and welfare, and crime. These papers were in-turn used in interviews with the gubernatorial candidates to provide a unified agenda to these candidates of what the Black community's concerns and priorities were for the next four years. Dozens of concerned community members and activists were invited to participate in this process.

It is obvious to most that no single organization speaks for the entire Black community. We commend those community organizations such as BUF, and those Black leaders such as Ron Herndon, John Jackson, and Herb Cawthorne, who have dared to be part of something bigger than their own agendas. We are proud to have the benefit of their unique experience and foresight in support of our efforts. They already have demonstrated their commitment to the notion of a unified Black political base by daring to subjugate their valuable personal perspectives and objectives to the will of a more representative body. Each deserves a great deal of praise from all who profess to be interested in the development of the community. The find of petty mud-slinging and disrespect represented by Mr. McCoy's response to one action of the Leadership Conference is an unfortunate example of why we often make very slow progress on the political front.

Our challenge to young Paul McCoy, Calvin Henry, and all others who like to loosely throw around the rhetoric about "unity and cooperation," is next time we disagree on some issue, let's not make small-minded attempts at destroying the credibility of others in the interest of trying to make ourselves look better. Instead, let us move forward, keeping our eyes open for the next opportunity that might allow us to work together cooperatively for the betterment of our community.

Black Leadership Conference

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