

EDITORIAL

The 4th Congressional District of Illinois represented by Cong. Luis Guitierrez...

the 12th Congressional District of New York represented by Cong. Nydia Velazquez... and the 13th Congressional District of New Jersey represented by Cong. Robert Menendez... all have four things in common and it's not their shape, size, location or the late Spanish artist Salvador Dali. Can you guess what it is?

They're majority minority (Latino) districts. They are Democratic. They are the by-product of the 1992 reapportionment plans resulting from the 1965 Voting Rights Act (VRA). There is a common misconception that the Voting Rights Act was created for blacks only, but it is the VRA that makes all the above possible. Let's look at some of these misconceptions. Have the rights of whites been violated by the creation of these districts? No. *Shaw v. Reno* is the only court case that we are aware of where the court offers a remedy without a violation. White voters are not denied their share of

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Voting Rights Disease Is Spreading
Crazy Shaped Theory Hit Latino Allies

political power. However, even with enforcement of the VRA, Black (and other minorities) continue to be barred from a fair share of political power nationwide. For example, there are slightly over 8,000 Black elected officials. We are 12% of the population, and there are 500,000 public office holders. Thus, 12% of 500,000 is roughly 60,000 political offices that should rightfully be held by Blacks. Eight thousand (8,000) is a mere 1.6 percent of the offices that should be held by Blacks if elected on a fair basis.

Does the *Shaw* decision advocate the appropriate remedy? No,

advocating a color-blind remedy in a race-conscious society (i.e. a demonstrated history of whites not voting for racial minorities) is divisive. Our opponents argue "any race-conscious" remedy is unlawful and racist and therefore must be avoided. They argue for laws that are "neutral". But to argue "neutrality" is to argue for the status quo, which is racist.

What is the appropriate remedy? The remedies used for African Americans and Latinos have been the conservative remedies of affirmative action and the Voting Rights Act. For Western Europe, Japan, Russia, Israel and Kuwait we use

reparations or repairing the damage done. For people of color, we use the conservative remedy of affirmative action to offset years of negative action. With regard to voting rights, we have not asked for reparations, which would be compensation for the damage done for the years we couldn't vote, but had to pay taxes, serve, bleed and die for our country. The Voting Rights Act was simply designed to gain political equity now, not compensate for past denial.

Racial gerrymandering or equal opportunity? The VRA does not advocate "racial gerrymandering" or "political apartheid." What is says is that race may be a factor -- along with income, party affiliation, geographic compactness, etc. -- in drawing district boundaries, so that those who have been excluded historically from an Equal Opportunity of being elected to office will have a fair chance. Historically, incumbency has also been a major factor. Court rulings that do not use the language of "equal opportunity," but instead use language like "racial gerrymandering" to interpret and affirm the voting rights of minorities, actually jeopardize the Voting Rights Act.

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it works smoothly, but we have got to do something. The legislature doesn't want to lose control of your money. Anytime they need money, it is too easy for them to raise your taxes. Measure 20 would put you in control of your money and not the state. I'm going to vote YES on Measure 20.

Janette Kirkland
Glendale, Oregon

perhaps they should have listened to the 39 million Americans who are uncovered or to those who cannot change jobs because of a pre-existing condition or those who have been dropped by their insurance company because they become ill or to those who have lost homes and savings because of catastrophic illnesses.

The reality is that Congress was too mean-spirited and too politicized even to work on stop-gap legislation which would provide health coverage for every American child and every pregnant woman. The reality is that for people of color, whose communities face health crises which more closely parallel those of Third World countries, the death of health care reform may mean additional hardships and unnecessary deaths.

Write to your congressperson and your senator and let them know you favor health care reform. Have the members of your church, of your block club, of your fraternity or sorority, of your labor union or social club let Congress know that we expect better from them and American deserves more.

Letter To The Editor

In the September 21st issue of *The Portland Observer*, Fred D. Miller who opposes the 2% Equal Tax Measure, stated that it would increase Oregonians federal income taxes by \$900 million in 1995.

He failed to report the reason for it, which is, Oregonians will no longer

be paying state income and property taxes, so cannot deduct a percentage of it off their federal taxes.

Also, he stated the measure would cost Oregon a revenue loss of \$490 million dollars in 1995.

According to calculations of Oregon's share of national trade figures (meaning \$503 billion dollars was exchanged in Oregon last year) a two percent tax would

raise more than \$10 billion dollars. Time Magazine's May, 1994 edition quoted Oregon's share of the national trade figure at \$503 billion in 1993.

Las of all, is the complaint that it is a new and untired system. At some time, every system is untried until it goes into effect. I fully expect there to be some changes and corrections before

ests of their patients."

Some of these dollars were used to put advertising on television which scared the American people about health reform. The result was that the American people, who had supported health care reform, began to question if they would have to give up too much themselves in order that we might all be covered. The result was that Americans began to believe that they would lose their right to choose their own physicians, although the proposed legislation did not do that. They began to believe that the quality of medical care would be undermined, although there is no reason to believe that to be the case.

Some of these dollars were given directly to members of Congress for their campaigns this fall. Millions of dollars were given to political action committees and one must question whether there could ever be no strings attached to such gifts.

The power that Wellstone was referring to is related to the money and implies, I believe, the enormous power the lobbyists in the United

States today. With the thousands of lobbyists in Washington today representing business, labor, trade and professional associations, special interest groups and others, it is a miracle that any legislation at all gets passed. Combined with the fact that too few of us - to few ordinary citizens - exercise our privilege to vote and then to hold our government representative accountable, the power in Washington is not accountable to the American people.

The politics Wellstone referred to are the missteps made by the Clinton administration in putting together viable legislation and the obstructionist actions of the Republicans. Instead of being "holed up" for months secretly putting together a comprehensive plan, maybe the administration should have involved both Democrats and Republicans and religious groups committed to health care reform in the initial writing and selling of the legislation. Instead of Republicans using health care reform as a way of showing their ability to stop the Clinton administration while denying any need for reform,

become a millionaire through her own hard work. Of her own story, Madame Walker said, "I am a woman who came from the cotton fields of the South. From there I was promoted to the wash tub. From there I was promoted to the cook kitchen. And from there I promoted myself into the business of manufacturing hair goods and preparations. I have built my own factory on my own ground."

In a biography written for young people by Madame Walker's great-granddaughter, A'Leia Perry Bundles, we learn the history of this remarkable woman. We learn how her incredible business acumen and knowledge of what black women really wanted in hair care products combined to make her fortune. We learn of her philosophy and her commitment to her people. Indeed, although she was known for her lavish life style, including her brownstone house in Harlem and her estate in upstate New York, she was also a woman who deeply believed in helping others, particularly other black women. She funded anti-lynching campaigns as well as black educa-

sin the U.S. because she was a woman and she was black.

Bessie Coleman was born in 1892 and raised by a single mother in east Texas. She attended a one room schoolhouse until 1915, when she moved to Chicago. She was almost 30 when she found her real calling in life. Even though every American pilot she approached about teaching her to fly turned her down, she would not allow her dream to die. She just went to Europe.

Following her training in France, Bessie Coleman began to fly in air shows in the U.S. in 1922. Called "Queen Bess" by the black newspapers, she was a dashing figure in her French-designed riding breeches, boots and tunic patterned after those worn by the Canadian air force. She was killed in an airplane accident in 1926, and her name remain unknown to many today.

Madame C.J. Walker was one of the most astonishing women of this country. Born Sarah Breedlove to former slaves in rural Louisiana, orphaned by age 7, married at 14, widowed by age 20, she was the first American woman, black or white, to

Civil Rights Journal

Money And Meanness Over Matter

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

The death knell has been sounded for health care reform during this session of Congress. The Senate majority leader has pronounced it dead and the Republican leadership has danced over the grave. It's a sad day for the United States.

It means that money and meanness has triumphed over substantive reform of a health care system which is on the critical list. It means the health of many Americans remains in jeopardy. In the words of Sen. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, "What killed health care? I think the unholy mix of money, power and politics."

By money, Wellstone was referring to the enormous sums of monies which have been spent by insurance companies, by the medical lobbyists and by others who felt that they would be adversely impacted by changes in health care. Says Rep. Jim McDermott, "Insurance companies took premium dollars and went out and advertised against the best inter-

Celebrating Black History In September

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

There are some who say that we should celebrate black history all year long, not just during February.

There are some who celebrate Christmas in July so that they can enjoy the spirit of that season twice in a year. Using those frames of reference, this column is a celebration of the history made by two African American women, both during this century.

Bessie Coleman shared something in common with Amelia Earhart. They both were pilots who set aviation firsts and they both began their training in 1921. While many Americans know of the accomplishments of Amelia Earhart, few have heard the name Bessie Coleman.

Bessie Coleman was the first African American woman to fly and she was the first African American, male or female, to earn a license from the French air association, Federation Aeronautique Internationale. A manicurist by profession, she had received her flight training in France since she was refused flying lesson

perspectives

Winners And Losers In The Education Game

Who said, "If you think of yourself as a victim and for long enough time, you will become one?" I did! After I visited my hometown of St. Louis, Mo and began to ask that inevitable question, "what ever happened to old so-and-so?" This was after a thirty-year absence.

Unfortunately, and with only a few notable exceptions, faith in my predictive powers was reinforced to no end. Being raised by a mother who was very astute in her evaluations of the human state--and was trained as a teacher--I found myself well-equipped early on to forecast success or failure in life among my schoolmates. In other words, I got a good dose of both experienced-based theory, and the empiricism of a 'people-person'.

This piece is not about developing any elaborate paradigms for forecasting a successful education experience for students but, rather, to set some of the facts that from day one my observation has been that a child's self-image is a key determinant. First, "I am somebody!" Those of us who got this message from parents or teachers, or both, succeeded whether "all else was equal or not."

Recently, I was privileged to read a quote from an interview with Wilma Mankiller, the principal chief of the Cherokee Nation (hearing her in person is an even greater privilege). Asked whether her recitations of the "wrenching experiences" of native American students were derived of her own experience, she replied, "absolutely. I was like so many Native children... I had a very tough time throughout my school years, teased about my name, about my accent. I searched for role models in the history books but found very few. For Years I Had No Self-Esteem."

In organizing this new series on education, I was particularly motivated to include this quote because of the number calls and faxes I got in respect to articles written the last six weeks. Especially those

that dealt with "Urban Planning", the cities and the African genesis of our 'modern urban panorama'. There was a universal outcry on the part of these parents, "Why-on-why aren't our children getting this in school?"

This comes from both African American and White parents (Teachers, who call, ask for text citations or for some

provisional documentation while I prepare my own publications for spring). Many ask whatever

happened to the Baseline Es-

says, that glorious project "destined to place the Portland Public School system on the national map in respect to "Multicultural Education"?... I've despaired and have started going to my children's classrooms but can't find anything like the materials and lesson plans I saw you and others working on...I couldn't even find your book, *Black Inventors of America...* These racists are incredible!"

Yes, they are and on top of that, they now can plead poverty. All of that motivating material I described as appearing in the October issue of *Scientific American* magazine -- The African genesis of not only the urban infrastructure of broad boulevards, city parks, gardens, zoos, museums and the sitting of public building, and the development of such culture as The "Empire" style of furniture and of dress -- all of that I submitted under my contract with the school district, and much more. What happened?

Wilma Mankiller, the Cherokee Nation Chief, makes no bones about her situation. "There will not be an adequate response until we run the system ourselves". Black children in Portland, who have little self-image, no history and few role models, bicycle past my window, delivering drugs.

Those a little older blow each other away with little thought. All, while scarcely a block away, the Black, Education Center (K to 5) turns out black kids who know who they are and who they will be -- and who are smart.

Continued next week

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