

EDITORIAL

BY ADRIAN G. WILSON, D.D.S.
PRESIDENT, DOCTORS COUNCIL

Despite the inadequacy of his plan, a year ago President Clinton was nonetheless highlighting the nation's health-care crisis. The Republican Contract we face today, on the other hand, does nothing to address the health crisis facing the working poor and uninsured across America. It blatantly ignores the vital health care needs of the urban poor.

DC already has the worst health profile in the U.S. It leads the nation in 8 of 10 "causes of death" categories, including: cancer, 256 vs. 200 per 100,000; Liver disease, 33 vs. 11 per 100,000; TB infection 24 vs. 10 per 100,000; syphilis, 125.9 vs. 17.5 per 100,000; HIV, 130.2 vs. 18.2 per 100,000 (at least 20% of the correctional population is HIV positive)--and 25% of DC residents are substance addicted.

Without voting representation and the power to protect ourselves, a Republican-led Congress and a docile Democratic minority are putting the squeeze on DC to cut costs and services, and to privatize health services. The result? Severely reduced health care services at the city hospital, neighborhood health clinics, DC's publicly run mental health hospital and correctional medical facilities.

NATIONAL RAINBOW COALITION

Health Crisis Deepens Nation's Capital Omen For The Country

At the same time, a plan is afoot to create a private entity to receive a huge DC subsidy to provide health care services to the uninsured. Health care contractors already reap millions in DC contracts to provide managed care services at \$212 per month per adult--one of the highest rates in the country.

The newest rounds of budget cuts will virtually close the health care door to over 100,000 uninsured residents and undocumented immigrants. Local politicians facing a budget crisis--yes, because of some mismanagement, but mostly due to past congressionally created debts--are being forced to target even the unborn in their budget slashing frenzy. They are eliminating 1st and 2nd trimester prenatal care to AFDC recipients, plainly punishing the unborn for being conceived by poor

parents. DC's infant mortality rate is already the highest in the nation. When guns and drugs are more accessible than preventive or prenatal care, we indeed are in the middle of a health care crisis.

Slashing and burning public health care budgets simply ripens the fruit for the private health-industrial complex, which is anxious to pick up the public share of \$950 billion in national health care expenditures. Yet private sector HMO's and hospitals refuse uninsured patients. Only money will get the most vulnerable among us through the door of a health clinic or hospital when public hospitals are privatized or clinics are closed. Whose money? Taxpayer dollars currently used to subsidize uncompensated care at public hospitals, in correctional medical facilities, mental health and neighborhood clinics

will be diverted to the private sector, which will profit from the patients they have traditionally and currently rejected. In DC, up to \$1 billion currently spent on public health care will be diverted to the private sector.

The potential savings by the public sector will be transformed into profits for the insurance industry and private providers. Public savings can be used to enhance health services for those in need, while profits enhance only the rich. District contracts for medical care have been shown to cost over 5 times more than care provided by the public sector. Market share, not health care, is the focal point of the budget cuts and reorganization advocated by the private sector.

When we have privatized the urban public health systems, who will: Assure that comprehensive care is provided? Assure that clinics are accessible to the public and that residents are not turned away? Assure that new services will be added when the need arises? Assure community input in decision-making on city-wide health policy (e.t., HIV, TB)? And who will assure quality care for the homeless and incarcerated?

This JaxFax is designed to alert Rainbow supporters to look for this pattern in their state and local communities. If you would like to form a local and/or national network to research, resist and fight this pattern of neglect and waste, please contact Dr. Adrian G. Wilson at 202-408-3373.

perspectives

The Education Scene, IV

It would seem that there are many African American newcomers to the Portland scene -- I can tell by the notes and calls from those who follow my weekly column and article. And, most recently, but last weeks questions regarding my brief allusion to an "Adams High school disaster". This was an effort to "concertize" by reference community fears concerning a new experimental child of the District ("Northeast Community School"; elementary).

To date, most of us in the community have been privy only to a few nebulous projections as to pedagogical structure -- and to only a few tenuous statements on policy, curriculum, or expected outcomes. My point was that where "eternal vigilance" is construed as the price of liberty, that attitude is even more applicable to an education establishment which is known (documented) to be prone to experimentation or minority children (ever hear of the mind-control drug, "Ritalin" -- often prescribed for school children determined to have behavioral or learning problems (determined by who? There are no resident psychiatrists at each school, not that anyone would wish such a situation).

In any case, "John Adams High School" was created in the mid-1970's amid a lot of public relations hoopla to the effect that it would answer the prayers of teachers and parents, and students who might have learning situations describable as difficult. Portland's introduction to the "gruesome twosome", as some parents later called them, was through a long Time Magazine article that described a new approach to learning (hands off), the innovation of two very young Anglo Saxons" with new, bright, shiny doctorates in the education fraternity.

From upper middleclass families themselves, the Times's article pulled out all the stops when describing the "educational miracles" the duo had wrought in a Boston, Mas-

sachusetts school district -- but with the children of their economic peer group, kids, who for the most part could survive a hands off, do-your-own-thing kind of scholastic environment. They had parents who could afford to hire tutors to repair a lot of the damage, and who had a head start just from being "into-the-manor-born"; coming up in a wealthy family is a 'cognitive incubator' of 'supper table input, plus social exposures and associations.

Not so with the lower economic sector of mainly blacks and some poor whites served by the experimental John Adams school. Not only had I known many of the parents involved -- and their children

since birth -- but as a teacher at Portland State University, I was getting much of the pitiful "Adams product" (not all) in my classroom. In answer to the question, "was there any attempt by Albina residents to head off this debacle?" the answer is yes. I remember going over to visit the two pioneers in 'hands off pedagogy' at their staging area in the basement of Jefferson High School. It was a frightening encounter and my fears were borne out in the university classroom.

I was handed in reports written in box-car-size letters on paper ruled in wide elementary school spacing -- and if not stopped the Adam's graduates would show up for class ten or fifteen minutes late just as they did at the high school study habits were poor or nihil in many cases and discipline was difficult to enforce. I was able to bring some around, but many were helped by an on campus college preparatory program.

This very morning I talked to a 35 year-old veteran of the "Adams" wars. He said he was still feeling the effects of four years of non-discipline at a very critical age of his development -- as were his peers with whom he was still in contact: Select your own courses, study if you feel like it, respect no one, teacher or student, gamble or light up a joint in the nearby park during school hours. Perfect training for the gang and drug culture. Let us have no more experiments, please!



By
Professor
McKinley
Burt

Civil Rights Journal

Washington, Fiscal Crisis And Justice

BY BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

I was born in the old Freedman's Hospital, part of Howard University, in Washington, D.C. You may meet many people who have moved to Washington, but you meet few who were born there.

It was not until I was in college that District residents were able to vote for President of the United States or mayor of their city. It was truly taxation without representation. Even today D. C. residents do not have a voting representative in the House of Representatives, nor a representative in the Senate. Even today Washington must go to Congress for approval and appropriation of its budget.

Now my hometown is facing a crisis which not only threatens its fiscal viability, but also threatens its dream of real home rule. Shortly after his November election, Mayor Marion Barry found that the budget crisis that he knew existed was much

deeper than anyone had admitted. He found that the District of Columbia is essentially insolvent and owing something like \$900 million. It was any mayor's and any city's worst nightmare.

In hearings on Capitol Hill since then, Mayor Barry has pointed to the debt passed on to the city by Congress at the time it received limited home rule, to the facts that the city can tax only 43% of its real estate due to the presence of the Federal government and cannot tax commuters, to the reality that Washington must perform certain government functions usually done by a state and to the administration of previous Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelley. It is important not to forget these factors, as well as Mayor Barry's own previous twelve years as Mayor.

The city's enormous debt is due to all of these factors, and, it seems, to a longstanding inability to curb its spending and make significant budget cuts. In February Washington's credit rating was dropped, further adding to its fiscal crisis.

It appears that Washington will soon be in fiscal receivership, probably with some kind of emergency financial control board placed in charge of its financial well-being. Already city non-public safety employees have had two furloughed days off without pay, with others planned throughout the year. Already hundreds of job and service cuts are planned.

Meanwhile, some Washington residents, led by a coalition of clergypersons and community leaders, are questioning why the city is not also looking at increasing its income. In the months since the fiscal crisis came to the forefront it has been reported that some quasi-government and even non-government agencies do not pay taxes to the District. For instance, the Federal National Mortgage Association (known as Fannie Mae) would pay some \$300 million in taxes if it were taxable. Or, for example, the hundreds of lobbying groups in Washington to lobby Congress are not taxed by the District.

Washington is not the first city

to find itself bankrupt. During the 1970's New York had a financial control board and Cleveland had similar fiscal woes. Other cities have been on the brink of bankruptcy as well.

Washington, D. C. is a city of public monuments and cherry blossoms. But it is also a city with the poorest of the poor, who have overwhelming health, education and social service needs. Washington is also an African American majority population, a fact which has not gone unnoticed during home rule discussions in the past nor in the fiscal questions of the present.

It is likely that Washington's fiscal crisis now puts its quest for real home rule on hold. For the sake of the whole nation, let's hope that this fiscal crisis is soon resolved. For the sake of the children of Washington, the poor and the elderly, let's hope this fiscal crisis is fairly resolved. For the sake of all of the residents of Washington, let's hope that this fiscal crisis doesn't end their hope for real home rule totally.

Along The Color Line

Racism On College Campuses

BY DR. MANNING MARABLE

Throughout the US, there has been an upsurge of racism in recent years, characterized by recent attacks against affirmative action and the efforts by the Republican-controlled Congress to reverse programs and policies favoring minorities.

But one of the sharpest examples of racial prejudice within society today exists at universities and colleges.

Racial attitudes on American college campuses began to worsen, approximately in the mid-1980s. Across the US there were increasing incidents of what seemed to be racially-motivated, random violence, harassment and intimidation of black, Latino, and Asian American students by whites. For example, in the spring of 1986, the University of Wisconsin at Madison's chapter of Kappa Sigma fraternity sponsored a party featuring what was termed a "Harlem Room." Fraternity members wore blackface makeup and Afro-styled wigs. Fried chicken and watermelon were served, and ugly graffiti was painted on the walls.

The following year, also at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, the Phi Gamma Delta Fraternity held a "Fiji island" party which was highlighted by a caricature of a black man with a bone through his nose. In the

fall semester, 1988, the university's Zeta Beta Tau fraternity featured a "mock slave auction," in which members donned Afro-style wigs and blackface makeup. These events at the University of Wisconsin sparked widespread condemnation on the campus as well as throughout the country.

Researchers in race relations began to suspect that these incidents represented a broader, national trend which university officials and law enforcement authorities had largely ignored. In 1987, the Baltimore-based National Institute Against Prejudice and Violence began to collect documented cases of racial harassment and violence against minorities on college campuses. Between the fall semester, 1987 through the fall semester, 1990, about three hundred campuses reported racial incidents.

Just a short list of such incidents are both sickening and shocking. For example, at the University of Illinois at Chicago, in May 1990, a penis severed from a medical school cadaver was hung outside the door of an African-American female residence hall counselor. At the University of Texas at Austin, in April 1990, African-American students protested after one all-white fraternity painted a racist epithet on the trunk of an automobile, and another fraternity printed a racist image on its t-shirts. At Teikyo Loretto Heights University in Denver, one dozen Japanese students were harassed, pelted with

eggs, and several racists had even urinated in front of them in public. At Brown University, students received hundreds of misspelled computer-printed flyers urging them to "keep white supremacy (sic) alive." At the State University of New York at Oswego in October 1989, racist and anti-Semitic epithets were written in the campus library, the student union building, one dormitory and on the walls of an underground tunnel.

White students who felt aggressively hostile to blacks and other minorities soon began to demand the termination of African-American Studies courses and a multicultural curriculum which emphasized diversity and tolerance. They argued that whites had become the "new minorities" on college campuses, and insisted that "reverse discrimination" had relegated them to a second-class status. At Temple University in Philadelphia, a group of

militant whites established the "White Student Union," which claimed for a time 150 members. At the University of Florida in Gainesville, a group of angry whites established a White Student Union, which called for the abolition of minority scholarship and internship programs. The White Student Union quickly established contacts with Tony Bastanzio, a former Imperial Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan, to help establish similar groups at campuses across the state.

Today, it is estimated that one

out of four minority students becomes a victim of racist harassment, intimidation and/or violence. Wherever I travel across this country, hundreds of African-American students give accounts of instances of racist notes passed under their dormitory doors, or of white college professors who crack racist jokes in the middle of their lectures.

But in general, patterns of campus racism are not primarily the blatant acts of bigots, or racially motivated random violence. Far more important are the intricate patterns of discrimination which marginalize blacks, Latinos and other students of color in campus life. Student government associations often do not adequately fund programs and events promoting cultural diversity. Deans' offices may give emphasis to minority student recruitment, but often do little to ensure their retention.

The only way to begin to reverse the trend toward racial discrimination is to foster an environment of pluralism and diversity within educational institutions. This includes changes within the curriculum and required courses, reflecting multiculturalism and the full richness of diversity within our society. It means supporting scholarship programs to increase access to college for blacks and Latinos, and increasing the numbers of minority faculty and administrators within white universities. Without vigorous efforts, the prevailing racist stereotypes and prejudices which are being permit-

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