

Black Teen Suicide Study Alarming, Yet Misleading

African-American Leadership Network Says Youth Are Not Killing Themselves Because Their Families Are Doing Better Financially

Members of the African-American Leadership Network Project 21 reject a recent center for Disease Control and Prevention study on teen suicide that says African-American teens reared in upwardly mobile families are not able to cope with the "stressful" environment created by black prosperity.

The study shows the suicide rate of African-Americans between the ages of 10 and 19 has increased by 114% since 1980. In southern states, the rate has grown by 214%. Some scholars and the study's authors say that a consequence of rising prosperity and social integration for blacks over the last few decades has caused a loss of racial identity and a distance between families, children and the community. Members of Project 21 say the situation is not so simple.

Project 21 Director Roderick Conrad said, "Headlines on the increase in the black teen suicide rate, while troubling, are hardly 'news.' While many loud, liberal and radical voices have decried the (quote) genocide (unquote) perpetrated by mainstream society, clearly the larger problem has always been an internal cultural suicide. How can we really be shocked at [these] numbers when 'black-on-black' crime -- often an extension of drug and gang-related activity -- has been raging for years?"

"The root cause is the chaotic result predicted decades ago by Democrat Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan," states Phyllis Berry Myers, president of Black America PAC's Leadership and Training Institute. "It is a liberal bureaucratic welfare state, which has eroded the most effective tools to producing stable, nurturing environments for young black Americans -- an intact family and safe, effective educational learning systems."

Robert George, a Project 21 mem-

ber and adjunct fellow at the Washington-based Center for New Black Leadership says, "given the collapse of urban family and educational institutions, should we be surprised at the spiritual emptiness which causes our young people to make often fatal choices? Whether they passively drift into the gang-war lifestyle or defiantly turn deadly weapons on themselves, the result is the same: A lack of self-esteem turning into self-hatred turning into self-destruction. Clearly, these are not factors of race -- they are factors of culture, spirituality and morality. Unless a commitment is made to strengthening the basic family unit, reforming our urban schools and re-energizing the spirit of our communities, these awful numbers will only increase."

Project 21 has been a leading voice of the African-American community since 1992. For information contact Roderick Conrad at 202-543-1286 or Project21@natinalcenter.org, or visit Project 21's website at www.project21.org.

Workplace & Public Policies Out of Sync With Their Lives

Washington D.C.—After 27 years as one of the nation's most effective advocacy groups, the Women's Legal Defense Fund became the National Partnership for Women & Families this month. With the new name and a new agenda focused on health care and workplace issues, the organization released a national public opinion poll, **Family Matter: A National Survey of Women and Men.**

Family Matters found that, even with an improving economy, two-thirds of African Americans (63%) say that time pressures on working families are getting worse. Just 18% say time pressures are getting better. Half (48%) say that making sure their family can get quality health care has gotten harder and more than four in ten (44%) say that the health care

system is getting worse. Neither the women nor men think workplaces are nearly as flexible or fair as they should be. Three in four African Americans (75%) under age 45 expect to need family or medical leave in the next ten years. Ninety-six percent of African Americans want employers to do more to help working families, and 90% want government to do more. Conducted by Lake Sosin Snell Perry & Associates, the poll compares attitudes of Americans of different generations, and explores views by gender, race, political affiliation, and income level.

"Americans want more responsive employers and lawmakers. They want change. They expect change. And they're willing to pay for it and vote for it," National Partnership President Judith L.

Lichtman said. "That holds true for women and men; African Americans, Hispanics and whites; generation Xers and baby boomers; Republicans, Democrats and independents; people with high incomes and people in poverty; stay-at-home moms and working women. And the demand for change is only going to grow. Today's younger workers expect more."

The National Partnership announced two new initiatives: the Quality Health Care Initiative to help women get the information and basic consumer protections they need for themselves and their families; and the Family Leave Initiative to make family and medical leave available to more working families for more reasons.

Career Connections Job Fair



The Career Connections '98 Job Fair will happen on Thursday April 2 at the Memorial Coliseum.

A full house of ninety employers are expected at the fair.

The Urban League will feature their One Stop Career Center booth during this event.

Martin Luther Memorial Lutheran Church invites you

to a retirement celebration for the Rev. Dr. Rozell Gilmore on Saturday, April 4, 1998 from 5pm to 8pm at the Lutheran Community Center located at 4219 NE Martin Luther King Blvd.

For more information call 281-7036.

NAACP Supports U.S. District Court Nominee

NAACP President Kweisi Mfume urged Senate Judiciary Chairman Orrin Hatch to approve the nomination of Frederica Massiah-Jackson to the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

"Judge Frederica Massiah-Jackson has been described by civil and criminal attorneys as a patient, fair, thorough and well-presented jurist," wrote Mfume in a letter to Sen. Hatch. "the NAACP believes that Judge Massiah Jackson is eminently and unequivocally qualified to serve in this very important position and deserves our nation's full endorsement and support."

Mfume called Massiah-Jackson

"one of the finest jurists the state of Pennsylvania ever produced." The rate of reversals of her decisions have been low and during her career only 14 of 4,000 cases were reversed. She has been praised for her balanced sentencing and critics and allies alike have commented that Judge Massiah-Jackson's rulings are neither too lenient nor overbearingly tough.

"Judge Massiah-Jackson is a fair jurist who deserves to serve on the U.S. District Court and we wholeheartedly recommend her and urge the Senate Judiciary Committee to move toward confirmation expeditiously," Mfume said.

You are 2 months old.
Your lungs are this tiny.
You spend day after day around secondhand cigarette smoke. You breathe it in. You cough. You hack. You wheeze. Your lungs clog up with sticky fluid and thick mucus. You get bronchitis. Or

pneumonia. If you have asthma, it will likely get worse. All together, up to 300,000 babies end up getting sick every year. 15,000 of them could end up hospitalized. Simply from being exposed to cigarette smoke. A message from the people of Oregon.