

EDITORIAL

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CIVIL RIGHTS JOURNAL A New Kind Of Politics

By BERNICE POWELL JACKSON

So often in this nation's history we've seen the divide and conquer strategy used to keep people of color apart. As people of color, too often we have internalized the racism which has been fed to us and we believe misconceptions and stereotypes about other people of color, and sometimes, even about ourselves. In politics, the divide and conquer strategy has been used time and again to keep people of color out of elected office.

Now there is a group which is working from a new paradigm, a multiracial/multicultural coalition working together to elect progressive candidates in Los Angeles. Called Coalition LA, this grassroots group of citizens from the 10th City Council District has worked for more than a decade against such divisive California propositions as Proposition 187, the anti-immigrant legislation and Proposition 209, the anti-affirmative action law. While they lost these struggles, they found new allies to work together across racial and cultural lines and in the past five years they have focused on bringing neighborhoods together, developing common political platforms, and running their own members for city council.

This community work, based on five months of going door-to-door to talk with residents about their concerns, has resulted in a Plan of Action. Not surprisingly, they found that residents wanted jobs, better housing; a greener, more safe community, and better educational opportunities for their children. When asked to imagine the city they could create if the people were really in charge, community residents wanted to make government accountable to the residents, to create a clean and healthy environment, to get more jobs in the community, to create affordable housing citywide, to make real

changes for children and to ensure safer communities.

The 10th City Council district in Los Angeles is a diverse one, including some parts of the Crenshaw district which burned in the 1992 uprising and the fast growing Koreatown. Coalition LA believes that it is by organized participation in neighborhoods in local government that can make a difference in the lives of people and can give them incentive to become involved in politics and elections.

Clearly, one key to that empowerment of the people is to have leaders who truly represent the community and who refuse to play the divide and conquer game. California, the nation's most populous state, already has achieved a status of having no racial ethnic majority in the state, which will become a demographic reality for the rest of the nation in another generation. Thus, how people of color in California work together for political power will be instrumental to the rest of the nation.

Within the 10th district, Coalition LA has chosen to support in the upcoming April election an African American candidate new to electoral politics, and not new to the district.

Rev. Madison Shockley is a local church pastor in the 10th district and grew up in that neighborhood as well. A civil rights activist, he is on the board of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Los Angeles and is also a member of the African-American/Korean-American-Christian Alliance and the African-American/Jewish Leadership Connection. Rev. Shockley clearly understand the need to build multiracial/multicultural alliances in the 21st century.

It was the beating of Rodney King by L.A. police officers which resulted in the acquittal of the police by a Simi Valley jury which sparked the uprising in 1992. Rodney King's simple question of "Why can't we just all get

President Clinton Called On To Fight Against Police Brutality

Unprecedented Coalition Of Civil Rights Leaders unify in call for action.

A diverse group of African-American, Asian, Latino and Jewish leaders demanded that President Clinton take action against the growing national epidemic of police brutality. The group of leaders issued their appeal to Clinton at a press conference held recently at the National Press Club and convened by National Urban League President Hugh Price.

Price, citing the police killings of Amadou Diallo in New York, Tyisha Miller in Riverside, and Deon Grimmer in Pittsburgh, declared that "recurring instances of improper use of deadly force, excessive use of force, racial profiling, abuse of basic civil liberties, and routine harassment of minorities who have done little or nothing wrong, are vivid signs of a national epidemic of police brutality."

As he spoke, Price was flanked by: Jesse L. Jackson, president, Rainbow/Push Coalition; Kweisi Mfume, president & CEO, NAACP; Johnnie L. Cochran, Jr., attorney; Reverend Al Sharpton, president, The National Action Network; Wade Henderson, executive director, Leadership Conference on Civil Rights; Raul Yzaguirre, president, National Council of La Raza; Joseph Lowery, Chairman, Black Leadership Forum; Abe Foxman, president, Anti-Defamation League; Karen Narasaki, executive director, American Civil Liberties Union.

Price called on President Clinton to:

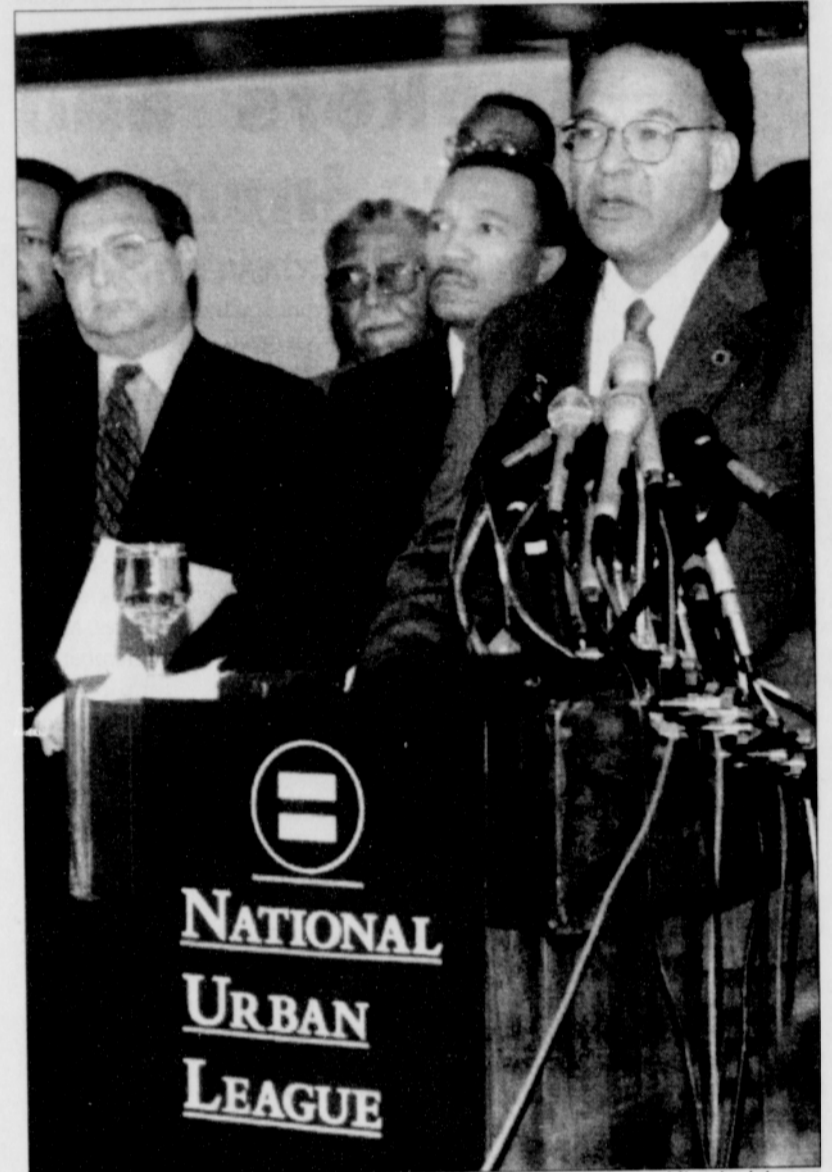
- Convene a White House summit this spring to place the national spotlight on this problem
- Dispatch a blue ribbon panel,

armed with subpoena power, to conduct public hearings to ferret out evidence of police brutality and abuse. Where there is widespread evidence of abuse, the panel should devise guidelines for state and local police departments, covering appropriate use of deadly force and prohibitions against detaining and searching people who aren't suspects in specific crimes and who've done little or nothing wrong

- Take legal action against police departments that repeatedly brutalize and abuse people by placing these departments "into receivership until they straighten out."
- Investigate practices of racial profiling

Henderson expressed hope that the group's diversity would persuade President Clinton to take action. "Today, many organizations are speaking with one voice in the hope of President Clinton moving to address this growing national crisis," said Henderson.

Just moments before the press conference, Price received a letter from Bill Clinton in which the President called the issue of police abuse and misconduct "critical." Attorney General Janet Reno agreed to meet with civil rights leaders and acknowledged the gravity of the police brutality issue in her weekly press conference. Reno stated that in the past five years, her department has criminally prosecuted more than 300 officers, resulting in more than 200 convictions, with another 100 investigations ongoing.



Washington, D.C. -- National Urban League President Hugh Price, right, flanked by civil rights leaders Kweisi Mfume, president & CEO, NAACP; Dr. Joseph Lowery, chairman, Black Leadership Forum; Abe Foxman, president, Anti-Defamation League; Joe Madison, Washington, D.C. radio talk show host; and many others, spoke in unison in a call for action against police brutality.

New Medicare Reimbursement Rates Metro Area Counties to Get Increases of More Than 10%

Thanks to changes written into law by U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), Oregon seniors will benefit from large increases in reimbursement rates for managed care under the Medicare plan. In much of the Portland metropolitan area, where more than half of all seniors are enrolled in managed care plans, increases will be more than 10% next year.

The increases come about as a result of changes suggested by Wyden to the formula, known as the AAPCC, used for determining the rates at which managed care plans are reimbursed for enrolling seniors. The changes were passed into law as part of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997. Previously, the AAPCC rewarded wasteful conduct and punished seniors in places with efficient health care systems, such as Oregon.

In many cases around the country, higher reimbursement rates have translated into additional benefits like prescription drug coverage, and free eyeglasses and hearing aids, among others.

"Oregon seniors should see results from these increases in better services and more choice from managed care providers," said Wyden. "Senator Smith and I are now fighting for further legislation to make sure that these increases continue in the years ahead, and ensure that they translate into the kind of improved benefits that seniors deserve."

Metro area counties will see particularly strong increases in 2000, with rises of 10.6% in Multnomah county, 12.4% in Clackamas County, 9.8% in Washington County, and 9.1% in Columbia County.

along?" was echoed throughout the nation. Now community activists in Los Angeles are out to prove that not only can we all get along, but we can work together to make our communities a better place for ourselves and our children. That sounds like new politics to me. That sounds like a vision for the 21st century we all need to model.

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