

OPINION

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Working Poor Face Staggering Attack

BY REP. ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS

During a difficult economic period when tens of millions of American families are struggling to make ends meet, the Congress is being asked to approve Bush Administration proposals that would cut, level-fund or radically modify many of the federal programs that are critical to tens of millions of Americans.

The President also is proposing \$1.5 trillion in additional tax cuts that would be of little benefit to anyone other than the most affluent members of our society. For example, an average black household would receive only \$25 this year under the President's plan to eliminate income taxation on stock dividends — an average Hispanic American household would gain only \$30.

Faced with these realities, reasonable people can no longer avoid asking tough questions about the President's "compassion."

Has the Bush Administration declared economic war on America's working poor?

Under the President's proposed federal budget, overall funding for the No Child Left Behind Act would be \$9 billion less than the amount that Congress authorized for 2004. Title I funding, so critical to low-



Rep. Elijah E. Cummings

income students, would still be less than one-half of what is needed (and \$6.2 billion less than the Congress authorized in 2001 for next year).

Administration proposals would cut, level-fund or radically modify many of the federal programs that are critical to tens of millions of Americans.

—Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, chair of the Congressional Black Caucus

The budget would also starve other key federal education programs by failing to maintain the funding levels that Congress approved in 2002—including the 21st Century Learning Center, Teacher Quality, Education Technology, Impact Aid, Vocational Education,

Perkins Loan, Gear-Up and Trio initiatives.

As the country attempts to struggle out of an economic recession, the President's budget would cut funding for job training and employment programs to \$713 million less than the amount that would maintain 2002 purchasing power. It also would eliminate Youth Opportunity Grants, fail to raise the maximum awards for Pell tuition grants and freeze funding for the Child Care and Development Fund.

The Bush Administration is seeking authority to shift the responsibility for Medicaid to the states and place a cap on the federal dollars that the states would receive—placing at risk the health of the more than 4.5 million African-

American children who currently participate in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Section 8 housing vouchers would be transformed into a block grant program, endangering federal housing assistance in the future. HOPE VI funding for the rehabilitation or reconstruction of severely damaged housing units would be eliminated and other key federal assistance for public housing would not keep pace with inflation.

Community Development Block Grants to low- and moderate-income communities would receive \$438 million less than would be needed to equal 2002 funding. Community Oriented Policing assistance would be slashed—and the Bush Administration would also have us eliminate the federally-funded Ed-

ward Byrne, Violence Against Women, Juvenile Justice Incentive, and Local Law Enforcement grants.

As the columnist, E.J. Dionne Jr., has observed, President Bush "... is doing all that he can to benefit the economic elites and, through stealth, to undercut government's commitment to the least fortunate."

Unfortunately, I must agree with Mr. Dionne.

The Honorable Elijah E. Cummings represents Maryland's Seventh Congressional District in the United States House of Representatives and serves as Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus in the 108th Congress.

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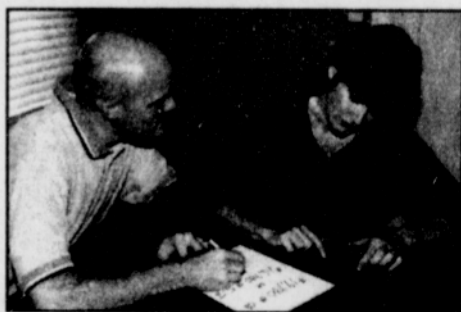
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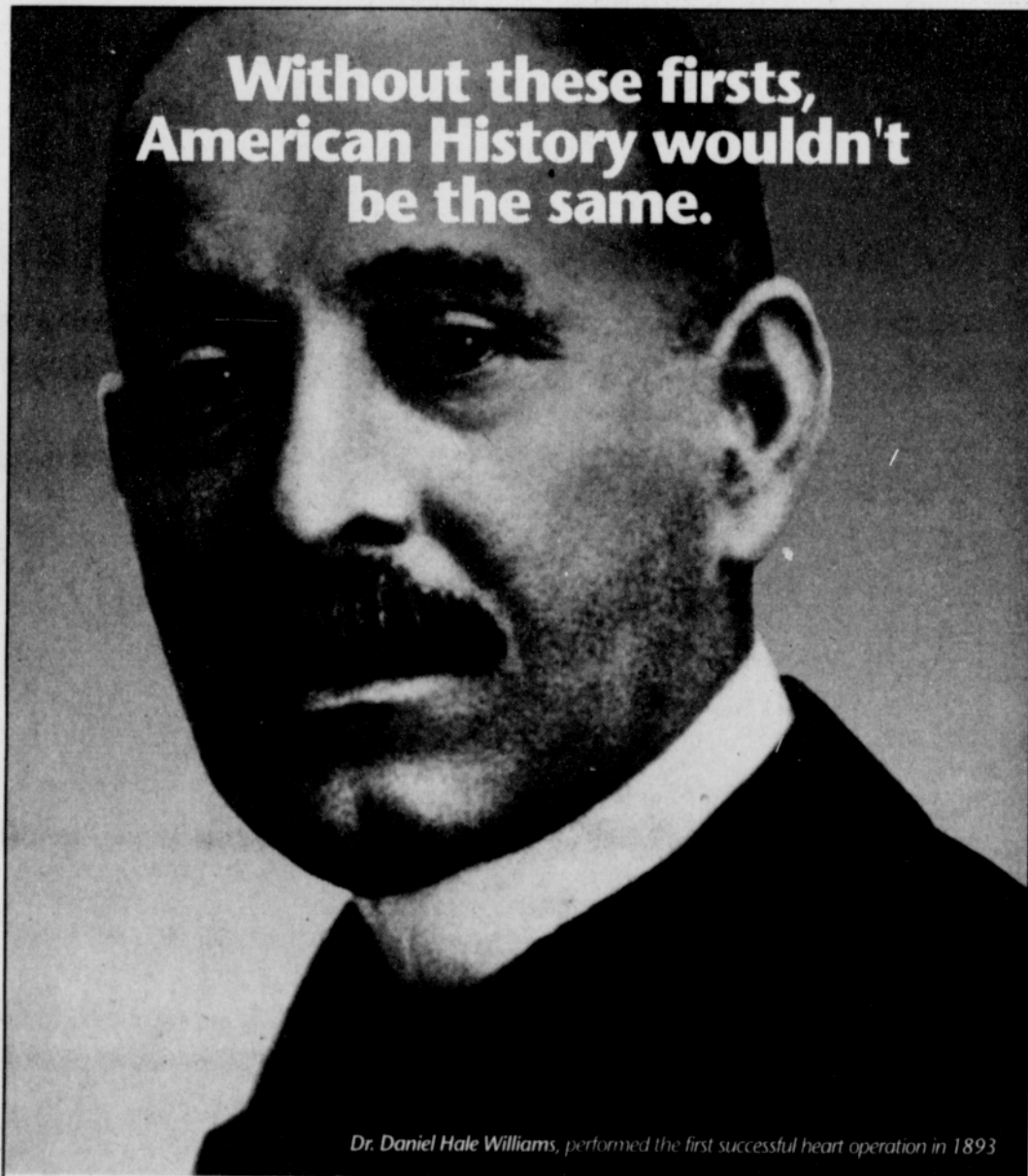


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Without these firsts, American History wouldn't be the same.



Dr. Daniel Hale Williams, performed the first successful heart operation in 1893

Madame C.J. Walker, first self-made American woman millionaire • Hyman S. Thomas, invented the potato chip, originally known as the Saratoga chip • Matthew A. Henson, first man to set foot on the North Pole • Jessie Jarue Mark, first woman to earn a doctorate in botany • Isaac Murphy, won the very first Kentucky Derby • Dr. Charles Drew, discovered the method for preserving blood plasma • Jewel LaFontant Mankarious, first woman to argue a case before the U.S. Supreme Court • Yvonne Clark, first woman to earn B.S. in chemical engineering at Harvard • Louis Armstrong, first to sing in "scatting" style • Otis Boykin, invented guided missile device • Jane Wright, pioneered several advances in the field of chemotherapy • Frederick McKinley Jones, inventor of portable X-ray machine • William A. Hinton, developed first test for syphilis • Norbert Rillieux, developed the first system for refining sugar • S. Boone, invented the first ironing board • Frank Grant, inventor of the baseball chinguard • L.D. Newman, inventor of the hairbrush • Shelby J. Davidson, created the first adding machine • William Warwick Cardozo, pioneered the study of sickle cell anemia • Kurtis Blow, first rap artist

You can't talk about Black history without talking about American history. Let's remember the African Americans who helped build America.

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