

Racial Wealth Gap Widens

(AP) — The enormous wealth gap between white families and blacks and Hispanics has grown wider.

A private analysis of government data finds that white households in the U.S. had a median net worth of greater than \$88,000 in 2002, 11 times more than Hispanics and more than

14 times that of black Americans, the Pew Hispanic Center said in a study released Monday.

African Americans were slowest to emerge from the economic downturn that started in 2000 and ended in late 2001, the report found.

Net worth accounts for the values of items such as a home and car,

checking and savings accounts, and stocks, minus debts such as mortgage, car loans and credit card bills.

Greater wealth means a greater ability to weather a job loss, emergency home repairs, illness and other unexpected costs, as well as being able to save for retirement or a child's college tuition.



Doublespeak and Common Sense in Education

By
Reg Weaver,
President,
National
Education
Association

For the last four years, we have been fed a steady diet of Orwellian doublespeak. Legislation that allowed for increased air-pollution was named the Clear Skies Act. The Healthy Forests Initiative was a windfall for the logging industry. And the Patriot Act actually curtails the rights of American citizens in the name of freedom.

But to my mind nothing was more cynical than to label as school reform the so-called No Child Left Behind Act. Why do I call it cynical? Certainly not because it called for raising standards of achievement in our public schools or required highly qualified teachers in the nation's classrooms. The 2.7 million members of the National Education Association — classroom teachers and other education professionals — have worked for those things for years. We take issue with the way the bill was crafted.

You see, with its complicated mathematical formulas for scoring tests, NCLB provides at least 37 different ways for a school to fail. So far, 27,000 public schools, including some of the nation's top blue ribbon institutions, have stumbled according to NCLB. Rather than help schools succeed, NCLB actually sets up the nation's schools to fail, and then provides punishments when they do. Why, if I didn't know better, I'd think the government was trying to destroy public education rather than improve it.

Now every parent knows that children learn at different rates, something apparently forgotten by the authors of the bill. NCLB requires all children, whether they are recent immigrants, learning disabled or homeless, to meet the same standards at the same time, as if they were machine parts produced in a factory instead of children with individual needs and abilities.

Dr. David Pastrick, superintendent of the Marion Center School District in Indiana summed the problem up recently when he said, "I believe philosophically in NCLB, but I don't believe that all children should be held to the same standard at the same time. It just flies in the face of common sense."

Common sense. Now there's something the teachers and education support professionals of the NEA can get behind. As revolutionary as it might sound in today's upside-down world, NEA believes that school reform should be about helping schools, not labeling and punishing them!

If you too believe in the power of education, and that every child deserves a great public school, I urge you to exercise your right to vote. Whether this is the most important election in our lifetimes is something that only history can decide, but we can be sure that whatever we decide this election year, it will have a lasting effect on our children's futures and our public schools.

I urge
you to
exercise
your right
to vote



Voters Have Election Doubts

Cloud cast by memories of 2000 in Florida

(AP) — Memories of Florida's contested 2000 presidential election and a growing number of pre-election lawsuits are making Americans skeptical about a voting process they once took for granted.

Six in 10 of those surveyed in an Associated Press poll say it's likely there will not be a clear winner in the presidential race by Nov. 3 — the day after the election. About half say they fear the results will be challenged in court, according to the poll conducted for the AP by Ipsos Public Affairs.

Both Democrats and Republicans worry about the possibility of an unresolved election — though Democrats express more worries. With both political parties putting thousands of lawyers on call for Election Day, a majority of voters expect the election results will be challenged in court.

A majority say they are confident the vote count in their own state will be accurate. But fewer than half of Democrats say they are "very confident" their state's vote count will be accurate, while three-fourths of Re-



Sen. John Kerry (left) gets a big presidential campaign boost from former President Bill Clinton during a rally in Philadelphia Monday. It was Clinton's first public appearance since he underwent heart by-pass surgery last month.

publicans feel that way.

In the closing days of the campaign, the national parties are keeping especially close tabs on Florida, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Iowa and New Mexico, all presidential battleground states where a challenge to a close race might be lodged Nov. 3.

More than half in the poll, 54 percent, say they think the vote count in Florida in 2000 was not fair and accurate, with Republicans overwhelmingly saying it was and Democrats overwhelmingly saying

it was not.

Elections officials in many states are taking steps to improve security at polling places but are looking for ways to heighten readiness without posting armed police.

Almost half in the poll say having armed police at the polls would make them more inclined to vote, while about one in six say it would make them less inclined. Minority voters were more likely than whites to say armed police would make them less inclined to vote.

First Black Admiral Dies

Retired Vice Adm. Samuel Lee Gravely Jr., the first black naval officer to become an admiral and to command a warship and a fleet, died Friday at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., after a stroke. He was 82.

Gravely began his 38-year Navy career as a fireman apprentice in 1942 and in the 1960s made history by becoming acting com-

manding officer of the destroyer USS Theodore E. Chandler. During the Vietnam War he commanded the destroyer USS Taussig and the guided missile frigate USS Jouett.

Subsequent assignments included command of a cruiser destroyer group, the 11th Naval District and the Third Fleet in the Pacific.



Samuel Lee Gravely Jr.

The Portland Observer Established 1970
USPS 959-680
4747 NE Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., Portland, OR 97211

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF, PUBLISHER: Charles H. Washington
EDITOR: Michael Leighton
REPORTER: Jaymee R. Cui
DISTRIBUTION MANAGER: Mark Washington
CREATIVE DIRECTOR: Paul Neufeldt
OFFICE MANAGER: Kathy Linder

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Portland Observer, PO Box 3137,
Portland, OR 97208
Periodical Postage paid in Portland, OR
Subscriptions are \$60.00 per year
503-288-0033 FAX 503-288-0015
news@portlandobserver.com
subscription@portlandobserver.com
ads@portlandobserver.com
classifieds@portlandobserver.com

The Portland Observer welcomes freelance submissions. Manuscripts and photographs should be clearly labeled and will be returned if accompanied by a self addressed envelope. All created design display ads become the sole property of the newspaper and cannot be used in other publications or personal usage without the written consent of the general manager, unless the client has purchased the composition of such ad. © 1996 THE PORTLAND OBSERVER. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION IS PROHIBITED.

The Portland Observer—Oregon's Oldest Multicultural Publication—is a member of the National Newspaper Association—Founded in 1885, and The National Advertising Representative Amalgamated Publishers, Inc, New York, NY, and The West Coast Black Publishers Association, Serving Portland and Vancouver.

DON'T BE TURNED AWAY

This year, every vote has meaning. This year, every person's vote must be counted. But before you go to the polls, make sure you know your rights.

If your right to vote is challenged in your precinct, you have the right to cast a provisional ballot, a ballot that will be held until the question of your eligibility is resolved through complete and proper channels.

Don't be turned away. Demand your right to a provisional ballot. Even better, get involved with the citizens who are monitoring this election for fairness through the voters rights protection program.

The great decisions facing our nation must be determined by the people—our seniors, young adults, men and women alike.

Vote on November 2nd.
It's your right!
It's your responsibility.

For more information on voter rights, go to www.afge.org/knowyourrights
Paid for by the American Federation of Government Employees, AFL-CIO.

