

OPINION

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Supreme Court and Civil Rights

Marc H. Morial, president and chief executive officer of the National Urban League, issued the following statement regarding the resignation of Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor:



Marc H. Morial

Throughout her tenure on the Court, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor demonstrated independence in her decision-making that often led her to cast the all-important 'swing vote' in cases of concern to us.

On occasion, Justice O'Connor sometimes saved the day by voting to uphold civil rights protections, as she did when casting the deciding vote upholding the University of Michigan's Law School affirmative action program. We thank Justice O'Connor for her service to the nation.

The selection of Justice O'Connor's successor will affect us all for the next generation and beyond.

I urge President Bush to consult with senators of both parties as well as the leadership of the nation's civil rights organizations to ensure the appointment of a qualified, distinguished and independent justice who will respect and uphold our civil rights laws.



Troubling Inequalities Plague Many Americans

Fighting for positive change

BY U.S. REP. AL GREEN

As we in Congress consider spending bills that will determine the course of this great nation over the upcoming fiscal year, I find the continuing inequalities that plague many Americans troubling:

It is unacceptable that African Americans have a 10.6 percent unemployment rate which is double the national average. It is unacceptable that African Americans experience poverty rates that are almost twice the national average. It is unacceptable that only 49 percent of African Americans own

homes compared to 69 percent nationwide, and it is unacceptable that African Americans are twice as likely to be denied a mortgage and two times more likely to become recipients of predatory loans.

The mission of the Congressional Black Caucus is to eliminate disparities facing the African American community; one of the most pressing of which is housing discrimination.

African Americans are two times more likely to be denied home loans



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— Congressman Al Green

and of those that are approved, more than 29 percent receive subprime loans.

More recently, the CBC held a hearing that uncovered data which confirmed that African American and Hispanic borrowers are several times more likely as their non-mi-

nority counterparts to become recipients of higher cost loans.

These sobering statistics don't fully convey or represent the true magnitude of our housing crisis - many in the minority community are faced with targeted practices, such as predatory lending and hous-

ing discrimination that continue to fuel disparities.

Recently, I along with Representatives Barbara Lee, Alcee Hastings and Raul Grijalva successfully offered my first piece of legislation that will provide an additional \$7.7 million dollars to combat housing discrimination. These funds will help educate consumers on the trappings of housing discrimination and provide resources to investigate such claims.

This measure received strong bipartisan support, which gives me confidence that progress can be

made through Congress to put an end to a practice that discriminates against people based on race, color, sexual orientation and ethnicity, as well as disability.

Have no doubt that I, along with my colleagues in the CBC, will continue our fight to eradicate these glaring disparities and bring about positive change.

Neither I nor the Congressional Black Caucus will rest until invidious disparities in all aspects of life are done away with, including, but not limited to, housing, employment, education, and discrimination.

Al Green represents the 9th Congressional District in Texas and is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Funding Solutions to Gun Violence

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

One of the biggest divisions in the discussion about gun violence is the question of prevention versus prosecution. The law enforcement approach to America's gun epidemic is part of the solution, but fails to acknowledge that gun-related deaths, like automobile-related

ones, could be prevented.

At the end of the day, this is a public health issue, not a criminal one and, as with other public health crises, the federal government should take a more prominent role in advocating for and funding gun violence prevention programs.

According to the Centers for

Disease Control and Prevention, there are about 50,000 gun-related deaths in the U.S. each year. Roughly half of these victims are African-American. Black males between the ages of 15-24 have the highest firearm homicide rate of any demographic group. In addition, approximately 75,000 Americans

suffer gun-related injuries annually.

Beyond these startling statistics, very little is known about gun violence. If policymakers were aware of any patterns associated with gun deaths - for example, whether or not abused children are more likely to become violent offenders or if it is more likely that a teenage boy will be shot between 4 and 6 p.m. than any other time of

day - perhaps they'd be able to develop and run effective prevention programs.

CDC has developed the National Violent Death Reporting System, a national, state-based system that monitors violent deaths. NVDRS helps identify potential risk factors, details the circumstances that

may have contributed to the incident and describes the offender and their relationship to the victim.

Judge Greg Mathis is chairman of the Rainbow PUSH-Excel Board and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.



Effective prevention programs can spare both the lives of the victim and the perpetrator.

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

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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.

Send address changes to Portland Observer, PO Box 3137, Portland, OR 97208

Subscriptions are \$60.00 per year
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