

U.S. Attorney Flap Tied to Minority Vote

Top Republicans targeted 'election fraud'

Under President Bush, the Justice Department backed laws that narrow minority voting rights and pressed U.S. attorneys to investigate voter fraud — policies that critics say have been intended to suppress Democratic votes.

Bush, his deputy chief of staff, Karl Rove, and other Republican political advisers have highlighted voting rights issues and what Rove has called the "growing problem" of election fraud by Democrats since Bush took power in the tumultuous election of 2000.

Since 2005, McClatchy Newspa-

pers has found, Bush has appointed at least three U.S. attorneys who had worked in the Justice Department's civil rights division when it was rolling back longstanding voting-rights policies aimed at protecting predominantly poor, minority voters.

Another newly installed U.S. attorney, Tim Griffin in Little Rock, Ark., was accused of participating in efforts to suppress Democratic votes in Florida during the 2004 presidential election while he was a research director for the Republican National



Karl Rove

Committee. He has denied any wrongdoing.

Taken together, critics say, the replacement of U.S. attorneys, the voter-fraud campaign and the changes in Justice Department voting rights policies suggest that the Bush administration may have been using its law enforcement powers for partisan political purposes.

The Bush administration's emphasis on voter fraud is drawing scrutiny from the Democratic Congress, which has begun investigating the firings of eight U.S. attorneys — two of whom say that their ousters may have been

prompted by the Bush administration's dissatisfaction with their investigations of alleged Democratic voter fraud.

Bush has said he's heard complaints from Republicans about some U.S. attorneys' "lack of vigorous prosecution of election fraud cases," and administration e-mails have shown that Rove and other White House officials were involved in the dismissals and in selecting a Rove aide to replace one of the U.S. attorneys. Nonetheless, Bush has refused to permit congressional investigators to question Rove and others under oath.

(Source: McClatchy Newspapers)

Tuskegee Airmen Honored

The Congressional Gold Medal will be conferred upon the Tuskegee Airmen in recognition of their heroism during World War II during a ceremony on Thursday, March 29.

Legislation awarding Congress' most distinguished civilian award was sponsored by Democrats Charles Rangel of

the House Ways and Means Committee and Carl Levin of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The Tuskegee Airmen performed heroically during World War II, serving with honor and distinction. Their unwavering commitment to protect and serve their country even in the face of

segregation and discrimination is an inspiration for future generations.

During World War II, the Tuskegee Airmen were the first African Americans to fly in the United States military, and their efforts contributed to President Truman's decision to desegregate the military in 1948.

Tillman's Family Rejects Findings

Accuses Pentagon of misleading them

(AP) -- Pat Tillman's family firmly rejected the Defense Department's findings into the former NFL star's friendly-fire death in Afghanistan, calling for congressional investigations into what they see as broad malfeasance and a coverup.

"Perhaps subpoenas are necessary to elicit candor and accuracy from the military," his family said in a statement Monday night, after hearing the results of the latest probes.

The men who shot Tillman have always claimed the April 22, 2004, incident was a terrible mistake in the fog of war, and the Army officially agreed Monday, declining to press charges.

But possible punishments still hang over several high-ranking officers who allegedly botched the investigations and key administrative tasks.

Nine Army officers, includ-



Former Arizona Cardinals football player Pat Tillman was killed by friendly fire in 2004.

ing four generals, made errors in reporting the friendly fire death to their superiors and to the Tillman family, the Pentagon said. Defense officials said one or more of those officers who provided misleading information as the military investigated could be charged with a crime.

A central issue in the case is

why the Army waited about five weeks from the time it suspected Tillman's death was friendly fire until it told his family. Several officers have testified they wanted to wait until the early investigations were complete, but regulations required the Army to notify family members if friendly fire was even suspected.

Navy Reservists Ship Out

About 60 Portland-area Navy reservists left Sunday for a month of training in Virginia and at least seven months at Kuwait Naval Base.

They'll load and unload cargo ships and maintain a large vehicle marshaling yard as a part of the Iraq War.

Maryland Apologies for Slavery

Maryland lawmakers have approved an apology for the state's role in the slave trade, expressing "profound regret" that it once "trafficked in human flesh."

Maryland follows Virginia in issuing a formal apology.

The vote in the House of Delegates on Monday makes the apology official, because a resolution doesn't require the governor's signature. The state Senate already approved it.

Co-sponsor Sen. Nathaniel Exum, a Democrat, said he was exhilarated that Maryland lawmakers decided to finally recognize the painful role the state played in slavery.

"Once we come to that recognition, maybe we will also recognize steps we need to do to get rid of the lingering effects of it on the people," Exum said.

In the 1700s, slave ships docked blocks away from the Maryland State House, and thou-

sands of enslaved men and women arrived in the town. Slavery officially ended in Maryland with the adoption of a new state constitution in 1864.

Author Alex Haley was doing research about his ancestors when he discovered that a slave ship had arrived in Annapolis in 1767 carrying one of his ancestors, Kunta Kinte.

The author's discovery led to his groundbreaking book "Roots."

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Fort Vancouver History Told

The Fort Vancouver National Historic Site has launched a new online feature celebrating the rich legacy of African Americans who have lived and served in southwest Washington.

"A Rich Legacy of African American History," unveiled by the fort's National Park Service, offers loads of information and images, including African Americans and the Hudson's Bay Company, African Americans in the U.S.

Visit the park's website at Army Era, A Slave Freed at

Fort Vancouver, Buffalo Soldiers at Vancouver Barracks, A Continuing Legacy and African American History Links

"This online web feature is a new way for visitors to connect to the park and its history, and a great way for the park to highlight some of our new and ongoing research," said chief ranger and project's manager Greg Shine. "This is not a one-time deal, it is an ongoing project in the park," he added.

Visit the park's website at www.nps.gov/fova.

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