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OPINION

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Home Equity and a Wealth Gap

equal access to

More African-Americans than ever before are graduating from college, settling into corporate jobs and, in many cases, run-

ning their own businesses.

nity, should celebrate these achievements. But we shouldn't get comfortable or grow too complacent. The gap between the haves and the have nots in this country grows each year. That divide, while visible in our own community, is most apparent when wealth is compared along racial lines.

So, though we may earn more money than previous generations, blacks still haven't amassed the personal wealth that whites have. Personal wealth, not annual salary,

white households own their homes, while less than 50 percent of black households own theirs. This figure alone can explain why the wealth gap between blacks

and whites is so vast. Home equity, the difference between the market price of a piece of real estate and the owner's mortgage, is the leading source of wealth for most Americans.

The equity a person has in their home can be leveraged to pay for a

may not work in our favor, doesn't mean we shouldn't aspire to homeownership. After all, those that came before us dreamt big dreams and fought countless battles, risking their freedom and their lives, so we could all enjoy equal access to opportunity. Around the country, organizations like Washington Mutual and Magic Johnson's Development Corporation, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Bank of America work to make the

Just because the system may not work in our favor, doesn't mean we shouldn't aspire to homeownership.

ness venture or a comfortable retirement.

For people of color, the home buying process can be intimidating, even when you have money. According to the Chicago Reporter, an independent magazine that focuses on race and poverty in the Chicago area, even middle- and upper-income blacks have a harder time securing mortgages. When they do secure mortgages, they often come with high-interest rates. In fact, African American households earning \$90,000 a year or more chose subprime mortgage lenders 40 percent of the time.

child's college education, a busi- dream of home ownership, the dream of wealth, a reality for people with low- and moderate-incomes and challenged credit histories.

It's been said time and again: economic equality has become one of the key civil rights issues of this decade. Government has its role to play. We, too, should work for our piece of the pie. By taking advantage of the resources available to us, we can close that wealth gap and open the door to so many more opportunities.

An ongoing series of questions and answers about America's natural healing profession. Dr. Billy R. Flowers

Part 8. CONSTIPATION:

The backing up of body's sewage system.

Nothing has ever really never completely eliminate everyhelped my constipation. What can Chiropractic possibly do?

A: As a natural form of healing, there is much a Chiropractic and the improved lifestyle we recommend can do to remove the immediate distress and long term health hazards of constipation. But before we begin, you should understand that constipation takes two approaches. The first is the tight, sometimes painful feeling in the lower back area. The second and more insidious type is what we call "hidden constipation." This is when we seemingly move our bowels regularly, but

thing in our colon (large intestine). This causes the colon to back up and spread toxic poisons throughout the body. This can lead to everything from sinusitis to allergies to arthritis.

Chiropractic can help to alleviate this problem by gently turning nerves back on in the colon and small intestine. It is not uncommon for a patient to have two, three or

Flowers' Chiropractic Office

2124 NE Hancock,

Portland Oregon 97212

Phone: (503) 287-5504

even four bowel movements after the first adjustments on his or her spine. A man with FBSS (failed back surgical syndrome) went home and had 12 bowel movements that night. And he claimed he wasn't even constipated! Whatever questions you might have about health and healing, you'll find that Chiropractic is often the answer. Call us for an appointment today.

sets the stage for future generations, securing their future and the progress of our people. And that with wealth begins homeownership.

Calculating net worth can be complicated but, in short, you determine the costs of assets - such as a home - and other investments and subtract from that any debts you owe. According to recently released census data, 75 percent of

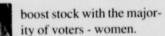
But, just because the system ship Conference.

Judge Greg Mathis is national vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leader-

Time to Grant Women Equal Rights A real legacy for the new Congress

BY MARTHA BURK

Some members of Congress are already looking ahead to 2008 and hoping to



These Congress members are going beyond nonbinding resolutions and

bills that won't get past the president's veto pen. They are talking about passing the Equal Rights Amendment.

The ERA states "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." Recently renamed the Women's Equality Amendment and introduced March 27 by its chief sponsor, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y. to a standingroom-only news conference, the ERA would grant equal constitutional rights to women -- something we have yet to achieve. A simple concept that had the blessing of both political parties until the Republicans struck it from their platform in 1980, with the Democrats following in 2004.

The ERA was first introduced in Congress in 1923, but was not passed and sent to the states for ratification until 1972. Unlike the 27th Amendment, ratified after 200 years, the Equal Rights Amendment was passed with a time limit of only seven years for approval by the states.

In that brief time, it was ratified by 35 states, but was stopped three states short by millions of corporate dollars backing Phyllis Schlafly's anti-woman storm troop-

ers. They feared unisex toilets more than they valued freedom from discrimination.

Much has changed since Congress first passed the ERA. Women have become the majority of both the population and of the electorate. Most are now in the work force full time, including nearly three quarters of mothers with children between 6 and 18. Women head one third of all households, and a whopping 61 percent of single parent families.

While much has changed, little progress has been made. On average, women still make only 76 cents to a man's dollar, working full-time and year-round. They hold 98 percent of the low paying "women's" jobs and fewer than 15 percent of the board seats in major corporations. Three-quarters of the elderly in poverty are women. And in every state except Montana, women still pay higher rates than similarly situated men for health, annuity, disability, and auto insurance.

Congress, only 16 percent female, has stifled the ERA year after year, even though it has been reintroduced in every session since time ran out on ratification.

But now with renewed energy and front-page coverage, Rep. John Conyers, D-N.Y., chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, promises fast-track hearings and reporting the amendment to the floor for a vote.

Martha Burk is a political psychologist who heads the Center for Advancement of Public Policy in Washington, D.C.



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