

OPINION

Opinion articles do not necessarily reflect or represent the views of The Portland Observer

Make Your Vote Count

Elected officials need to hear from you

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

As both the Democratic and Republican candidates for President zig-zag their way across the country, debating, making speeches and fighting for votes in the country's primary elections, one particular group has become a target: "super delegates."



democratic because the party generally supports social justice issues that affect our day to day lives.

If, as a voter, you've selected one candidate over another, and so have the rest of the voters in your state, you'd, rightly, expect them to receive the state's votes for the nomination. It will be an insult to your sensibilities to learn that, because of behind the scenes politicking, the votes instead went to the second-place finisher.

With no real front-runner for the nation's top office for either party, these "super delegates" could be the deciding factor in who receives the nominations for president this summer. The question: who should they be voting for?

Super delegates are elected officials - members of the house, senators and others - who cast votes at the party conventions. Because of

The nation's democratic process will only work if the votes of its citizens truly count. Both the 2000 and 2004 elections have proven to this country what can happen when the voices of the people are ignored.

Both the 2000 and 2004 elections have proven to this country what can happen when the voices of the people are ignored.

their positions as government leaders, they are not bound by the votes of their constituents; they are free to cast a vote for whomever they choose. If a particular candidate can win their support, they can also win the nomination, no matter what that state's voters decided in their primary elections.

For example, a candidate could come in second in a large state but, if they have enough "super delegates" on their side, they could lock up that state's nomination.

How does this affect African-Americans?

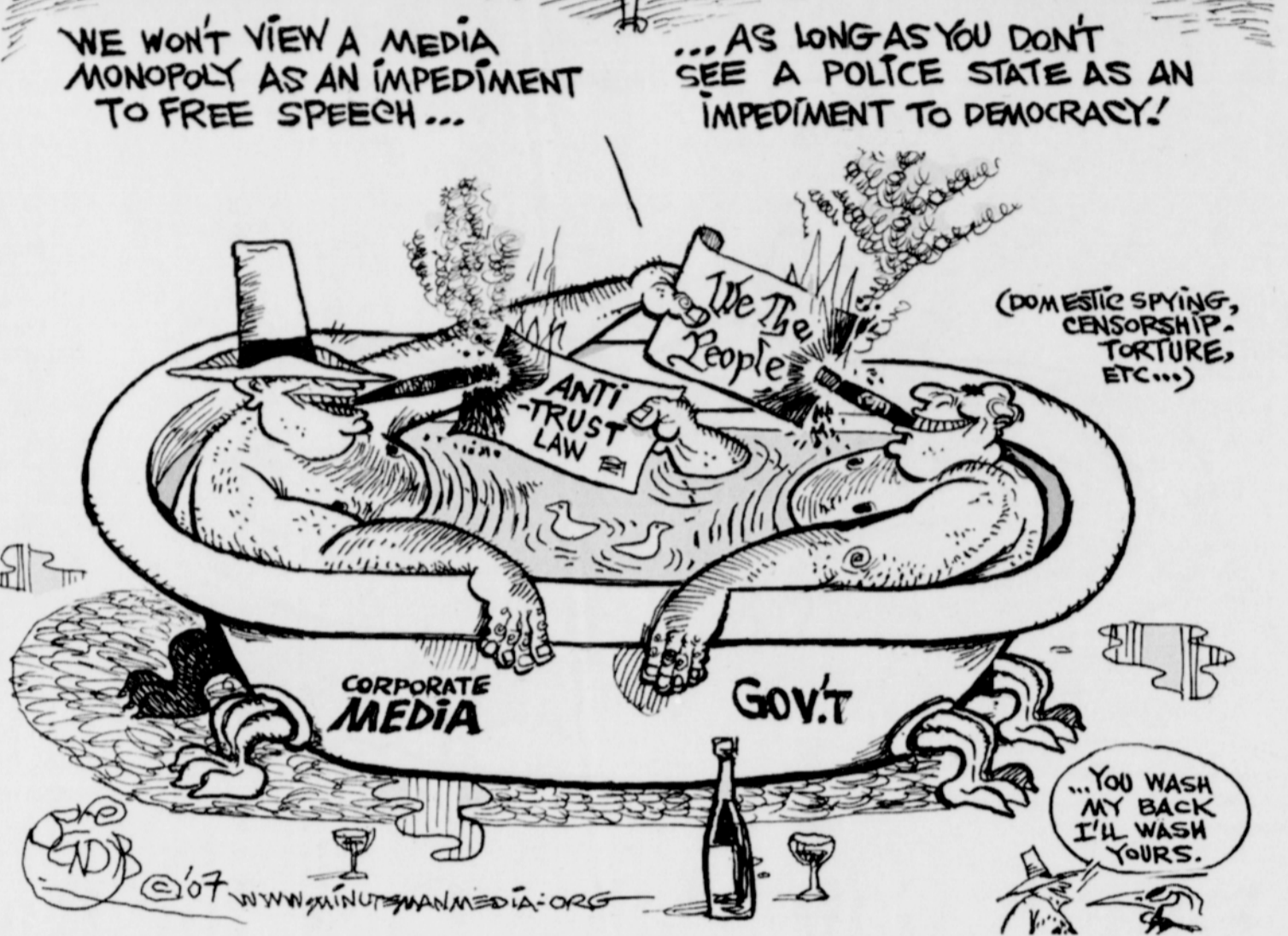
The fight for the Democratic Party nomination is especially tight and, historically, blacks have voted

How can you make sure your state's "super delegates" reflect your interests at the August Democratic National Convention? Call them. Write them a letter.

Send them an email. If you support Senator Barack Obama, call your senators and representatives and let them know you expect them to support Obama. If you support Senator Hilary Clinton, let your representative know. Inform them that their job is to reflect your interests as a constituent.

Judge Greg Mathis is national vice president of Rainbow PUSH and a national board member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

NEWS ITEM: FCC RULES IN FAVOR OF FURTHER MEDIA DEREGULATION:



Black Americans in Different Worlds

Gulf between rich and poor hurts

BY WILLIAM REED

When you hear a black person saying they don't see race, watch out! "Colorblind blacks" are usually also middle-class in terms of their income and outlooks. There is such a widening gulf between the values of middle class and poor blacks that we no longer can think of blacks as a single race.



A Pew Research Center survey found black college graduates who say that "the values of middle-class African Americans are more closely aligned with those of middle-class whites than those of lower-income blacks".

More and more there are two kinds of African Americans - the ones with education and jobs and those with neither. The problem is that the more "colorblind" blacks become the more they gravitate toward whites and away from their brethren at the bottom of the economic ladder.

A majority of black Americans surveyed blamed individual failings, not racial prejudice, for the lack of economic progress by lower-income African Americans. The report said in 1994, 60 percent of African Americans believed racial prejudice was the main thing keeping blacks from succeeding economically; and only 33 percent blamed the indi-

vidual.

This year, 53 percent said individuals were responsible for their own condition. At the same time, the survey found most blacks believed racial prejudice was still a widespread problem.

When you hear a black person saying they don't see race, watch out!

Sixty percent of African Americans surveyed said blacks often faced discrimination when they applied for jobs or looked for housing.

One result of shifting views on individual responsibility may be changes in blacks' attitudes toward immigrants. In 1986, 74 percent of blacks said they would have more economic opportunities if there were fewer immigrants; today, 48 percent feel that way. Most blacks and whites who participated in the poll agreed that immigrants tended to work harder at low-wage jobs than workers of their own groups.

On the topic of diverging values, the values of blacks at the top of the economic scale are dif-

ferent than those at the bottom. Forty-four percent of blacks polled in 1986 said they saw greater differences created by class than by race. Today, that figure has grown to 61 percent. The feeling holds for blacks with less than a high school education: 57 percent of those surveyed said middle-class blacks are more like middle-class whites than they

are like poor blacks.

Overall, the survey found that there has been a convergence of values held by blacks and whites. Blacks and whites have become more culturally integrated and, therefore, less-affluent blacks feel more estranged. The survey also found that pessimism about economic prospects has grown significantly among blacks. Fewer than half of those polled, 44 percent said they expected life to get better. Twenty years ago, 57 percent had said they thought life would improve.

Blacks up and own the economic scale do not see the kind of forward momentum they'd saw in earlier times. One reason for the pessimism may be that the condi-

tion of the black middle class appears to be more fragile than that of whites. Middle-income African American families appear to have tremendous difficulty passing on their middle-income status to their children. About 45 percent of black children who grow up in middle-class families will slip into a lower-income bracket in adulthood. About 16 percent of white children and about 45 percent of black children were unable to match their parents' success and slipped into a lower socioeconomic bracket in adulthood.

African Americans of all stripes are highly patriotic and concerned about a concentration of economic power as are whites. They share the general belief in the benefits of hard work - and are equally admiring of those who acquire wealth through hard work. And while they are far more supportive of government help for the needy than are whites, two-thirds of blacks are concerned that too many low-income people depend on government aid.

While middle-class blacks tend to be more "colorblind," the survey found blacks on all sides of the economic divide less upbeat about the state of black progress now than at any time since 1983.

William Reed is president and chief executive officer of Black Press International and publisher of the "Who's Who in Black Corporate America Register."



*In memory of Joyce Washington
May your dreams stay alive.
January 23, 1937 - March 15, 1996*

Tyranny in Law School Admissions

Requirements devastate minorities

BY MICHAEL COYNE

The requirement of the American Bar Association that law schools use the Law School Aptitude Test in admissions decisions is having a devastating effect on African-American applicants.

The ABA uniformly denies accreditation to law schools with average LSAT scores below 143, yet the average LSAT score for African Americans is 142. Since many ABA law schools employ inflexible LSAT "cut-off" scores, individuals with superior grades are rejected out of hand. Despite this, the ABA has never accredited a law school that uses an alternative test.

ABA law-school accreditation policies begun in the 1970s have begot skyrocketing tuition and fees greatly exceeding the cost of inflation in the decades that followed.

Law-school tuition has risen at a far greater rate than college tuitions. While tuition, room and board at undergraduate institutions increased by 58 percent in the 1990s, law-school tuition jumped by 88 percent.

In 2002, then-president of the ABA, William Paul, decried the alarming lack of minority representation in the legal profession.

No student can finance the cost of law school from his or her earnings at work alone. The escalation of the cost of attending law school disproportionately affects people of color and those from the less affluent segments of society.

In 2002, then-president of the ABA, William Paul, decried the alarming lack of minority representation in the legal profession. The 2000 U.S. Census put this figure at 9.7 percent.

The key to an accessible high-quality education is not more loans or state subsidies to feed

absolute power granted it by our government and has beguiled state supreme courts to accept its dictates in determining who can sit for the bar examination. This abusive and destructive accreditation tyranny has blockaded both minorities and the affordable law schools that serve them.

By design or indifference, the ABA's policies regarding law school accreditation disproportionately impact people of color and the less affluent. The Department of Justice cannot continue to tacitly condone that discrimination and that the Department of Education must terminate recognition of the ABA as the only federally approved national accreditor of law schools. The Department of Justice must act to ensure justice for all, not just the white and the wealthy.

Michael Coyne is associate dean of the Massachusetts School of Law at Andover.



Dentures Worth Smiling About!

- Professional Services
- Affordable Prices
- Payment Plans: OAC
- Over 20 years experience
- Full & Partial Dentures
- Natural Appearance
- Full Service Lab
- Accepting Oregon Health Plan

Melanie Block, L.D. DENTURIST
503-230-0207
We've Moved!
200 N.E. 20th Ave., Ste 100
Portland, OR 97232
Free parking