

OPINION

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THANKS GEORGE!

Public Jobs Will Help We need elected officials on board

BY JUDGE GREG MATHIS

We've heard a lot of news recently about the government providing billions of dollars to bail out banks and mortgage companies. Missing in all of this, however, is much needed news about a mass scale effort to support the millions of Americans who have lost their jobs and the millions more on the verge of losing theirs.



It looks like help may be on the way in the form of multi-billion dollar package that would create jobs and support Medicaid. Some elected officials are all for it; we need others to get on board. House Democrats are doing their part by introducing an economic recovery bill that will put between \$400 and \$500 billion aside for states to rebuild their infrastructure and provide low-income people with much needed healthcare.

The nation's governors also hope that the federal government would provide an additional \$20 billion to beef up ailing Medicaid programs.

The idea of creating jobs and stimulating with a program that improves the nation's infrastructure is nothing new. After World War II the public works program put Americans to work and built new bridges and roads across the country.

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Many, including myself, have called for the creation of a modern day public works program for years. With major bridges crumbling and the streets in disrepair, it is a much needed initiative.

The American economy is fragile. So too is its railways, its roads and bridges. A program that breathes new life into both simply makes sense.

New labor and project management jobs would be created. As workers earn, they spend. Spending could help lift our economy out this tailspin. President-elect Barack Obama has voiced support for such a program. We need to help him and the House Democrats make sure it gets funded.

The House Democrats plan to present their bill next month. Write your elected officials, Democrat and Republican. Urge them to support this legislation. Let them know that you expect them to support you just as they support big business.

The recent elections have shown us that, if Americans become and stay engaged in the political process, big things can happen. Continue to lift your voice and fight for an America that works.

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

Health Care Flaws Must Not Wait

Obama's victory was for change

BY DR. HENRI M. TREADWELL

President-elect Barack Obama will have a variety of economic, domestic and foreign policy issues to confront when he takes office in January, but it is crucial that he follow through on his promises to address the flaws in the nation's healthcare system.

The healthcare issue is frequently discussed in terms of the 46 million uninsured Americans, but in communities of color there is another crisis raging: Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans experience daily the devastating impact of health disparities that prematurely disable and kill men, women and children.

We live in a nation where 12.2 percent of all Native Americans over age 19 suffer from diabetes, where 9.6 percent of all Hispanics are in poor or fair health, and where prostate cancer mortality is twice as high among blacks compared with whites.

Clearly, Sen. Obama broke a barrier with his historic win on Election Day, sending an African American to one of the most powerful positions in the world. But people of color in commu-



nities across the country still face many barriers, and few are as destructive as health disparities and the lack of quality healthcare—20 percent of African Americans are uninsured, as are 35 percent of all Hispanics under age 65.

Consider the pain and suffering caused by infant mortality. Recent data show the infant mortality rate for blacks

ate attention is the health conditions in the nation's correctional institutions.

African Americans comprise 44 percent of the nation's 2.2 million prison population, or about one million people, many of whom suffer from mental conditions that go largely untreated. Moreover, the prisons are incubators for infectious diseases ranging from HIV to tuberculosis,

like to operate more healthful institutions, but they lack resources. Their institutions could vastly improve healthcare services for prisoners if the federal government allowed inmates to receive Medicare and Medicaid benefits.

If inmates received better medical treatment in prison, the cost of later treating advanced stages of many diseases and conditions would be reduced.

This is another example where an enlightened approach to public policy can make a difference in communities of color.

While many Americans are celebrating Sen. Obama's victory, his administration must bring about meaningful change. It will be disappointing if business as usual continues in Washington. The people voted for change, a change that gives America a government that takes comprehensive approaches to improving healthcare and addressing the health disparities in communities of color.

That's the change we need. Dr. Henri M. Treadwell is director of Community Voices, a non-profit working to improve health services, and health-care access, for all Americans.

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at 13.5 per 1,000 live births, compared with 5.7 for non-Hispanic whites and Hispanics.

What's clear is the need for a new approach, one that takes into account the socio-economic conditions that lack face in the United States, as well as the broad, stressful impact of racism and discrimination. When people in communities of color hear about the "change" that is supposed to come to Washington with the Obama administration, they are hoping it includes a new approach to the infant mortality problem and other health disparities.

Another problem that needs immedi-

staph infections and hepatitis. When inmates return to their families and communities, these diseases are spread to their family and friends.

If the prisons provided comprehensive healthcare, these diseases could be better treated, and even prevented, and ex-inmates would not be such health threats to their communities upon release.

Flawed public policy is at the root of the problem.

Also, does it make sense that inmates lose their Medicare and Medicaid benefits once they are incarcerated?

To be sure, prison wardens would

Peace Community Let Down No to Gates as Secretary of Defense

BY TOM H. HASTINGS

Robert Gates is Bush's Secretary of Defense and has been for two years. President-elect Barack Obama has announced that he will retain Gates in an open-ended offer to remain in charge of the Pentagon.

Something is wrong with this picture.

The disastrous Bush-era military policies have driven the economic collapse, killed more than 4,100 Americans, wounded another 30,000, and angered much of the world, beginning with U.S. citizens.

The punditry's speculation that Gates would merely provide a transition is not reassuring to the millions who have been opposed to the criminal stupidity of invading and occupying Iraq. We want real change. We want it beginning on Jan. 20, not after a year or two.

As long as the U.S. occupies Iraq, the



killing will continue. Iraqi civilians have paid the highest price for Bush's decisions—more than 100,000 have died on the 'battlefield' and more than a million have died from the destruction of Iraq's infrastructure, according to

Gates should be given the normal pink slip richly deserved by any caretaker of policy so bad it kills and drags the country down.

peer-reviewed medical studies.

Historians have long noted that Americans have the capacity to 'turn on a dime' and wage war. We have shown how to massively retool our industrial base, conscript millions, recruit millions of volunteers, train them all and mobilize them to defeat bona fide threats to our security.

It's time to show that we can turn on that dime to wage peace.

Indeed, that is one of the two primary reasons the peace community first chose Obama over Hillary Clinton and then over John McCain—we have bipartisan consensus on this particular major policy.

Along with the creation of jobs, the heart of the change we now legitimately expect, having earned it by a long and tough campaign, was to get the most electable peace candidate headed for the White House.

But when Robert Gates accepted Obama's unconditional offer, he especially noted to the national press that he was not interested in remaining just to help transition to different policies.

When reporters followed up and asked about the stark differences between his publicly stated opposition to timelines for exiting Iraq and Obama's clear promise to get the U.S. out in 16 months, maximum, Gates pointedly

noted that Obama is pledged to listen to his appointees in his new cabinet.

Excuse us? Obama's pledge was toward peace. There are numerous candidates for the cabinet who would honor that pledge. Gates obviously would not. This is not acceptable to Americans, nor to the rest of the world.

Mr. Obama: At least take office before you begin breaking campaign promises—and our hearts. Gates should be given the normal pink slip richly deserved by any caretaker of policy so bad it kills and drags the country down.

We hope for fast change in Iraq—and you are setting us up for massive disappointment. We worked for you and voted you in to effect real substantive change and save lives. Robert Gates is not the way to the change we need and expect.

Tom H. Hastings is director of PeaceVoice and a founder of Whitefeather Peace Community in Portland. He teaches conflict resolution at Portland State University.

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Part 26 KIDS AND CHIROPRACTIC
As the twig is bent so grows the tree

Q: I have recently noticed my son has one shoulder higher than the other. Could this be a sign of a problem in his spine?
A: Good thinking, mom! It surely could. In fact having one shoulder higher than the other is a cardinal sign of curvature of the spine. According to Chiropractic research, the earlier a curvature is caught, the higher the potential for success. To be certain about health of your child, call our office today for a professional spinal evaluation. Spines (big or small) are our specialty.

Q: I have been told that my child needs an operation for a curvature in her spine. Is there an alternative?
A: You most definitely should have a thorough Chiropractic checkup on your child immediately. Spinal surgery gets. All conservative efforts at handling your child's problem should be considered before consenting to surgery. Our office is highly trained and skilled at handling problems like that of your child's. Don't be fooled by the thought of "watching the condition" either. Without proper assistance it won't go away. Offer your children the best in health care. Give them regular Chiropractic checkups. As the twig is bent so grows the tree!

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