



“Challenging People to Shape a Better Future Now”

BERNIE FOSTER
Founder/Publisher

BOBBIE DORE FOSTER
Executive Editor

JERRY FOSTER
Advertising Manager

LISA LOVING
News Editor

HELEN SILVIS
Multimedia Editor

PATRICIA IRVIN
DAVID KIDD
Graphic Designer

MONICA J. FOSTER
Seattle Office Coordinator

JULIE KEEFE
SUSAN FRIED
Photographers



The Skanner Newspaper, established in October 1975, is a weekly publication, published each Wednesday by IMM Publications Inc.,

415 N. Killingsworth St.,
P.O. Box 5455, Portland, OR 97228.
Telephone (503) 285-5555.

E-mail: info@theskanner.com

World Wide Web site:

<http://www.theskanner.com>

The Skanner is a member of the National Newspaper Publishers Association and West Coast Black Publishers Association.

All photos submitted become the property of The Skanner. We are not responsible for lost or damaged photos either solicited or unsolicited.

© 2014 The Skanner. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. REPRODUCTION IN WHOLE OR IN PART WITHOUT PERMISSION PROHIBITED.

To see The Skanner News on your smart phone go to theskannermobile.com or scan this QR code with your app.



- Local news
- Opinions
- Jobs, Bids
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Music reviews
- Bulletin board
- RSS feeds

Holder's Legacy: No Coward on Race

After being confirmed as the nation's first African American U.S. attorney general, Eric H. Holder, Jr. wasted little time putting everyone on notice that he would not tip-toe around the volatile subject of race.

“Though this nation has proudly thought of itself as an ethnic melting pot, in things racial we have always been and continue to be, in too many ways, essentially a nation of cowards,” Holder declared in a speech at the Justice Department.

There was the predictable uproar on the right and President Obama, while not repudiating his new appointee, told the New York Times, “I think it's fair to say that if I had been advising my attorney general, we would have used different language.”

And that's precisely the point. Holder was courageous in directly taking on the issue of race while Obama, in the words of Georgetown University Professor Michael Eric Dyson, “runs from race like a Black man runs from a cop.”

Holder's deeds, not his words, are what made him such an exceptional attorney general.

He fought for criminal-justice reform, saying the overrepresentation of Blacks in the criminal justice system “isn't just unacceptable; it's shameful.” He said, “Too many Americans go to too many prisons for far too long, and for no truly good law enforcement reason.”

He favored a 2010 law that eliminated the sentencing disparities between crack and powder cocaine. And he led a successful effort to reduce prison sentences



THE CURRY REPORT

George E. Curry

for low-level, non-violent drug offenders.

Arguably his most lasting imprint was in the area of voting rights. When the Supreme Court struck down a key section of the 1965 Voting Rights Act, Holder said the ruling could not be used for the wholesale disenfranchise-

Holder's deeds, not his words, are what made him such an exceptional attorney general

ment of people of color. He sued Texas over its voter ID law and challenged North Carolina in court over its law to restrict early voting and same-day registration.

Holder further revitalized a sector of the Democratic Party by supporting same-sex marriage and his refusal to defend the Defense of Marriage Act, which holds that marriage is strictly between a woman and a man.

There were some disappointments as well.

He supported the FBI's right to track U.S. citizens without obtaining a warrant. He also approved of the National Security Agency's authority to collect millions of phone records of Americans not accused of any crime

In his zeal to plug national security leaks, the Justice Department obtained the phone records of journalists performing their jobs. Last year, Holder backtracked, promising that the Justice Department “will not prosecute any reporter doing his or her job.”

Republicans highlighted the failure of Operation Fast and Furious, an Arizona-based Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) project to track weapons purchased by Mexican drug cartels. Not only did ATF fail to account for more than 1,000 firearms that had been purchased by straw buyers, two of the missing weapons were linked to the killing of Brian Terry, a U.S. Border Patrol agent.

When Holder, citing executive privilege, refused to turn over certain Fast and Furious records to Congress, the House held him in contempt, the first for a sitting cabinet member.

Both conservatives and liberals criticized Holder for his failure to prosecute individuals connected to the Wall Street financial crisis in 2008. While some firms deemed “too big to fail” were subjected to record fines, no Wall Street executives were prosecuted. They were derisively labeled “too big to jail.”

Most African Americans will remember the bold stances and actions Holder took following killing of Trayvon Martin by George Zimmerman in Florida

and the Aug. 9 killing of 18-year-old Michael Brown, Jr. by Darren Wilson, a White police officer, in Ferguson, Mo. Brown was shot at least six times.

He criticized Florida's Stand Your Ground law, telling NAACP delegates, “These laws try to fix something that was never broken.” Holder visited Ferguson, sharing his own personal experiences of being profiled by police. Following his visit to Ferguson, Holder ordered a federal civil rights investigation of the predominantly White police department. He said the investigation would determine whether Ferguson officers had “engaged in a pattern or practice of violations of the U.S. Constitution or federal law.”

In a speech earlier this month at New York University, Holder said that as a former U.S. attorney and the brother of a longtime police officer, he has nothing but respect for police officers. But he said he is also an African American man “who has been stopped and searched by police in situations where such action was not warranted.” Consequently, he said, “I also carry with me the mistrust that some citizens harbor for those who wear the badge.”

Under Holder, the Justice Department has initiated twice as many police reviews for possible constitutional violations than any other attorney general. At least 34 other departments are under federal investigation for possible civil rights violations.

Conservatives have pilloried Holder for being so aggressive on civil rights. But he has not backed down for one simple reason – he is no coward.

More Blacks are Headed to Congress

There are 44 African American members of Congress. Next year, five more are expected to join them, bringing the total to 49. That will represent the highest number of Blacks in Congress in American history. But will it make a difference? Can they leverage their numbers?

Another record-breaking development in the record-breaking 114th Congress will be that all of the new Black members will be women. It is likely that as many as 20 Black women could take the oath of office on Capitol Hill, which is also a record.

That's the good news. The bad news is that as we've seen in statehouses throughout the South, when Democrats become a minority in a legislative chamber, that means less clout for everyone in the party, including African Americans.

Depending on how many House Democrats there are in 2015 (there are now 199), the Black Caucus could become 25 percent of the House Democratic Caucus. As the Tea Party members in the House Republican Caucus have proven over and over, a voting bloc of just 25 members can leverage a great deal of power.

Despite the large percentages and the voting power within the Democratic Caucus that could help drive a Black agenda, the



NNPA COLUMNIST

Lauren Victoria Burke

biggest issue that can block Black power is that all but three Black members are likely to serve in the minority in the U.S. House from 2015 and 2016. Unless there is an

(D-Ohio) announced a new strategy to make sure that Black voters are aware of the importance of the midterm elections. The plan is to contact more than 3,000 pastors in battleground states and make sure they urge their parishioners to vote. “Freedom Sundays” was launched on September 21 and the goal is to reach more than 1 million voters. More than \$250,000 was spent on the launch day alone for the get-out-the-vote effort.

The upcoming midterm elections on November 4 feature what

midterm voting, Barbara R. Arnwine, executive director, of the Lawyers Committee on Civil Rights Under Law, announced that her group will send out “voter toolkits” to thousands of community groups and civic organizations ahead of November 4. Arnwine is stressing that November's election is the first since and slew of changes in several states became law. The efforts at voter protection by the Congressional Black Caucus and the Lawyers Committee are earlier than usual in an off-year election cycle. In past cycles, there has been lots of criticism that get out the vote efforts get underway too late to be effective.

At some point, the changing demographics in the U.S. will have to show up not only on Election Day turnout stats but in the complexion of members of Congress. Though Hispanics are the largest minority group in America at 16 percent, the face of Congress still has not reflected the number. The Congressional Hispanic Caucus has 28 members, 16 members less than the Congressional Black Caucus.

Next year, as the Congressional Black Caucus grows to the largest number in their history, they will also have to work to adopt a strategy that will solidify their power.

It is likely that as many as 20 Black women could take the oath of office on Capitol Hill, which is also a record

unexpected shock on November 4, Black Caucus members may have to wait until 2017 to use the full force of their power.

The 1993 class of Black members, who arrived after many minority-majority districts were created, is also set to control at least six committees in the House. Six African American chairmanships would also be yet another historic benchmark. That's if Democrats can regain control of the House.

But will it happen? Last week, Congressional Black Caucus Chair Rep. Marcia Fudge

are expected to be very close statewide races in states that feature and high percentage of African American voters. They include Georgia, North Carolina, Florida, Louisiana and Arkansas. In all of these states and a few others, Black voters literally have the fate of control of the U.S. Senate and a few governor's offices in their hands. Many primaries over this past year and several elections over the last few cycles have featured races that have come down to only one or two percentage points.

To punctuate the importance of