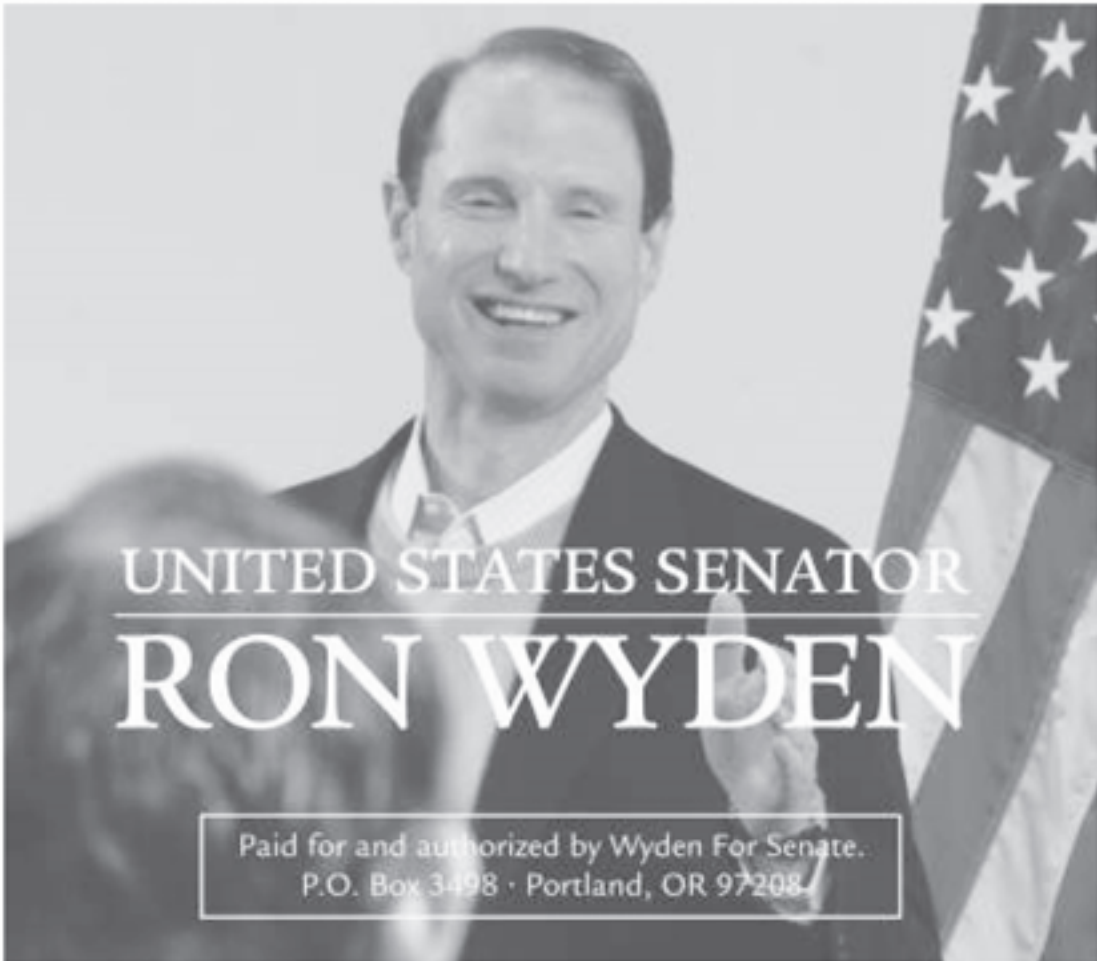


'The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.'



-- Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



CBC Chair Butterfield Vows to Work with Both Parties



Congressman G.K. Butterfield

By Lauren Victoria Burke
NNPA Columnist

If you were the new chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), beginning your time tenure when the first Black president of the United States was completing his last two years in office, what would your plan be?

If you were chair at a time when Republicans held a record number of House seats – the most since 1928 – and conditions for Black Americans were getting worse, what would your plan be? If that first Black president on his way out the door wasn't all that excited about Black agenda items and rarely connects with members of Congress, what would be the plan?

These are the questions that the new Black Caucus chairman, Congressman G.K. Butterfield of North Carolina, has to confront over the next two years. Presidential politics have already begun to take the stage at the start of 2015 as

a lame-duck president notorious for not connecting with members of his own party in Congress begins to announce policy objectives.

Butterfield got off to an aggressive start on January 6 with his first speech as Black Caucus Chairman.

"America is not working for many African Americans and we, as the Congressional Black Caucus, have an obligation to fight harder and smarter in the next Congress to help repair the damage," he said. The speech included a devastating rundown of current statistics on where African Americans now stand.

"We are fighting generations of indifference on the part of those in power. The statistics tell the story," Butterfield said. Then he told the audience at the Capitol:

- Twenty-five percent of Black households live below the poverty line, compared to 8 percent for White households;
- One out of three Black children lives in poverty;
- African Americans are twice as likely as Whites to be unemployed;
- African Americans earn \$13,000 less per year than their White counterparts;
- The unemployment rate of African Americans has con-

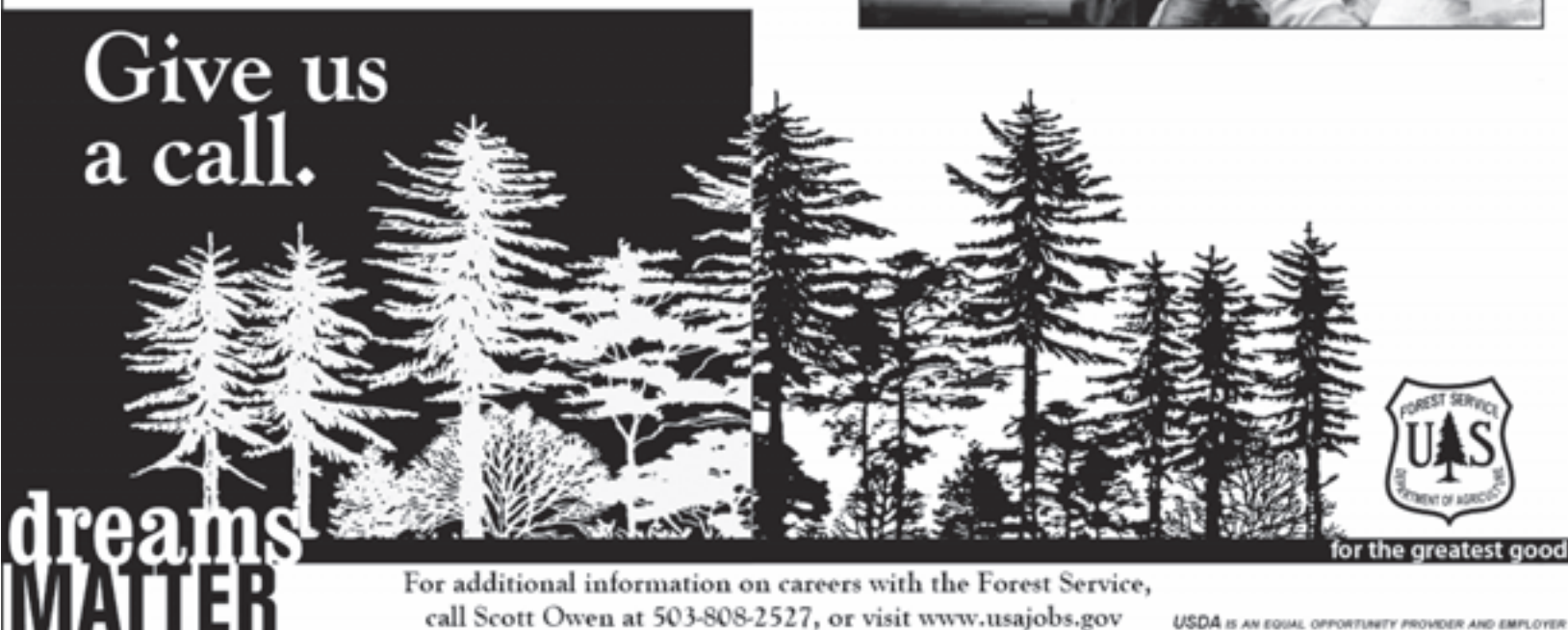
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