

1988 Congressional Black Caucus Legislative Synopsis

For Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) Members, the Second Session of the 100th Congress marked an historic point when the U.S. House and Senate faced a litmus test of leadership. Whether in urban centers or rural townships, our communities are under seize. Drug barons, rampant crime and gang warfare threaten the sanctity of our homes and families. The health of our young and elderly deteriorates. Economic instability imperils our future. And while a limited few have prospered, in the main, we have become a nation at risk.

The explosion in homelessness, the erosion of our sense of community, and the stagnation of spirit among our young have all

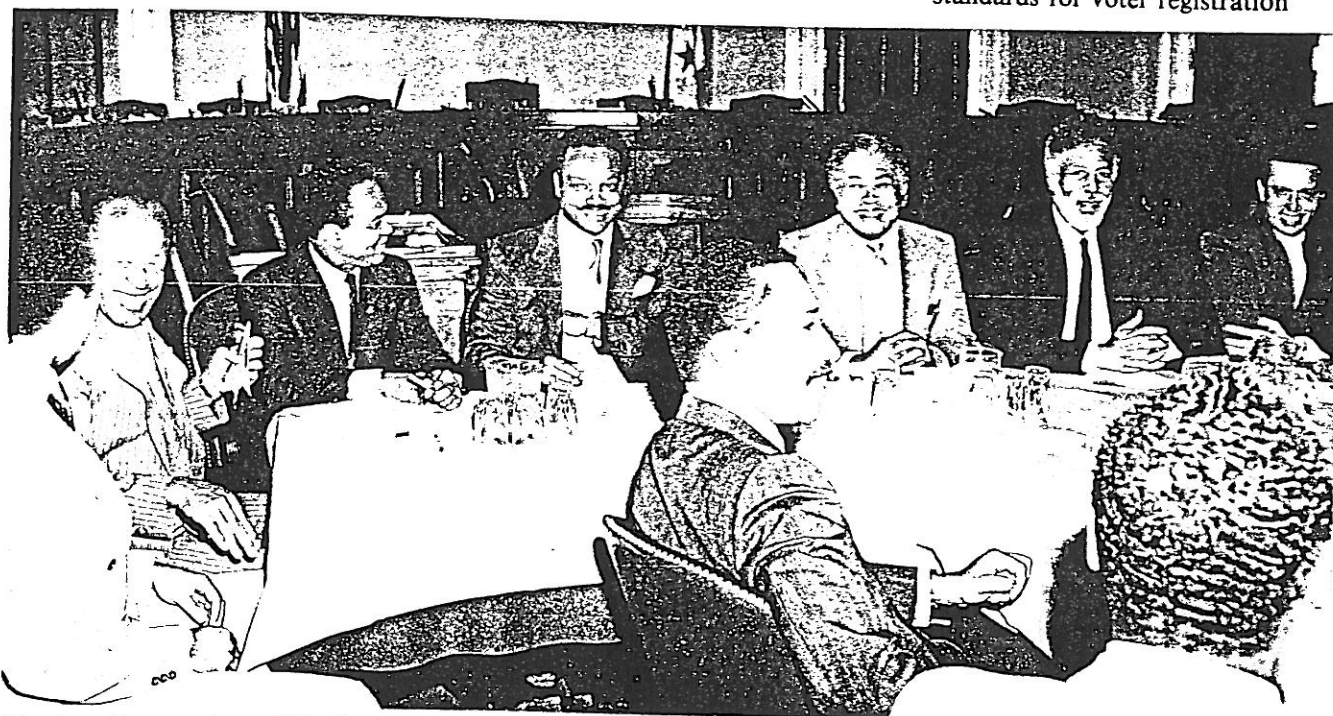
converged to demand that CBC Members engage in a new level of advocacy. Consequently, the Caucus has amassed the most comprehensive legislative portfolio in its history. Since this Congress was sworn in, Caucus Members have introduced an unprecedented 421 individual bills and amendments. This achievement is coupled with the additional responsibilities CBC Members carry through Chairmanships of five full Committees of the House, two Select Committees, and a total of 18 Subcommittees. The 23 Members of the Caucus hold 166 Committee assignments and represent one of the most influential voting blocks in the House.

Domestic Issues

Affirmative Action, Civil Rights & Voting Rights

The CBC's Civil Rights portfolio is anchored by the landmark victory of the Dean of the CBC and Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee. California Congressman Augustus Hawkins, won passage of the critical Civil Rights Restoration Act (H.R. 1214) remedying the damage inflicted by the Supreme Court's Grove City decision.

Pending action in this session are measures championed by another senior CBC Member, Michigan's Congressman John Conyers who introduced H.R. 3666 and H.R. 3950 to establish national standards for voter registration



Members discuss voter mobilization with Rev. Jesse Jackson.

regulations and same-day registration for federal elections.

The CBC's array of Civil Rights bills covers every legislative approach to enhancing equal opportunity and affirmative action. Among these are H.R. 5054, introduced by Missouri Congressman William Clay, to establish an EEO Appeals Board in the Library of Congress. A labor specialist, Mr. Clay has also introduced H.R. 20, Federal Employees Political Activities Act to restore the rights of civilian federal employees to participate in elections. A companion measure, The Postal Service Employee Political Activities Act - H.R. 21 - creates a framework for political participation while protecting such employees from improper solicitations.

With the Equality in Education Act, New York's Congressman Charles Rangel seeks to deny tax exempt status to educational institutions which discriminate. The lone Black female Member of the House, Congresswoman Cardiss Collins, has introduced H.R. 331, to strengthen the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's authority to enforce fairness in Federal employment. With H.R. 333, the Non-Discrimination in Advertising Act, Mrs. Collins has restricted tax deductions for advertising placed by those who discriminate by refusing to advertise on minority owned or formatted stations. Tennessee's veteran Congressman Harold Ford, has joined Congressman George Crockett in focusing on the minority hiring practices of the Department of State (H.Con.Res. 143).

Agriculture

The small and minority farmer has two champions in Congressmen Ed Towns, and Mike Espy who Co-Chair the CBC Braintrust on Agriculture. Mr. Mike Espy is

Mississippi's first Black Representative since Reconstruction. Mr. Towns has introduced numerous bills to support the family farm and historically Black land-grant colleges.

The Federal Budget

Chairing the powerful House Committee on the Budget, Congressman William H. Gray, III leads the battle to shape federal budget priorities. Spiraling deficits forced demands for budget reform and the 1988 Budget Summit created an unprecedented back drop to the FY '89 Budget debate. Gramm-Rudman goals threatened critical programs, but under Chairman Gray the Budget compromise met deficit reduction goals, while retaining funds to meet basic human needs.

CBC Alternative Budget

As part of the budget debate in the first session of the Congress, the CBC offered its Alternative Budget committed to health, education, housing, welfare reform, and the homeless. Its projections for 1989 totaled more than \$1 trillion dollars, with deficits falling below Gramm-Rudman and Administration targets with the savings achieved by lowering unemployment.

For the 1989 budget debate, the Caucus did not offer its traditional Alternative Budget but instead convened a series of hearings on domestic and fiscal issues, and published a collection of platform and policy recommendations central to the 1988 elections.

Defense Alternatives

California Congressman Ronald V. Dellums again offered his Defense Alternative Budget for FY' 89 and recommended deleting unnecessary weapons systems including the Midgetman missile and the "Star Wars" Strategic Defense Initiative while creating a new Strategic Technology Research Office in D.O.D. 79

Census & Reapportionment

CBC Chairman Mervyn M. Dymally, has made the Census' undercount of the poor and minorities a major issue, introducing H.R. 3511 to improve the accuracy of the Census data collected in 1990.

Consumer Protection

Congresswoman Collins, Secretary of the CBC, and a staunch consumer advocate, has offered a bill which amends the Truth in Lending Act requiring lenders to post current interest rates for various loans at all times (H.R. 322), and contains a provision which makes it illegal for retailers to increase the price of certain consumer commodities once that price is marked (H.R. 547).

Criminal Justice & Crime Control

During the 100th Congress, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice Chairman Congressman John Conyers has addressed some of the most crucial issues in our society. His Hate Crime Statistics Act (H.R. 3193), provides for the acquisition and publication of data about hate crimes based on race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. Mr. Conyers also continues to raise the issue of the disproportionate number of Blacks receiving the death penalty, by the due process and equal protection provision in his bill, H.R. 4442.

CBC Members have aggressively sought to protect the victims of crime with Congresswoman Collins authoring the Victims of Handgun Crimes Compensation Tax Act (H.R. 464), and Congressman Conyers sponsoring the Public Safety Officers Death Benefits Amendments of 1988 which increase the benefits payable upon the death of public safety officers. Addressing the needs of senior citizens, Mrs. Collins has offered an amendment to the U.S. Code to

provide penalties for assaults against the elderly that result in medical expenses paid by the United States. During this session of Congress, she and Mr. Conyers have proposed separate measures to contain the sale of handguns, respectively, H.R. 325 which establishes mandatory registration laws and H.R. 335 prohibiting the importation, manufacture, transfer, and transport of handguns. Congressman Rangel's House Concurrent Resolution 58 expresses the Sense of Congress that Marcus Garvey should be posthumously granted a full and absolute pardon.

The District of Columbia

Congressman Walter Fauntroy has made history with the passage of the first Statehood Bill for the District of Columbia (H.R. 51) which was approved by the House D.C. Committee. He has also generated measures to establish a Supreme Court (H.R. 152) and an Attorney General for the District (H.R. 141). Mr. Fauntroy has also created a legislative mandate to use federal land for a monument honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. within the District (H.R. 152).

Drug Abuse

The Chairman of the House Select Committee on Narcotics, Charles Rangel, fought Administration double talk in his efforts to stem the flow of illegal drugs. He has initiated numerous legislative measures to strengthen law enforcement and drug treatment. He has also proposed amending the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe Streets Act to increase the appropriation for drug law enforcement (H.R. 1411), as well as a bill to coordinate national and international narcotics control policies (H.R. 2454). Caucus Members have paid particular attention to educational and preventive ap-

proaches to the anti-drug problem with Congressman Hawkins calling for new drug abuse programs for youth (H.R. 4872). Congressman Rangel has also introduced the Intravenous Substance Abuse & AIDS Prevention Act (H.R. 3292) to help health care professionals address this crisis.

Economic Security

The centerpiece of the CBC's agenda for economic security is the work of Congressman Charles Hayes who introduced an Economic Bill of Rights for All Americans (H.R. 2870) to protect and improve our nation's quality of life. Congressman Mike Espy has offered a measure which would create a statutory authority for the FmHA's limited resource loan initiative which provides reduced rate loans to low-income borrowers (H.Amdt. 401). Focusing on regional concerns, Congressman Espy has authored a bill to establish the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission (H.R. 4373).

Worker advocate, Missouri Congressman William Clay has authored a concurrent resolution to express Congress' support for private sector efforts to alleviate the losses retirees and employees suffer when pension plans are terminated.

Education

The Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, Congressman Augustus Hawkins, with the passage of The Effective Schools and Even Start Act (H.R. 5) has proposed new strategies to improve elementary and secondary education. In addition, CBC Members produced a wide cluster of initiatives targeted to special educational needs. Mr. Hayes' dropout measure was merged into H.R. 5 and authorizes the Secretary of Education to make grants to local

educational agencies for dropout prevention and reentry demonstration programs. Mr. Hawkins also offered a bill to authorize federal assistance to meet the specific needs of educationally deprived children (H.R. 950).

Congressman Mickey Leland of Texas authored the Education for Homeless Children Act (H.R. 179) to guarantee homeless children equal educational opportunities. Select Education Subcommittee Chairman Major Owens, the only formally trained Librarian ever to serve in the House, introduced the Technology to Educate Children with Handicaps Act (H.R. 3602) to provide financial assistance to educate severely handicapped young people. Mr. Rangel has also offered a bill to exempt the Pell Grant higher education assistance program from sequestration (H.R. 1932).

In a novel legislative measure, Ohio's Louis Stokes has authored the Public Housing Gateway Act of 1988 (H.R. 4899) which calls for the Secretary of Labor to make grants to public housing agencies to provide basic training in literacy and employment skills. Congressman Towns brought before the House a concurrent resolution urging full funding of student financial assistance programs (H.Con.Res. 107). Under the Bilingual Education Act, Mr. Towns called for family English literacy programs to teach aliens with temporary residency status a minimum understanding of English and American history (H.R. 2088). Chairman Hawkins worked to amend the National School Lunch Act to require free lunch eligibility to be based on the non-farm income poverty guidelines prescribed by OMB (H.R. 4306).

Promoting a novel set-aside, Congressman Conyers proposed a bill to require that each state