

Legislative Highlights of the 96th Congress

AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FOUNDATION

A CBC legislative initiative, Title V of the Foreign Assistance Authorization Bill for FY '81 passed the House of Representatives on June 5, 1980. This authorized \$5 million for the establishment of the African Development Foundation which will identify and provide funding for community level programs in Africa in such areas as: education, housing, irrigation and agriculture. In the closing days of the Congress, Congressman William Gray worked very diligently for the passage of this bill, achieving an authorization level of \$2 million. The integrity of the bill was retained, and this initiative will probably pass before the end of the 96th Congress.

FULLILOVE vs. KLUTZNICK DECISION

The Minority Economic Development Braintrust achieved a major victory with the Supreme Court decision in the Fullilove vs. Klutznick case. The Supreme Court declared in this decision that it is constitutional for the Congress to establish 10% set aside legislation for minority involvement in federal contracts. This suit was precipitated by an amendment which Congressman Parren Mitchell offered to the 1977 Public Works Act to increase the number of Black contractors receiving contract awards from the federal government.

IRS TAX EXEMPTION

The CBC worked to prevent legislation prohibiting the IRS from implementing regulations denying tax exemptions to private schools which discriminate against minorities. Many tax exempt private academies were organized, particularly in the South to avoid school integration. The House has retained this language in the FY '81 Department of Treasury Appropriations bill. The bill is pending action in the Senate.

Mitchell ?
FAIR HOUSING

The CBC mobilized support in the House for passage of measures to strengthen the 1968 Fair Housing Act enforcement procedures against discrimination in the sale, lease or rental of housing. This bill is pending action by the full Senate. In light of the time remaining in this Congress, it will probably not be acted on during the 96th Congress.

Congress ?
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. HOLIDAY

In the final days of the 96th Congress 1st session, the CBC mobilized support for passage of a bill to declare the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. a full legal national holiday. The bill was withdrawn from consideration due to an amendment to have the birthday commemorated on Sunday. The bill will not be reconsidered during the remainder of the 96th Congress.

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CHILD WELFARE SERVICES

One of the successes of the Caucus during the 96th Congress was the passage of the Child Welfare Services Act. Congressman Charles Rangel was very instrumental in achieving the passage of this bill. This bill, which has been signed into law, provides incentives to state governments to improve services to children and families to prevent the need for the child's removal from the home to a foster care facility. If the child must be removed from the home, the law would allow for the provision of additional services to facilitate the placement of the child back in its home. Should this effort prove to be unsuccessful, additional money would be provided to permit the child to be freed for adoption or the placement of the child in a permanent foster home. The law also provides matching funds to state government to benefit families who wish to care for "hard to place children", that is those children who are handicapped and subsequently would require more intensive care. This law also increased the level of funding for Title XX of the Social Security Act. This section of the law provides for additional social services in all the states as well as for the emergency shelter programs for adults as well as children.

MEDICARE AMENDMENT OF 1960

During the 96th Congress, Congressman Harold Ford introduced two amendments to the Medicare program to provide for the coverage of dental care, hearing aids, eyeglasses and dentures. Congressman Louis Stokes also introduced a similar bill. No action was taken on either bill during the 96th Congress.

FEDERAL CORRECTIONS OMBUDSMAN ACT

As a result of numerous letters and complaints from prison inmates, Congressman Bennett Stewart introduced The Federal Ombudsman Act. This ~~bill~~ would have established an independent Federal office with the authority to investigate complaints concerning the treatment of any federal inmate or the conditions of the facility in which they resided. This bill unfortunately received no action during the 96th Congress.

1981 LABOR, HEALTH AND EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS BILL

During the final consideration of the 1981 Labor, Health and Education Appropriation bill by the House Appropriations Committee, Congressman Louis Stokes offered several amendments which increased the funding of programs in these federal agencies to aid the poor and minorities. The most farreaching of these amendments was an amendment to add \$145 billion to the Title I program of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This program is the largest federal effort to provide compensatory education and benefits poor children throughout the country. Ninety percent of all school districts in the country receive this kind of assistance. The 1981 Labor, Education, Health Appropriations bill however, will probably not be acted on by the full Congress during the 96th Congress. However, the amendment will be included in the Continuing Resolution for these agencies for fiscal year 1981.

Congresswoman Cardiss Collins has fought for subsidized housing in minority and low income areas for the past several years. She provided much of the initial input into the Department of Housing and Urban Development's decision to reevaluate its rules for the location of subsidized housing. As Chairwoman of the Manpower and Housing Subcommittee of the House Committee on Government Operations, she held hearings on the effects of the Gautreaux decision in September of 1978. Congresswoman Collins also introduced legislation to free Chicago from the injustices of the Gautreaux formula. This legislation will not be acted upon by the Congress before the close of the 96th Congress.

ENERGY AND WATER DEVELOPMENT APPROPRIATION FOR 1980-1981

During the 96th Congress, Congressman Julian Dixon succeeded in obtaining provisions in the 1980 and 1981 Appropriations bill for Energy and Water for a comprehensive social health and rehabilitation services program to the residents of Triana, Alabama. Triana, with a population of one thousand people, is a totally Black community. These residents were the victims of DDT contamination due to the dumping of 2000 tons of DDT into the community's local water source by a private company under contract with the United States Army. In addition to providing these services to mitigate the impact of the DDT pollution, the Army is conducting research to determine the most effective approach to remove the DDT sediment.

FOREIGN AID APPROPRIATIONS

As the result of action by Congressman Julian Dixon, the level of Development assistance to Africa and the Caribbean has been increased. Notably the amendment would provide funds for the redevelopment of Sahel in west Africa, as well as provide funds for the development of alternative energy sources to Jamaica. The bill also provides for an increased effort to meet the emergency needs of African refugees, as more than half of the worlds refugees are on the African continent.

MARTIN LUTHER King, JR. NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

The CBC was instrumental in insuring the passage of legislation to establish as national historic sites, the Martin Luther King, Jr. birthplace, Ebenezer Baptist Church, and the King Center for Social Change in Atlanta, Georgia. Also designated as an historic site were the Bethune-Cookman College and the Richmond Battlefield Park at Newmarket Heights, where fourteen (14) Black soldiers won the Congressional Medal of Honor in the Battle of Richmond.

D.C. VOTING RIGHTS AMENDMENT

The D.C. Voting Rights Amendment was initiated by Congressman Walter Fauntroy and with the support of the Congressional Black Caucus, was passed by the Congress in 1978. The Resolution would bestow voting privileges to the Representatives in the House from the District of Columbia and provide for two (2) Senators who would also have voting privileges. The Amendment has been ratified by nine (9) state legislatures. The ratification process must be completed before 1985.

THE HIGHER EDUCATION ACT

The Higher Education Act was enacted by the Congress and signed into law by the President during the 96th Congress. Title III of this law increases federal assistance to Black colleges. Additionally this section would provide "Challenge grants", which would afford Black colleges the seed money to establish their own endowment programs. Title IX of the law would maintain the CLEO programs which provide assistance to disadvantaged students for legal education. Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm was very active in securing the passage of this legislation.

HAITIAN REFUGEES

The Congressional Black Caucus Task Force on Haitian Refugees (Congresswoman Chisholm, Congressmen Evans, Leland, Conyers and Fauntroy) played a major role in bringing to the attention of the nation the unequal and inhumane treatment visited upon the "Black boat people". The position of the CBC, that these Black refugees were victims of discrimination based upon race and national origin, has been upheld by the Federal District Court in Miami. H.R. 8047, a bill introduced by Congresswoman Chisholm would have sought to provide 100% federal reimbursement for state and local governments for expenses associated with Haitian refugee resettlement and adjustment. But more importantly, the bill would provide Haitian refugees full refugee status.

Hawkins influenced the 1st 8 hrs of debate 1st Concom Budget Deal a core assumption underlying the Budget were done in response to the lang in the Humphrey-Hawkins Act. -> from budgeting

BUDGET MOBILIZATION

The Congressional Black Caucus budget mobilization effort sought to increase awareness and support both within the Congress and across the nation for a federal budget not balanced at the expense of the nation's poor, elderly and youth.

* Four CBC press statements were issued and two news conferences were called between February and May, 1980 to expose the fiscal year 1981 federal budget as an "unmitigated disaster" for the poor and minorities. The CBC focused the massive decreases in domestic social programs for the survival of poor and underrepresented Americans. The CBC was also involved in a March for Jobs, Peace and Justice on May 15-17. Congressman Parren Mitchell developed and the CBC Members supported, the "Mitchell Human Needs Amendment" an alternative balanced budget which would restore funds cut from domestic social programs. The Congress passed the Budget just prior to the Thanksgiving recess. It did not reflect the Mitchell amendment. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 312-77.

THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT BILL

Hawkins added Hawkins' name on Ceta

The Youth Employment bill would have reauthorized Title IVA of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) which would have provided employment and training for youth from the ages of 14 to 21. These programs are currently being carried out under a continuing resolution, which expires December 15th.

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* Economic Policy

Hawkins