



The NAACP Advocate

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Fall 2007

2007 Annual Convention

The 98th Annual NAACP Convention

Thousands of delegates attended this year's convention in Detroit, MI where the NAACP engaged in a number of notable activities. Themed "Power beyond Measure," the convention included a host of activities such as political forums, an authors' pavilion with book signings, a national academic, cultural, technology and science youth competition, and a mock burial for the N word.

The N Word

Hundreds of delegates marched to Hart Plaza in the much-anticipated kick-off events to bury a word that is wrought with insult and bigotry. The mock funeral was a part of the



Hundreds turned out to support the NAACP's mock burial of the N word at Detroit's Hart Plaza.

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NAACP "STOP" Campaign, an initiative of the NAACP Youth & College Division that seeks to "STOP" the demeaning images of African Americans in the media, particularly with respect to the portrayal of African American women. No word defames, degrades and denigrates our community like the N word and just as Jim Crow was put to rest in the city of Detroit in 1944, the NAACP returned to Detroit 63 years later to bury and put to rest once and for all the this dehumanizing word. Rap industry legends Kurtis Blow and Eric B joined the NAACP in eliminating the use of derogatory terms

and images aimed at and used by African Americans. Also participating were Rev. Otis Moss, Pastor, Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago, IL, R & B singer Eddie Levert, Kwame Kilpatrick, Mayor of Detroit and the Honorable Jennifer Granholm, Governor of Michigan.

The Presidential Candidates Forum, Legislative Workshops

The NAACP Washington Bureau hosted a Presidential Candidates Forum in which the 2008 presidential

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The NAACP Advocate

Julian Bond
Chairman of the Board

Dennis C. Hayes
Interim President/CEO

Publication Editor
Shelly Anderson, Ph.D.
Director of Research

Contributing NAACP Departments & Programs

ACT-SO
Civic Engagement
Communications
Economic Empowerment
Education
Field Operations
Health
Hollywood Bureau
Legal
Research
Washington Bureau
Youth & College

Send all newsletter submissions to:

The NAACP Advocate
4805 Mt. Hope Drive
Baltimore, MD 21215
theadvocate@naacpnet.org

SUBMISSIONS INVITED!

Interested in submitting information, articles, or photos to *The Advocate*? Contact our editors at theadvocate@naacpnet.org.

Stop Campaign



In today's culture, nothing is more influential than the images and impressions we receive daily from the mainstream media. What people watch on television, listen to on the radio, see in a movie or on the Internet has a profound impact on how they view the world.

The NAACP firmly believes that we all have a responsibility to insure that those images and impressions foster respect, and not hate or racism.

Incidents like Don Imus referring to Rutgers University Women's Basketball players as "nappy headed hoes", or actor Michael Richards going on a tirade using the n-word at a comedy club in LA, should never be tolerated. Now is the time to call for a STOP in our community.

We must tell the artists and media executives who produce material that fosters a culture of disrespect that by promoting racist ideas and rants, they put their own financial future at risk.

At the same time, we must recognize the need for balance within the African American community in regards to what the community deems acceptable in music, film, and other media. Images reflected in songs and music videos that show half-dressed African American women being objectified or demeaned by men, or young African American men as thugs must STOP. These kinds of images promote hurtful and false stereotypes of young African Americans.

On college campuses around the

country, like Clemson University, the University of Texas-Austin, and Johns Hopkins, racial incidents are a too-common occurrence, and the way that media portrays young African Americans only contributes to the problem.

That's why the NAACP Youth & College Division has developed the STOP Campaign.

STOP Defaming Our Women... *by respecting all African American Women and not describing them in profane and derogatory terms*

STOP Degrading Our Community... *by not supporting hurtful images that portray negative images of the African American community*

STOP Denigrating Our History... *by not supporting words and media that diminishes our proud history and insults our ancestors*

STOP Accepting Disrespect... *by not patronizing companies and artists that put forth demeaning and disrespectful images in our community*

START Standing Up... *by standing up against anyone who diminishes the capacity of young people*

START the Diversity... *by supporting balance and diversity of content in the entertainment industry to create positive role models for young people and by demanding more African Americans and other people of color in decision making positions in the entertainment industry*

Visit www.naacp.org to sign the pledge today!

Convention continued from p. 1

candidates were invited to address the NAACP attendees. While only one Republican candidate appeared, all eight Democratic contenders came to share their ideas on issues that matter most to African Americans. Moderated by Russ Mitchell of CBS News, the candidates answered questions posed by NAACP delegates via pre-taped video on issues such as health care, education, jobs, and voting rights.

The Washington Bureau also held a legislative workshop in which congressional members Carolyn Kilpatrick (MI), Bobby Scott (VA), Danny Davis (IL), and Sheila Jackson Lee (TX) discussed issues related to the federal budget, immigration, ex-felon re-entry, and how the Congressional Black Caucus and the NAACP can work together to promote issues of mutual concern.

ACT-SO

The ACT-SO competition, founded in 1978 as a forum through which African-American youth can demonstrate academic, artistic and scientific

expertise, was held in Dearborn, MI. This year's program brought together talented youth from more than 150 cities across the country to compete for bronze, silver and gold awards in areas such as performance art, science and technological innovation, humanities and visual art.

ACT-SO is an NAACP sponsored yearlong program designed to recruit, stimulate, and encourage high academic and cultural achievement among high school students of African descent. The program relies on the dedication and commitment of volunteers, community and business leaders who serve as mentors and coaches to promote academic and artistic excellence.

Through this collaborative effort, participating students develop the confidence and skills needed to excel in school and in life.

The ACT-SO 30th anniversary program will be held next year in Walt Disney World Florida July 3-



2008 presidential candidates who appeared at this year's convention. From left to right – Joe Biden (D), Hillary Clinton (D), Christopher Dodd (D), John Edwards (D), Mike Gravel (D), Dennis Kucinich (D), Barack Obama (D), Bill Richardson (D), and Tom Tancredo (R)

August 3, 2008. For more information about ACT-SO please call 410-580-5650.

The NAACP 99th Annual Convention will be held July 12-17, 2008 in Cincinnati, OH.



Students compete during a dance competition at the NAACP 98th Annual Convention.

NAACP Files Lawsuit Against Major Home Mortgage Companies

The NAACP recently filed suit in Los Angeles federal court against 12 of the country's largest lenders, alleging systematic, institutionalized racism in sub-prime home mortgage lending. This is the first known lawsuit that challenges such lending practices on a broad scale.

According to the lawsuit, African American homeowners who received sub-prime mortgage loans from these lenders were more than 30 percent more likely to be issued a higher rate loan than Caucasian borrowers with the same qualifications.

"We are asking our members and all African American borrowers who bought or refinanced a home in the last five years to come forward and tell us their stories or at least re-examine their mortgages," said NAACP National Board of Directors Chairman Julian Bond. "They can help us correct these egregious, demoralizing practices that too often turn the so-called American dream of homeownership into a nightmare."

Other studies cited in the lawsuit demonstrate that disparities are pervasive. In fact, upper income African Americans are more than twice as likely to receive higher cost loans as their lower income white counterparts. The Federal Reserve Board, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the FDIC have all made similar observations.

"Lenders named in the suit, on average, made high cost sub-prime loans to higher qualified African Americans 54 percent of the time, compared to 23 percent of the time for Caucasians," said NAACP Interim President & CEO Dennis Courtland

Hayes.

Mortgage lenders named in the lawsuit include: Ameriquest, Fremont Investment & Loan, Option One, WMC Mortgage, Long Beach Mortgage, BNC Mortgage, Accredited Home Lenders, Encore Credit, Bear Sterns First Franklin Financial, HSBC Finance and Washington Mutual.

We are asking our members and all African American borrowers who bought or refinanced a home in the last five years to come forward and tell us their stories.

"The NAACP is bringing this suit as part of its longstanding demand that offending lenders stop discriminatory practices and bring their activities into compliance with federal law including the Fair Housing Act, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, and the Civil Rights Act," said NAACP Interim General Counsel Angela Ciccolo.

Even when creditworthiness and other risk characteristics are accounted for, African Americans are still significantly more likely to get higher rate loans. According to the lawsuit, these statistical disparities are not mere coincidences, but instead are a result of systematic and predatory targeting of African-Americans borrowers.

"My credit record warrants a better interest rate," said Amara Weaver of the Waukesha County NAACP in Wisconsin, whose mortgage was shifted to a sub-prime lender immediately after closing on a property in her neighborhood that had been a drug den. "As a professional if I get treated

that way, I know those who are less fortunate are victimized more often. This situation lets me know I can't expect equal treatment and that is frustrating."

"It's extremely frustrating," added Michelle Allison of the NAACP's Merced Branch in California's Central Valley. She refinanced with a major lender and was locked into a prepayment loan and now owes \$100,000 above what she initially requested. "It's like being over a barrel. I just wanted to be treated fairly and receive the best service. I was not given options or enough information for me to make an alternate decision. I want to get back to where I was financially before I received my loan."

NAACP branches across the nation are addressing the predatory lending issue. In Michigan, the Detroit branch's executive director Heaster Wheeler chairs the state's Predatory Lending Task Force. He and others have met with Gov. Jennifer Granholm who has instructed the state insurance and banking commissioner as well the state's civil rights office to coordinate with the branch to craft further legislation and use their authority more strictly to enforce current laws. The Washington, D.C. Branch has partnered with the American Association of Retired Persons. Through workshops, seminars, church meetings and other gatherings it has been discovered that the typical predatory lending victim in that city is an elderly African American female who is single and on social security. They are encouraged to refinance for home improvements and other reasons. The NAACP's Connecticut State Conference has a committee to address

See Lawsuit—p. 5

ERI Initiative Helps Increase Diversity

Since 1996, the NAACP has been measuring corporate America’s financial relationship with the African American community through its Economic Reciprocity Initiative (ERI).

The NAACP is committed to creating access to equal opportunities for African Americans; one of the ways we achieve this is through the ERI. This initiative has been successful in helping to increase diversity in the areas of hiring and promotion, vendor relations, advertising and marketing, and charitable giving.

Over the past eleven years, the ERI has expanded its scope and has continued to highlight on an annual basis the diversity efforts made in some of the leading industries. This year the NAACP surveyed fifty-three corporations in the following five industries: lodging, telecommunications, financial services, general merchandising, and automotive.

While the progress over the years has shown improvement, the opportunity to make a more meaningful impact is still ahead. The ERI recognizes that one of the ways in which companies can continue to make strides is in the area of vendor relations/supplier diversity. Corporations spend millions of dollars each year purchasing goods and services. We believe that corporations should make a greater effort to support African American vendors when acquiring goods and services. Recognizing the important role that vendor relations and small business development play in the economy, the NAACP has weighted the supplier diversity category more in grading the corporations.

As always, the NAACP will continue to focus on the hiring and recruit-

ment, marketing and communications practices within each of the industries involved in the initiative. Additionally, the NAACP has launched its Best Practices Diversity Guide as a supplement to the consumer guide. The best practices guide highlights innovative strategies undertaken by companies in an effort to help improve diversity in corporate America.

To access the 2007 NAACP Economic Reciprocity Initiative Consumer Choice Guide and the Best Practices Diversity Guide, please visit our web site at www.naacp.org.

See chart to the right for ERI scores.

Lawsuit continued from p. 4

predatory lending issues and has been actively engaged in assisting individuals in their cases. They are also encouraging legislative action and are conducting community education initiatives.

In addition to the NAACP’s Legal Department, the organization and the proposed class of its members are represented by Feazell & Tighe LLP of Austin and Kabatek Brown Kellner LLP of Los Angeles and the law office of Gary L. Bledsoe.

For more information on the lawsuit or join the class action go to naacp.org or call the NAACP National Office at (877) NAACP-98.

ERI SCORES

COMPANY/SCORE/GRADE

Automotive Industry

DaimlerChrysler	2.90	B-
Ford	2.81	B-
Toyota	2.57	C+
General Motors	2.43	C
BMW	2.26	C
Hyundai	2.24	C
Honda	1.89	C-
Mitsubishi	1.81	C-
Nissan	1.65	D+
Volkswagen	1.34	D

Financial Services Industry

Wachovia Corp.	3.24	B
Bank of America	3.09	B
SunTrust Banks, Inc.	2.94	B-
Washington Mutual	2.87	B-
Keycorp	2.62	C+
LaSalle Bank	2.62	C+
Wells Fargo & Co.	2.56	C+
U.S. Bancorp	2.54	C+
Fifth-Third Bank	2.47	C
National City	2.44	C
Citigroup, Inc.	2.38	C
PNC Financial	2.24	C
J.P. Morgan Chase	1.94	C-
Citizen’s Financial	1.78	C-

General Merchandising Industry

Federated Dept. Stores	2.82	B-
Wal-Mart Stores, Inc.	2.57	C+
J.C. Penney Company	1.70	D+
Nordstrom, Inc.	1.44	D
Kohl’s Dept. Stores	1.38	D
Sears Holding Corp.	0.88	D-
Dillard’s, Inc.	0.00	F
Target	0.00	F

Lodging Industry

Loews	2.91	B-
Adam’s Mark	2.77	B-
Marriott	2.62	C+
Starwood	2.30	C
Intercontinental	2.19	C
Hyatt	2.11	C
Carlson	2.08	C
Wyndam	1.91	C-
Hilton	1.88	C-
Choice	1.65	D+
Omni	1.50	D+

Telecommunications Industry

Alltel	3.05	B
AT&T	2.87	B-
Cablevision	0.00	F
Charter	1.94	C-
Comcast	2.76	B-
Cox	2.68	C+
Embarq Corporation	1.69	D+
Qwest	1.21	D
Sprint Nextel	1.94	C-
Time Warner Cable	2.49	C
T-Mobile	0.00	C
Verizon	2.71	C+

Wall Street Internship Program Caps Successful Debut

Gateway to Leadership, the groundbreaking internship program that places outstanding African American students in summer intern positions at some of the nation's premier financial services firms, graduated its inaugural student class in a two-day series of events in New York City recently.

The 19 interns gathered with the program's organizers, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and The Money Management Institute (MMI), in addition to executives from sponsoring companies, including Brinker Capital, Goldman Sachs, Charles Schwab & Co., Inc., and Lockwood Advisors, Inc. The closing evening events included a student panel discussion on lessons learned from the internship experiences, a presentation to the winners of a student case study competition, and keynote speeches by NAACP Interim President Dennis Courtland Hayes, MMI President Christopher Davis and Brinker Capital founder Charles Widger.

"The Gateway to Leadership program has opened doors for me that I didn't even know existed," said Tiffani Davis, a senior majoring in accounting and Finance at Florida A & M University, who interned for the summer at Morgan Stanley. "Not only have I gained a better understanding of the inner workings of the financial services industry, but I've also made lifelong connections through my program sponsors. I hope to become an active member of the Gateway alumni association, helping students like me have the same opportunities to learn from and network with leaders in financial services."



2007 inaugural class of Gateway to Leadership summer interns.

Day two of the closing events saw the interns tour key Wall Street locations, including The Bank of New York, The Depository Trust & Clearing Corporation, and New York Stock Exchange, where they were addressed by Prudential Investments President, Judy Rice.

"African Americans continue to be under-represented in America's financial institutions," said the NAACP's Dennis Hayes. "It is our hope that these young men and women will not only be better prepared to compete in the financial services industry, but will also take their experiences and their enthusiasm back to their schools, communities and their peers."

Gateway to Leadership officially launched its first intern class June 4, preparing students—many from historically black colleges and universities—

for leadership roles in the financial services industry. Conceived by Brinker Capital founder Chuck Widger, who is a member of MMI's Board of Governors, the program places students in the financial services field.

"The program was successful beyond even my anticipation," noted Widger. "The interns came from many different backgrounds and schools, but they all shared an unbridled enthusiasm for their summer jobs and learning opportunities at their host firms. We're already planning next year's curriculum, which promises to offer even more host firms, participating schools and opportunities."

For more information on next year's Gateway to Leadership visit www.gatewaytoleadership.org.

Reversing the Dropout Crisis for African Americans

As parents, educators, school boards and students prepare for the 2007-2008 school year, the NAACP Education Department offers the following points for consideration.

There is a major crisis in our high schools that it is disproportionately affecting students of color. Large high school dropout rates are threatening to derail the hopes and aspirations of our community as well as the future of our most precious resource – our children.

Approximately 1 million children drop out of school each year. Nearly 50 percent of African American students who drop out are leaving school with less than two years left to complete their high school education. There is clearly a need for focused, deliberate action to reverse this trend.

Consider the statistical profile for a student of color leaving high school without obtaining a regular high school diploma as compiled recently by the Alliance for Excellent Education.

- In the 2006–07 school year, 1.2 million students failed to graduate with their class; a majority of these non-graduates were racial and ethnic minorities (EPE Research Center 2007).
- In the 2003–04 school year, only 53.4 percent of black students, 49.3 percent of American Indian and Alaska Native students, and 57.8 percent of Hispanic students graduated on time (EPE Research Center 2007).
- In the 2003–04 school year, only 46.2 percent of Black boys, 44.6 percent of American Indian and Alaska native boys, and 52.3 percent of Hispanic boys graduated on time (EPE Research Center 2007).
- Graduation rates for Asian Pacific American (APA) students are

unaccounted for and their needs often overlooked because existing data is not disaggregated to illustrate the dire circumstances of many students from various APA communities.

- The nation’s minority students are four times more likely to attend a high school with very low graduation rates (60 percent or lower) than the nation’s non-minority students (Balfanz and Legters 2004).

Current research shows conclusively that students of color who fail to graduate from high school are more likely to be unemployed, on public assistance programs, incarcerated, in poor health, and more likely to die at younger ages. The NAACP’s 2001 *Call for Action in Education* is the Association’s organic guide for education reform and advocacy.

Based on that document, the NAACP Education Department proposes the following 10-point plan of action for arresting and reversing the dropout trend among African American high school students:

1. Schools and districts must work closely and aggressively with NAACP units and state conferences to involve parents and entire
2. communities more intimately in the educational process of young people in that community.
3. Closely and consistently monitor student progress through a variety of assessment and evaluation methods beyond one high stakes standardized test.
4. Involve local business, community colleges, and technical/vocational institutions in cooperative partnerships that provide alternate routes to receiving a regular high school diploma.
5. Standardize the methods for defining, calculating and reporting on dropout rates for all students.
6. Develop programs EARLY that are designed to prevent students from dropping out.
7. Ensure that teachers and administrators have the resources and support necessary to educate all students.
8. Hold schools accountable for decreasing their dropout rates and increasing their graduation rates.
9. End the over-identification and under-servicing of minority students in special education programs.
10. Provide schools with the resources to ensure that curricular material is culturally relevant.
11. Decrease resource inequities between and among schools.

NAACP Regional Contacts:

Region I, III, IV	Rev. Gil Ford – Regional Director
Region II	Nelson B. Rivers – Chief of Field Operations
Region V, VI	Rev. Charles White – Deputy Chief of Field Operations
Region VII	Andrea Brown Gee – Manager, Internal Affairs

For questions related to the regions, please call your regional representative at 410-580-5777.

NAACP Fights to Secure Justice for Louisiana's "Jena 6"

The NAACP and its partners are providing considerable resources in defense of six Louisiana teens, who in the last several months, have faced overly aggressive prosecution and extended incarceration for fighting with whites in their community. The group has come to be known as the Jena 6—in reference to the small town where a series of racial incidents escalated leading to the arrest of the young men and all being charged with serious criminal conduct offenses that could lead to many years of imprisonment.

The facts in the case:

In a small highly segregated rural Louisiana town of Jena in September 2006, a black student asked permission from school administrators to sit under the shade of a tree commonly reserved for the enjoyment of white students. School officials advised the black students to sit wherever they wanted and they did. The next day, three nooses, in the school colors, were hanging from the same tree. The Jena high school principal found that three white students were responsible and recommended expulsion. The white superintendent of schools over-ruled the principal and gave the students a three-day suspension, saying that the nooses were "a youthful stunt." Black students decided to resist and organized a sit-in under the tree to protest the lenient treatment given to the noose-hanging white students.

Racial tensions remained elevated throughout the fall. On Monday, December 4, 2006, a white student who allegedly had been racially taunting black students in support of

the students who hung the nooses got into a fight with black students. Allegedly, the white student was taken to the hospital treated, released, reportedly attended a social function later that evening.

As a result of this incident, six black Jena students were arrested and charged with attempted second-degree murder. All six were expelled from school. The six charged were: 17-year-old Robert Bailey Junior whose bail was set at \$138,000; 17-year-old Theo Shaw - bail \$130,000;

NAACP Interim General Counsel Angela Ciccolo:
"These cases demand national attention and support. The NAACP will work to achieve racial healing and unbiased justice for the Jena 6."

18-year-old Carwin Jones—bail \$100,000; 17-year-old Bryant Purvis—bail \$70,000; 16 year old Mychal Bell, a sophomore in high school who was charged as an adult and for whom bail was set at \$90,000; and a still unidentified minor.

On the morning of the trial, the District Attorney reduced the charges from attempted second degree murder to second degree aggravated battery and conspiracy. Aggravated battery in Louisiana law demands the attack be with a dangerous weapon. The prosecutor was allowed to argue to the jury that the tennis shoes worn by

Bell could be considered a dangerous weapon.

When the pool of potential jurors was summoned, fifty people appeared, all white. The jury deliberated for less than three hours and found Mychal Bell guilty on the maximum possible charges of aggravated second-degree battery and conspiracy. He faces up to a maximum of 22 years in prison. The rest of the Jena 6 awaits similar trials.

On August 26, 2007, Assistant General Counsel Anson Asaka, Field Operations Director Charles White, Youth and College Director Stefanie Brown and Youth Field Director Althea Bonello traveled to Jena, Louisiana and met with families to discuss their concerns regarding legal assistance, organizing and fundraising. The Branch and Field Department plans on organizing a major demonstration on September 20, 2007, the day of Mychal Bell's sentencing.

"These cases demand national attention and support," said NAACP Interim General Counsel Angela Ciccolo. "The NAACP will work to achieve racial healing and unbiased justice for the Jena 6."

The NAACP encourages concerned individuals to sign the online petition, call or write Louisiana Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco and States Attorney Charles C. Foti to express their concern. Individuals can also donate to the Jena 6 and the NAACP to support ongoing efforts to secure justice in this case. More information can be found on the NAACP web site at <http://www.naacp.org>.

Amid Claims of Racial Bias, the NAACP Probes San Jose Police

Last month, Rev. Nelson B. Rivers III of the national NAACP met with Police Chief Rob Davis over what he called alarming allegations that San Jose police arrest and use force on a disproportionate number of people of color.

“We understand profiling can be going in the country,” Chief Davis said. “We understand the sensitivity of the issue. The San Jose PD is committed to doing everything we can to ensure that that does not happen in San Jose.” In the meeting, recommended that the city hire outside consultants to investigate the department and develop more diversity

among its senior ranks. Rivers also suggested the police force give more credibility to people making complaints of racism and admit that the disparate statistics are a problem.

In March, police released a report that revealed Latinos represented more than half of the department’s use-of-force arrests. It also concluded that African-Americans were subjected to use of force out of proportion to their population in the city.

According to that unprecedented “Use of Force” report, 10 percent of the 34,000 people arrested in 2006 were African-American, but 17 percent of those subjected to force

were African-American. The city is roughly 32 percent white, according to the latest census figures, 32 percent Latino and 30 percent Asian. Only 3 percent of the city’s residents are black.

Last year, the Santa Clara County civil grand jury investigated allegations of racial profiling. But the 14-page report, prompted by a complaint from the San Jose Silicon Valley NAACP, found no evidence of systematic racial profiling within the department. It did note “legitimate concerns” about police “excesses.” (San Jose Mercury News)

Entertainment

NAACP/NBC Screenwriting Fellowship Established at UCLA School of Theater, Film and Television

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and NBC Entertainment today announced the first recipient of the newly established NAACP/NBC Fellowship in Screenwriting at UCLA’s School of Theater, Film and Television.

NBC Entertainment and NBC Universal TV Studio co-chairman Marc Graboff and NAACP interim president and chief executive officer Dennis Courtland Hayes named writer-director Yule Caise, M.F.A. ’07, the inaugural fellow. Caise was selected from among five finalists submitted by members of UCLA’s screenwriting faculty for review by NBC and the NAACP.

“NBC is proud to join with the NAACP in sponsoring this vital fellowship that will encourage new voices within the minority community to learn valuable screenwriting skills

under the guidance of such an excellent school as UCLA,” Graboff said. “This involvement underscores NBC Universal’s continuing commitment to promote diversity within the entertainment industry’s artistic community.”

The \$20,000 fellowship will be awarded annually to a screenwriting graduate student, with primary consideration given to those students with unique and original voices who further the interests of underrepresented minorities in the entertainment industry.

“The NAACP has historically recognized the importance of education as a tool for advancement and is proud to be working with UCLA and NBC in this effort,” Hayes said.

“We applaud NBC for making this commitment to the development and support of new diverse talent in the entertainment industry.”

NBC executives serve as mentors

to the fellow, who is required to participate in internships at NBC and the NAACP’s Hollywood Bureau. Ted Frank, executive vice president of NBC Entertainment Strategy and Programs, is supervising the fellowship project in collaboration with Vic Bulluck, executive director of the NAACP’s Hollywood Bureau.

The NAACP/NBC Fellowship in Screenwriting is part of UCLA’s Ensuring Academic Excellence initiative, a five-year effort aimed at generating \$250 million in private commitments specifically for the recruitment and retention of the very best faculty and graduate students. The initiative was launched in June 2004 and its goals include \$50 million to fund fellowships and scholarships in UCLA’s professional schools.

Local Spotlight

Florida Branch Marches for Jobs & Justice

Last month, the Miami-Dade NAACP sponsored a March for Jobs and Justice. The purpose of this direct action was to commemorate the August 28, 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Forty-four years later, South Florida continues to experience the problems of blatant and deliberate racism in governmental employment practices, disparities in resources for youth in education, unwarranted attacks on the character of black males in positions of power and more. This action highlighted these issues in order to help bring about changes. Adora Obi Nweze, President of the Florida State Conference of NAACP Branches and a National Board member, was in attendance at the rally, which featured music and speakers discussing labor conditions, housing conditions, immigration, and educational opportunities. Bishop Victor T. Curry, President, President of the Miami-Dade NAACP, also discussed next steps as a result of the march.

Research

African American Policy Opinion Survey

During the months of July and August, the NAACP Research department released an online policy survey in which respondents were asked their opinions on education, police misconduct, affirmative action, and immigration as they relate to African Americans.

Over 2,100 individuals from across the country responded to the survey. The data is currently being analyzed, though a preliminary review suggests somewhat moderate views on these issues. Detailed findings of the data will be made available via the NAACP web site in October.

Many of the policy survey respondents were recruited through the NAACP Public Opinion Survey Panel in which individuals who opted-in have the opportunity periodically to provide their opinions on a host of social, economic, and political issues.

If you would be interested in opting-in to the survey panel, send an email with your preferred email address, gender, age, and race to surveypanel@naacpnet.org.

Policy

StateNet: The NAACP's Civil Rights Bills Tracking System

Could your work as an advocate benefit from more information about state and federal legislation? The NAACP has invested in a service called StateNet, which tracks important bills in the areas of health, education, criminal justice, international affairs, civic engagement and economic empowerment. StateNet allows NAACP users to come to the website to look up civil rights bills by topic, bill number, state or region.

This service helps to alert NAACP users at an early stage about critical civil rights legislation like affirmative action bans, minimum wage changes and voter ID requirements. It also allows users to quickly update members about the status of important civil rights bills. The StateNet system is available on the website. Look for the link to StateNet at www.naacp.org. Enter the username & password "advocate" and start following the bills that impact civil rights.

Crisis

NAACP Welcomes Jabari Asim As New Editor of *The Crisis*

In August Jabari Asim, former Washington Post section leader, became the new editor of *The Crisis*.

"The Board of *The Crisis* is enormously pleased that Jabari Asim has agreed to edit our publication," said Roger Wilkins, the magazine's publisher. "Mr. Asim is a seasoned editor, a fine writer and author of a new best selling book. He is a gentleman devoted to the cause of racial justice, is excited about his new role with the NAACP and we are energized by his joining our ranks."

Asim comes to *The Crisis* from the Washington Post where he was deputy editor of its "Book World" section, where he helped determine coverage of poetry, essays, fiction and nonfiction created around the world.

"*The Crisis* will encourage its readers to recognize that there is no time less like the present to work together to overcome injustice and create a fair and equitable society for all Americans," Asim said. "I'm honored and humbled to be a part of *The Crisis*' rich and enduring tradition of committed journalism, constructive dissent and enlightened resistance. I will do my best to uphold its standards."

The Crisis was originally published by NAACP co-founder W.E. B. Du Bois beginning in 1910 as the premier crusading voice for civil rights. Today, *The Crisis*, one of the oldest black periodicals in America, continues this mission. A respected journal of thought, opinion and analysis, the magazine remains the official publication of the NAACP and is an articulate partner in the struggle for human rights for people of color.



STATE POLICY UPDATES

Illinois Governor Signs Smoke-Free Act

Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich recently signed the Smoke-Free Illinois Act. Originally sponsored by State Rep. Karen A. Yarbrough and State Sen. Terry Link, the act imposes a statewide ban on smoking in all public places, including bars, restaurants public buildings and work places. Based on evidence in other smoke-free states, Illinois should see a drop in lung cancer rates of up to 20 percent and a 10 percent decline in all tobacco related deaths. The Smoke-Free Illinois Act supersedes most local ordinances that may have been considered weak, such as allowing a phased in smoking ban or exempting establishments that installed approved air filtration systems. (Center for Policy Alternatives)



New Voter Legislation for North Carolina: NC Legislature OKs Same-day Voter Registration

The North Carolina House and Senate have agreed on a bill to allow people to register to vote and cast their ballots at the same time at early voting facilities. Current state law allows registered voters to cast their ballots early, in the three weeks prior to an election, but people must be registered to vote 25 days before the election. HB 91, sponsored by Rep. Deborah Ross, allows voters to register and vote throughout the early voting period, up until the Saturday before Election Day. The House and Senate settled on a version of the bill

without a Senate-added amendment requiring registration forms and ballots to be printed in English only. The bill was signed by the governor in July. (Center for Policy Alternatives)

NC to Provide Education and Awareness to Reinstated Voters

The state passed HB1743, an election reform bill which will require the State Board of Elections, the Department of Corrections, and the Administrative Office of the Courts to provide written notice to formerly incarcerated persons informing them of their right to vote upon completion of sentence and provide them with a voter registration form. The bill, which will “jointly develop and implement educational programs and procedures for persons to apply to register to vote at the time they are restored to citizenship” awaits the governor’s signature. (The Sentencing Project)

Maine Governor Signs Financial Literacy Bill

Gov. John Baldacci has signed LD 216, sponsored by Rep. Marilyn Canavan, which will help expand financial education programs in the state. The law creates the Council on Financial Literacy to support projects that provide financial literacy education and to provide up to \$50,000 a year in matching grants to these projects. The bill’s supporters hope to reach high school and college students, whose level of indebtedness is rapidly rising. (Center for Policy Alternatives)

Connecticut Raises the Age of Juvenile Court Jurisdiction

SB 1500, signed by Gov. Jodi Rell, contains a provision to raise the age of juvenile court jurisdiction from 16 to 18. Sen. Toni Harp and Rep. Toni Walker were key sponsors of the reform. Minors who commit nonviolent offenses will now be tried in juvenile courts where they have access to age-appropriate programs and rehabilitative services. New York and North Carolina are now the only states that automatically try 16- and 17-year olds as adults, although Rhode Island has just joined 10 other states in automatically trying 17-year olds as adults. Youths placed in the adult prison system are much more likely to become serious criminals than those dealt with in juvenile courts. (Center for Policy Alternatives)

Washington Supreme Court Rules on Paying Fines Before Voting

The Washington Supreme Court ruled recently that felons who serve their full prison terms still must pay their court-ordered legal fines before voting again. In a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court said the law did not illegally discriminate against poor felons who have trouble paying their legal bills. Under this law, Washington felons must complete their entire sentence – including payment of all court costs, fees, and restitution – before their voting rights may be restored. The Court stated that the law doesn’t violate the state constitution’s fair treatment laws because the policy applies to all felons regardless of their crime. (komotv.com/news/local/8731652.html)

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