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The Soul of New Orleans

2008 Presidential Primary Season

Red, White, Black or Blue?

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in New Orleans

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Saturday, February 9, 2008

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2008 Presidential Primary Season:

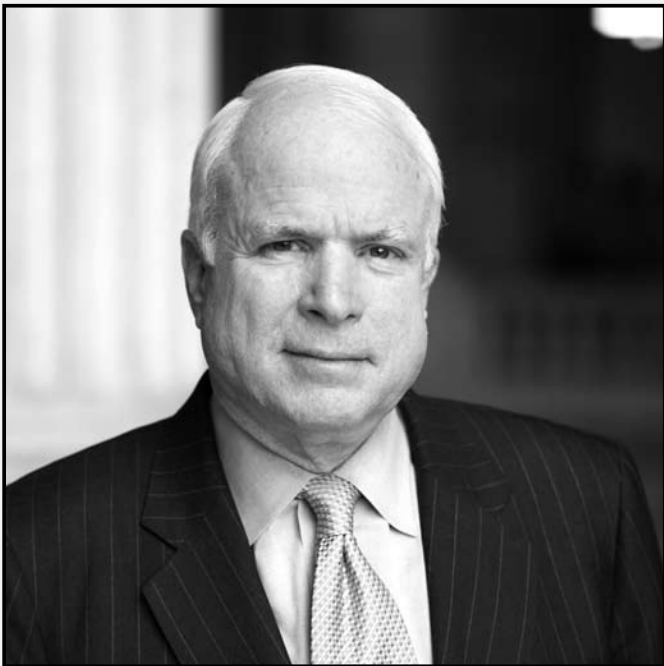
Red, White, Black or Blue?



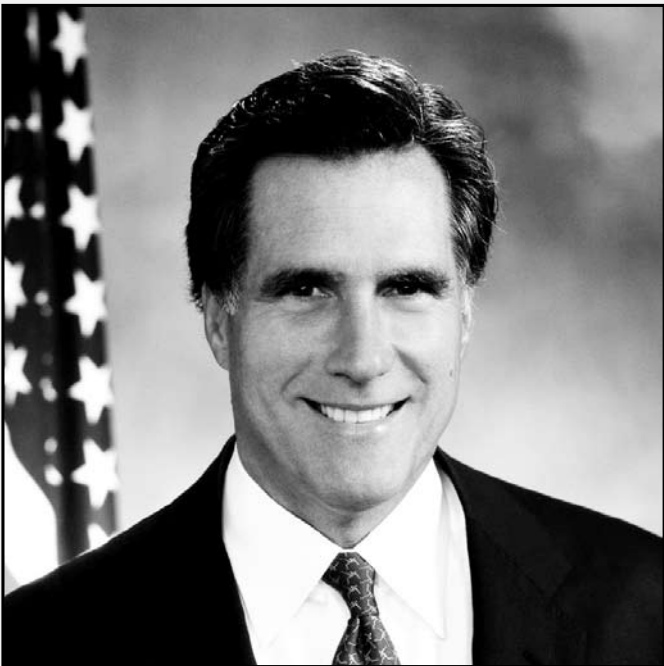
Senator Hillary Clinton



Senator Barack Obama



Senator John McCain



Governor Mitt Romney

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DATA NEWS WEEKLY

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By Cheryl Mainor

This historical National Primary season has brought more excitement to America's democratic process. The diverse field of candidates and urgent issues are driving voters in record numbers, but do results show a preference for Red, White Black or Blue?

This Saturday, Louisianans will again travel to the polls and caucus to voice their preferences for candidates for President. Here's a snapshot of Louisiana:

Louisiana Demographics (2006 Census ACS)

- Population: 4,287,768
- Gender: 48.5 male, 51.5 female
- Race: 64.4 white, 31.6 black, 1.3 asian, 0.2 indian, 0.0 pacific islander, 2.9 hispanic,
- Age: 74.6% 18 years and over; 12.2% 65 years and over; Median age:
- Median Household Income: \$39,337
- Families Below Poverty Level: 14.4%
- Education: 8.6% of those over 25 have a bachelor's degree or higher

Democratic Primary Saturday, Feb 9th
Delegates at Stake: 68
Republican Caucus, Saturday Feb 9th
Delegates at Stake: 47

prior to his Iowa victory, were predicting that Super Tuesday would seal the nomination for Sen. Clinton. On the contrary, it only served to further entwine the two candidates in a contest which is igniting thongs of voters from every race, gender, ethnic background and age demographic, and pushing voter participation to record levels in a Democratic primary.

In most of the 22 states participating in Super Tuesday, Democrats out Voted Republicans some at a rate of 2 or 3 to one, which may indicate that Democrats if they pick the right candidate who can unite the party, will have a very good chance of winning the general election, as more states (red states) have come into play for Democrats. It also suggests that there is lackluster support for the Republican offerings.

Super Tuesday Results

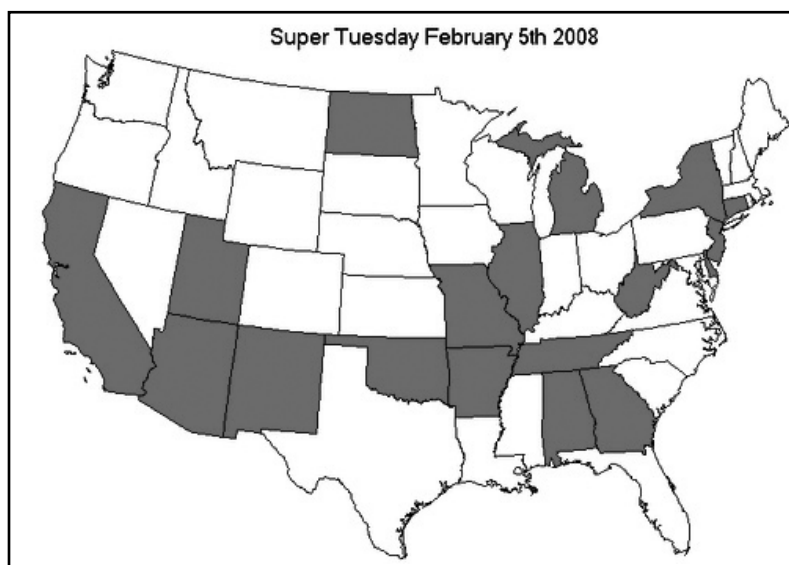
Sen won victories over Sen. Barack Obama in California, Massachusetts, New Jersey and New York last night, giving her presidential campaign a crucial boost. But Obama countered by winning of a string of states, including the general election battleground of Missouri, in the seesaw race for the Democratic nomination. The results ensured that the fierce

Arizona, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Tennessee. Those victories helped stem what appeared to be gathering momentum around Obama's candidacy since he won in South Carolina on Jan. 26. But Obama won in more places than his New York rival, racking up victories in his home state of Illinois, as well as Alabama, Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Minnesota, North Dakota and Utah. His narrow victory in Missouri came after Clinton appeared on the brink of winning there. Only the outcome in New Mexico remained unresolved early this morning. In many of the states Clinton won, Obama had surged from far behind to narrow the gap in the days before Super Tuesday. Her ability to hold off his charge brought a sense of relief to her campaign advisers, but the likelihood that neither would emerge with a significant advantage in delegates was a sign that their roller-coaster competition would continue.

McCain Dominates Big States

Sen. John McCain surged closer toward the Republican nomination yesterday by capturing the biggest Super Tuesday states, including California, but failed to knock out his rivals, who deprived him of victories across GOP strongholds in the South and West. As millions of Republicans went to the polls in 21 states, the senator from Arizona racked up hundreds of delegates on the strength of winner-take-all primaries in the Northeast and elsewhere. But his inability to win in more than half of the states voting yesterday complicated his hopes of rallying the party behind his candidacy. Former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee scored a surprising sweep of his native South, while former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney picked up a number of states in the West but fell short in critical battlegrounds that would have established him as McCain's primary challenger. Huckabee and

Romney vowed last night to stay in the race as it moves to Virginia, Maryland and the District on Tuesday. The multiple-front clash represented a virtual national primary as Republicans voted to choose a standard-bearer, with more states voting at once than in any other GOP nomination battle. McCain appeared poised to emerge with roughly half of the 1,191 delegates he needs to clinch the nomination, a huge one-day take after an epic, year-long fight to define the Republican Party in a post-George W. Bush era. McCain easily captured New York, New Jersey and Connecticut, after being endorsed by former New York mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, a defeated rival. McCain also won Missouri, Arizona, Illinois, Oklahoma and Delaware. His victory in California appeared to be by a large margin, though Romney will probably collect a sizable share of the state's delegates because they are apportioned by congressional district.



Clinton and Obama Remain Locked in Dead Heat

Something is happening across the country, that much cannot be denied by anyone witnessing this epic battle between Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton and Sen. Barack Obama over the Democratic Presidential nomination. And though the punditry is now collectively predicting that this race will end at the Democratic National Convention in Colorado this summer, Obama and his movement have surprised the establishment, who

contest for delegates will continue into critical primaries in Louisiana, Washington and Kansas (Republican) on Saturday, Feb 9th, with other Large and important states like Virginia, Maryland and D.C, on Tuesday Feb 12, and Texas and Ohio on March 4, and possibly beyond, in what has become the party's most competitive race in at least a quarter of a century. Clinton claimed four of the five biggest prizes in Super Tuesday's 22-state Democratic competition. She also captured

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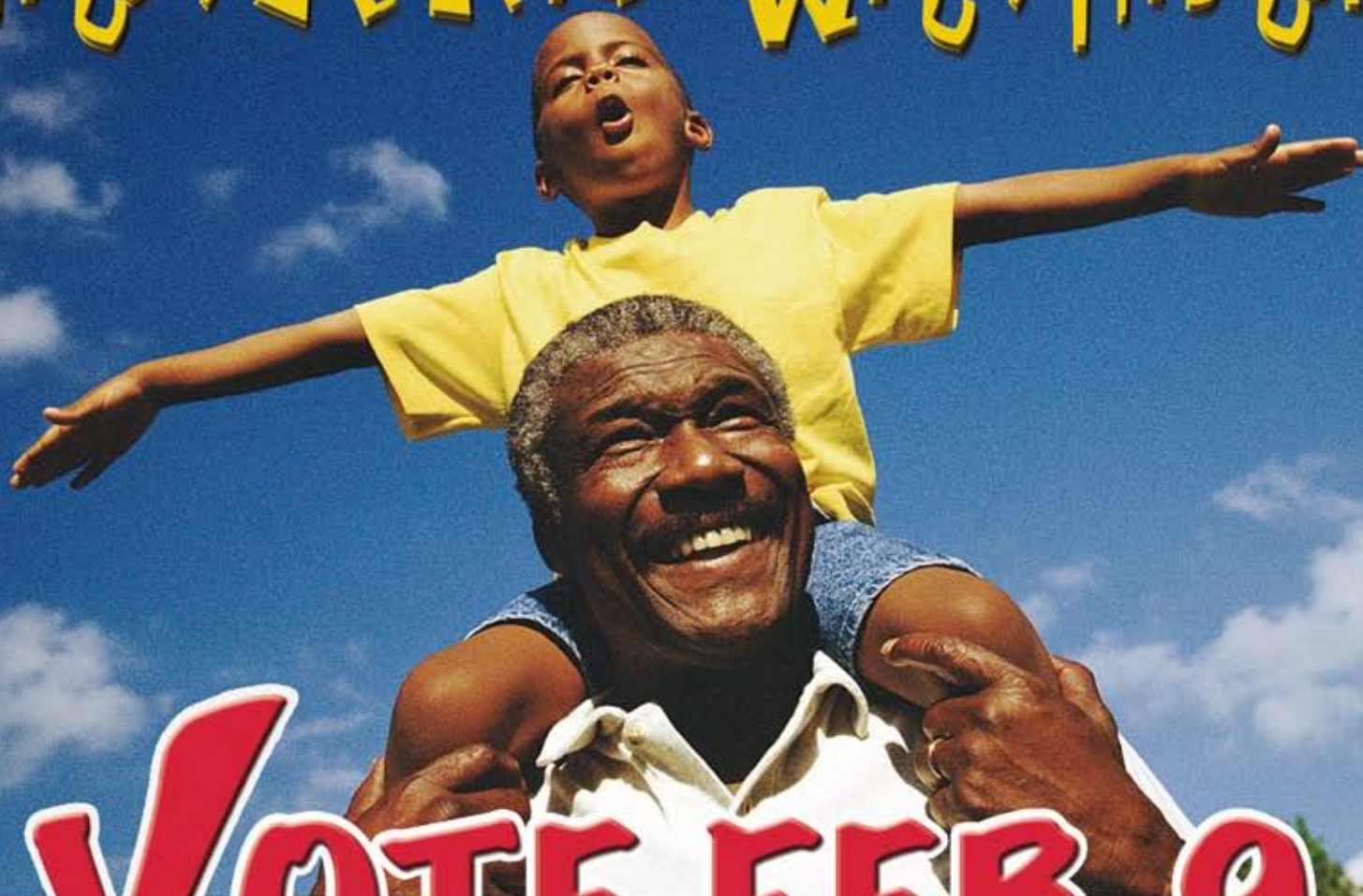
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First-Ever Convening of Ethnic Media and Civil Rights Groups in New Orleans

By Christine Senteno

The first-ever convening of Louisiana ethnic media, civil rights and immigrant rights groups met in New Orleans' Generation Hall Jan. 26. They discussed the challenges of covering news while the city's structures and ethnic makeup are changing rapidly.

New America Media and LSU's Manship School of Communication hosted the event where representatives from African American, Latino and Vietnamese news organizations shared concerns of reaching their own communities, growing their revenues and looking common ground with other ethnic groups.

Ethnic media's critical role during and after Hurricane Katrina has shifted to a new challenge: how to cover the rebuilding efforts – and news from each other's communities – as the rest of the country watches.



New Orleans Tribune editor Jacques Morial said many people across the nation are getting news about the rebuilding efforts in New Orleans from mainstream, establishment news sources. Ethnic news outlets need to look for ways to get news from their communities out across the nation. They bring a different perspective to the national debate that is often overlooked.

New Orleans Agenda Publish-

er Vincent Sylvain shared, "Obviously, there is a need for ethnic media. The audience is there. They need the information."

Director Sandy Close said NAM said she wanted to create a network that has the support of academics, journalism schools, civil rights groups and ethnic media outlets to promote inter-group relations.

Civil rights advocates explained access to housing, jobs, and

healthcare, as well as quality education and public safety are major concerns for all communities in New Orleans. Environmental concerns are also a top issue.

National Council of La Raza Program Coordinator Catherine Han Montoya said many community based organizations talk about these issues in silos without looking for opportunities to collaborate. These matters go beyond one topic, one community or one city.

She continued, "As my uncle eats the kim chee and my aunt eats the enchilada I recognize these issue are not just happening at the policy level, they are happening at the dinner table."

Pollster Sergio Bendixen presented NAM's recent national poll

years and was credited with helping bring the convening to New Orleans.

As the faces and buildings of New Orleans continue to change, Data News Weekly Editor Edwin Buggage said he was interested in expanding relationships with media in Latino and Vietnamese communities. He is hopeful these groups can work together to help inform advocates to build stronger collations in tackling problems that affect all groups.

El Tiempo publisher Juan Carlos Ramos explained New Orleans is a place where cultures are mixed together. All media outlets want to inform their communities about themselves and about other groups who share their interests.

The rapidly changing demographics from what Mayor Ray Nagin described as a "chocolate city" before Hurricane Katrina to now what has grown to include three times as many Latinos post-Katrina has brought an anti-immigrant backlash.

Senior Fellow for Washington, D.C.'s The Center for American Progress, Henry Fernandez said anti-immigrant groups are looking for ways to provide a wedge between ethnic groups. He explained hate groups are fundamentally against people of color.

Groups such as the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) are routinely used in mainstream news organizations as experts on the issue of immigration. However, the internationally known civil rights organization, the Southern Poverty Law Center has identified FAIR as a hate group.

Fernandez notes it is up to the ethnic media outlets to use credible sources and be vigilant about educating subscribers when mainstream media is not using them.

Ralph Izard Professor at LSU's Manship School of Mass Communication said their organization will be looking for ways to continue to bring ethnic media in New Orleans connected to each other.

Many representatives of the over 70 participants had expressed interest in keeping a dialogue going.



on race relations. The objective was to explore ways ethnic media could identify stereotypes, confront them and begin to strengthen ties.

One national poll finding showed respondent's felt ethnic media had a key role to play in the coverage of race relations. They should explore ways the media can step up to that challenge. It also revealed other ethnic groups felt African Americans had led the way in establishing civil rights that are benefiting all ethnic groups now.

LSU Associate Professor Jinx Broussard gave a historical presentation of African America media in New Orleans. Black newspapers have been around for centuries and have set the stage for ethnic media to gather their communities around the immigrant marches and protests in support of Jena 6.

Data News Weekly was recognized as one of the oldest and most respected newspapers in New Orleans. Publisher Terry Jones has worked with event co-hosts NAM and LSU for several

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Louisiana Presidential Primary Special

Candidates On the Issues

By Cheryl Mainor

With such tight races on the Democratic side, here's a chance to take a look at a few of the issues addressed by Candidates Obama and Clinton, McCain and Romney which may help Louisiana voters wade through the rhetoric and make an informed decision at the polls.

Barack Obama

Party: Democratic
Occupation: Lawyer
Current Job / Position: Senator from Illinois

Q: Do you have a plan to make health care more accessible to Americans? If so, how would you do it?

A: Every American has the right to affordable, comprehensive and portable health coverage. My plan will ensure that all Americans have health care coverage through their employers, private health plans, the federal government, or the states. My plan builds on and improves our current insurance system, which most Americans continue to rely upon, and creates a new public health plan for those currently without coverage. Under my plan, Americans will be able to choose to maintain their current coverage if they choose to. For those without health insurance I will establish a new public insurance program, and provide subsidies to afford care for those who need them. My plan includes a mandate that all children have health care coverage and I will expand eligibility for the Medicaid and SCHIP programs to help ensure we cover all kids. My plan requires all employers to contribute towards health coverage for their employees or towards the cost of the public plan. Under my plan a typical family will save \$2,500 each year.

Q: What specific changes would you make to the Social Security program?

A: Social Security is indispensable to our workers and seniors. It is a great reflection of our values and commitments, and I want to make sure it is solvent and viable for the American people, now and in the future. The focus of reform options should be on protecting the basic integrity and fairness of Social Security. I will work in

a bipartisan way to maintain Social Security's solvency for future generations. I believe everything has to be on the table that is genuinely intended to strengthen the program. We can close the gap with an equitable mix of benefit and tax changes similar to those recommended by the bipartisan Greenspan Commission in 1983.

Q: Do you support setting a deadline for either a withdrawal or a partial pullback of troops from Iraq? If so, what would be the date of that deadline?

A: I opposed this war from the beginning, when it was unpopular to do so, in part because I believed it was a diversion from the real threat of al Qaeda and that giving this President the authority would lead to the open-ended occupation we find ourselves in today. Now our soldiers find themselves in the crossfire of a civil war and our military is stretched thin. I support beginning the withdrawal of our troops from Iraq immediately, and under the plan I introduced in January 2007, we would have begun withdrawing forces engaged in combat operations on May 1, 2007. A withdrawal of our troops is the best leverage we have to press the Iraqi political leaders to make the political compromises necessary to end their civil war.

Q: Do you support affirmative action? If you do, why do you think it is a benefit to our country? If not, what do you think would be gained by changing or eliminating it?

A: I support affirmative action. When there is strong evidence of prolonged and systemic discrimination by organizations, affirmative action may be the only meaningful remedy available. Affirmative action programs, when properly structured, can open up opportunities otherwise closed to qualified minorities without having an adverse impact on the opportunities for whites. And while I support affirmative action for minorities, I also support efforts to increase opportunities for qualified students from low-income college to attend colleges and universities – regardless of their race.

Q: What would be your top three overall priorities if elected?

A: My top priority as president will be ending this war in Iraq, a

war that should have never been authorized and never been waged. In doing so, I will work to keep our country safe from terrorists and to restore American credibility around the world. Providing universal health care to the 47 million Americans who currently do not have it will be another top priority of my administration, as will combating global warming and putting our country on the path toward energy independence. But all of the issues that I have focused on in this campaign – whether it's creating a 21st century education system and fighting poverty or achieving comprehensive immigration reform and strengthening our economy – are vitally important and must be prioritized by the next president. And all of these issues share one thing in common: in order to fully address them, we have to do more than change political parties. We have to fundamentally change our politics and transform the way business is done in Washington.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

Party: Democratic
Occupation: Lawyer, U.S. Senator
Current Job / Position: Senator from New York

Q: Do you have a plan to make health care more accessible to Americans? If so, how would you do it?

A: Yes. I recently unveiled a plan that will provide quality, affordable health care to all Americans, including the 47 million who don't have coverage today. I believe we have a moral imperative to provide quality health care for all Americans, and when I am President, enacting legislation to provide guaranteed quality, affordable health care will be my top domestic priority. My plan is based on the

principles of shared responsibility and choice. If you have a plan you like, you keep it. If you want to change plans or aren't currently covered, you can choose from the same plans available to Members of Congress or opt into a public plan like Medicare. My plan will lower costs and improve quality, making health care affordable and accessible to everyone. It will lower health care costs by modernizing the system, focusing on preventive care, coordinating and streamlining care for chronically ill patients, and getting rid of the hidden cost of providing care to the uninsured. Under my plan, working families will get a tax credit to help pay for their premiums, insurance companies won't be able to deny coverage based on pre-existing conditions, and people won't lose coverage if they switch or lose their jobs.

Q: What specific changes

would you make to the Social Security program?

A: I have a clear, straightforward plan to deal with Social Security. First, return to fiscal responsibility. That will give us the kinds of options we had in the late 1990s, when we had a plan to keep Social Security solvent until 2055. Second, set up a bipartisan process to address Social Security's long-term challenges. Third, as part of that process, we should consider a range of modest fixes to strengthen the program. But I will never agree to privatization, and I do not believe we should fix Social Security on the backs of the middle class or our nation's seniors. I also believe that in addition to protecting Social Security for future generations, we need to do more to promote retirement savings. That's why I have a plan to give every American the chance to open a new American Retirement Account, with gener-

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Data Around Town

There was a good time to be had in New Orleans, during Mardi Gras, At the Zulu Ball, and Data was there. Here are some highlights:



Mr. & Mrs John C. Charles and their daughter, dressed to impress.



Mayor C. Ray Nagin at the Mayor's Ball stops to enjoy the moment and strike a pose



Mr. & Mrs John C. Charles and their daughter, dressed to impress.



Mr. & Mrs John C. Charles and their daughter, dressed to impress.



Mr. & Mrs John C. Charles and their daughter, dressed to impress.



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Judge tosses Katrina lawsuit against Engineer Corps

NEW ORLEANS, Jan 30 (Reuters) - A federal judge in New Orleans on Wednesday dismissed a class action lawsuit against the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

over the failure of the city's levee system during Hurricane Katrina's floods in 2005.

U.S. Judge Stanwood Duval ruled that the Corps, which de-

signed and built the levees and floodwalls meant to keep the below-sea-level city from being inundated, was shielded by a 1928 law that protects the federal

government from lawsuits over flood control projects.

In his ruling, Duval scolded the agency for "its failure to accomplish what was its task."

"Millions of dollars were squandered in building a levee system ... which was known to be inadequate by the Corps' own calculations," Duval wrote in his ruling, issued in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana.

Katrina's storm surge breached outflow canals bounded by levees and floodwalls in August 2005, flooding 80 percent of the city and killing as many as 1,600 people.

Lead plaintiffs' attorney Joe Bruno said in a statement he

would appeal the decision.

"I know I'm fighting an uphill battle, but I'm not going to give up," Bruno said.

Wednesday's ruling will not affect a similar case involving the Mississippi River-Gulf Outlet, a navigational canal that Duval had previously indicated was not protected by the 1928 Flood Control Act.

Hundreds of thousands of claims have been filed against the Corps over the flooding, Bruno said. He set the total value of the claims between \$30 billion and \$50 billion. (Reporting by Russell McCulley; Editing by Erwin Seba)

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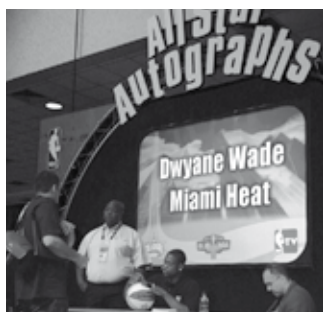
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Community Announcements

Abct Opens Its 8th Theater Season With A Bang

New Orleans, La. February 1, 2008...The Anthony Bean Community Theater presents Charles Fuller's Pulitzer Prize winning drama "A Soldier's Play, directed by Wilbert L Williams and starring its theater's founder Anthony Bean and veteran actor Harold X. Evans. Performances take place February 15-17, 22-24, 29 and March 1-2 and 7-9. Friday and Saturday at 8:00 PM and Sunday's matinee at 3:00 PM. (Note: Sunday's performance on March 2 will be an 8:00 PM evening show ONLY.) Tickets are \$18.00 for adults, \$16.00 for students and seniors, and are available by calling the Box Office at (504) 862-7529. (Box Office hours are Tuesday-Saturday at 2-6 PM. and two hours before performances.) You can also charge by phone or charge on line at www.anthonybeantheater.com.

Oscar Robertson to Hold Book Signing at Barnes & Noble Westbank

Basketball legend Oscar Robertson signs his autobiography "The Big O: My Life, My Times, My Game" and his instructional book "The Art of Basketball," Barnes & Noble Booksellers, 1601 B Westbank Expressway in Harvey, LA, Sunday, February 17, 2 p.m. (504) 263-1146 or www.bn.com.

www.ladatanews.com



The Time Is Now



Edwin Buggage
Data Editor

Election Day is finally here and it is truly been an interesting turn of events in the city and the state post Hurricane Katrina. It has been a rough time for many of us as we try to put the pieces of our lives back together. So many people are still scattered about the country trying to find their way home or just simply make sense of what has happened to the lives they once knew. This election as has many of the recent elections post Katrina is about much more than previous ones. The decisions we make today and the people we choose to represent us will have

a hand in shaping what our city and state will look like for years to come.

Today, we cannot afford to have the business as usual approach to government, so it is important for us as voters to think carefully this time about what is at stake. In this race for the White House there are some of the same faces that have dominated politics and public life for quite some time, and we must ask ourselves the question in these tough times are these the right people to do the job? If you believe they are then vote for them, but if you think that somebody new who has some different ideas can come in and make the changes necessary for this city, state and nation to move forward then by all means vote to put them in office. But regardless of who is placed in the White House it is time for us as citizens to recognize that the power does not lie solely with them it lies with us. We are the ones who entrust them with our vote of support, so in these tumultuous times we must ask for accountability from

our elected leaders.

We must hold them accountable and responsible for the decisions they make on our behalf. In these tough times we need courageous, honest and compassionate leaders who are about doing the right thing. We need leaders who will put people before politics, and the put progress of the nation and ahead of hubris and personal ambition. This is the time for them to truly stand for something, so we need special kinds of leaders, and it is up to us as voters to let this election on Saturday and the General Election in the Fall of 08 make a statement that we will not continue to let just anyone represent us for they are a reflection of how we are perceived across the globe.

The time is now for the people of Louisiana to make a stand, to truly make a statement that something new is on the horizon; a functioning working government that will work on behalf of the people and for the benefit of the people for this is a new day. The waters after Hurricane Katrina

crashed into the city of New Orleans, exposing the social breach that is inequality in this city. We need leadership that will bridge the gap between those who have and those who do not, we cannot continue to just stand idly by when the least of us continue to suffer, in this new city it is time for everybody to get a their fair share of the pie, and not what previously was the case where it's pie a la mode for a few and barely crumbs left over for the rest.

The time is now that we must recognize that the waters that flooded the city did not discriminate and that all of us are suffering trying to put our lives back together. Let us get past false divisions so that we can work less like individual fingers pointing at the problems and become one fist united pummeling the things that keep us divided and together move our city, state and forward. Although we must realize that unity is not uniformity and know that we will not always agree but we must have from this moment on a better way to solve our dif-

ference with discourse, courtesy, and respect.

Today we must realize that although we may have come here on different ships and even slept on separate decks, but we must realize right now we are in the same boat trying to save our city and our nation. So this Election Day we have a choice which path we can take using our votes as oars; we can choose to try to navigate our ship to a place where we all can work together to make this city, state and nation a better place, or we can do nothing and continue to let chaos ensue moving us further away from the dream of bringing back our city from the ashes. And today we have a chance to truly make it a better place, and voting is only one of the many ways we can achieve that, for citizenship is about being involved; so get involved and do something that can make your neighborhood, city, schools, church, and family better. For the power to make the world a better place is in our hands and the time is now.

Stimulus Efforts Not Enough to Halt Economic Decline



Marc Morial
President & CEO
National Urban League

To Be Equal

The news is in. In 2007, 1.3 million U.S. households faced some stage of foreclosure, up 79 percent from the previous year, according to RealtyTrac, which tracks foreclosures. This startling statistic coupled with declines in housing starts and sales explains to some extent why our nation's leaders want to as soon as possible stem the tide of economic decline in which the subprime mortgage debacle has no doubt played a role.

It should come as no surprise that in light of topsy-turvy markets and skittish investors that the powers that be would spring to action, in the midst of a competitive election year. Just what they ultimately agree upon will deter-

mine just how stimulating their efforts will be. In mid-January, U.S. House leaders and President George W. Bush struck an unlikely alliance in the name of stimulating the faltering economy. They must have realized that a tightening pocketbook and unemployment do little to quiet the restless and vote-happy American ranks.

Remember the 1992 presidential election when economics emerged as a major issue, thanks in part to Independent candidate H. Ross Perot's crusade for a balanced federal budget?

The billionaire's campaign helped give Bill Clinton an electoral edge over Bush's father, then-incumbent President George Herbert Walker Bush. Together, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi with Bush and Minority Leader John Boehner arrived at a \$150 billion compromise that provides tax rebates of \$300 and up to moderate- and low-income households, among other things. Much to the National Urban League's approval, they also included a provision raising limits on Federal Housing Administration-backed home loans designed to help ease the credit crunch and to give homeowners a greater opportunity to

refinance debilitating adjustable-rate mortgages.

There's no doubt that every little bit helps, especially in lean times, when a few hundred dollars can ease the strain of living paycheck to paycheck like so many African-Americans do. But, in crafting their stimulus package, our nation's leaders ignored tried-and-true strategies used in past recessions with much bigger bang for the buck than what the House passed in January.

A few hundred dollars isn't likely to give an unemployed American the kind of boost that an extra six months to find a new job is. Similarly, an extra \$300 per child is not likely to improve a household's bottom line as much as a summer job.

To effect long-term positive change, our leaders need to invest in long-term strategies that teach its citizens how to fish - not to throw them a minnow, usually in an election year.

The Urban League movement, however, would prefer a more comprehensive effort that incorporates an extension of unemployment benefits, increased food stamps and greater investment in summer jobs for at-risk youth.

According to a recent analysis by Moody.com's Chief Economist Mark Zandi, extending unemployment insurance and increasing food stamp payments would generate \$1.64 and \$1.73 per \$1 investment, respectively. That compares to \$1.26 per \$1 cost of the House-proposed tax rebates. With long-term unemployment up by 200,000 in 2007, an extension of unemployment insurance coupled with increased food stamps should be the first things put on the table.

In the House, they aren't but in the Senate they are. Even in prosperous times, Blacks experience twice the rate of unemployment of Whites. Just imagine how bad it is when the economy tanks. Increased food stamps not only help the unemployed, they help the underemployed as well as part-timers.

For Black teens, more than one third of them unemployed in December 2007, more than twice the rate of White teens, summer jobs help connect them to the working world, giving them desperately-needed skills and putting them on the road to economic self-sufficiency.

It's wonderful that our nation's

leaders want to show their love to their constituents in an election year. But will they still love us after Election Day? That is the real question here. Is it worth digging our nation further into debt for a short-term feel-good gain? Is it worth putting our future in jeopardy by investing in initiatives that fail to achieve the best result?

I would be remiss if I didn't applaud our leaders for putting aside partisan politics to further efforts to help fiscally struggling Americans. This rare show of bipartisan cooperation gives me hope that comprehensive and effective stimulus legislation will eventually see the light of day.

It is the NUL's ultimate hope that final legislation will look more like what the U.S. Senate is considering - one that includes an extension of unemployment benefits as well as increased food stamps - but also includes funds for summer jobs.

Our leaders should also use their stimulus package as a springboard for future efforts to level the economic playing field for all Americans of all tax brackets.

Marc Morial is president and CEO of the National Urban League.

Data Zone



AT&T presented Corporate Contribution grants to recipients at a reception held at the New Orleans African American Museum of Arts (NOAAM) on January 31. Standing bottom from L-R: Linda Lewis, Armstrong Services; Gina Recasner, NOAAM; Marsha Broussard, NOAAM; Elise Felix, Anthony Bean Community Theater; Adolph Bynum, NOAAM. Standing center from L-R: Ben McLeish, Desire Street Ministries; J.B. Watkins, Desire Street Ministries; Ronald Markham, New Orleans Jazz Orchestra; Tony Felix, Anthony Bean Community Theater. Standing top L-R: Keith Hitchens, AT&T Louisiana; Charles Johnson, NOAAM



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2008 Black History Month

Data News Weekly Black History Month Issues

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Election Special, Continued from page 7.

ous matching tax cuts of up to \$1,000 to help middle-class families save.

Q: Do you support setting a deadline for either a withdrawal or a partial pullback of troops from Iraq? If so, what would be the date of that deadline?

A: Yes. I have voted for end dates in May 2008, June 2008, and December 2008. But President Bush is not willing to set an end date. When I am President, I will end the war in Iraq. I will convene a meeting of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, my Secretary of Defense, and my National Security Council to draw up a viable plan to bring our troops home starting within the first 60 days of my administration. When I am President, I will withdraw our forces from the sectarian fighting. There will be no American soldiers refereeing a civil war. No more combat patrols in Baghdad.

Q: Do you support affirmative action? If you do, why do you think it is a benefit to our country? If not, what do you think would be gained by changing or eliminating it?

A: I support affirmative action that opens the doors of opportunity, but I don't believe in quotas to guarantee results. For millions of Americans, affirmative action policies helped knock down barriers of the past that prevented them from attending school, entering the workforce, or starting a small business. I was in support of the University of Michigan affirmative action cases because I believe that diversity in higher education is a vital national interest. The benefits of diversity are real— and not only in our school system but also in our economy and society overall. As President, I will support strong and sensible affirmative action. I will call upon corporate America to be as di-

verse as the customers it serves. I will call on schools to support programs to meet the needs of all of its students from different backgrounds. And I will build an administration that reflects America's diverse backgrounds and values.

Q: What would be your top three overall priorities if elected?

A: When I am President, my top three priorities will be providing quality, affordable health care to all Americans, ending the war in Iraq, and strengthening the middle class. It is a tragedy that there are 47 million Americans without health insurance and many more just a pink slip away from losing the coverage they have. Health care just isn't affordable for many people — premiums have been skyrocketing and half of all personal bankruptcies in the United States are caused by medical bills. My plan will focus on offering high-quality care — ensuring that Americans have access to preventive, basic, and chronic care that is coordinated and delivered by well-trained health care professionals. And I will implement cost-savings measures throughout the health care system so that cost is no longer a barrier to having health insurance for any American. The war in Iraq is sapping our military strength, absorbing our strategic assets, diverting attention and resources from Afghanistan, alienating our allies, and dividing our people. As I have said previously, if President Bush does not end the war, when I am President, I will. For 35 years, I have worked to improve the lives of America's children and families, and I will continue to do so when I am President. I will create new well-paying jobs through investments in alternative energy and innovation, increase the minimum wage, support our unions, and keep and create middle-class tax cuts.

I want to eliminate incentives for American companies to ship jobs and profits overseas, and I plan to invest in new industries at home to make America competitive in the global economy. I will ensure that all American children have access to quality education, starting with Pre-K and continuing until college, and that they are prepared to enter the workforce so that all Americans have a chance to live up to their potential.

John McCain

Party: Republican
Occupation: Military Officer, Politician
Current Job / Position: Senator from Arizona

Q: Should the government have a role in expanding access to health care? What, if anything, would you do to restructure the health care system?

A: I believe real health care reform must put individuals and families, not bureaucrats, at the center of our health care system. Americans deserve leadership for real reform that provides greater access to high-quality health care and ends spiraling costs. But the road to reform does not lead through Washington and a hugely expensive, bureaucratic, government-controlled system. We have all tangled enough with the existing bureaucracy to know that even more will diminish, not improve, quality. I believe the best way expand access and controls costs, without hurting the quality of our health care, is to harness competition to offer more affordable insurance options for as many Americans as possible, and to leverage innovation — such as low-cost health clinics in retail stores for example — and cost-effectiveness of our nation's firms to put an end to existing rigid, unfriendly bureaucracies. I support the development of a

secure national medical records and placing greater emphasis on preventative care so fewer people have to spend time in hospital and emergency care. We must build a national market where insurance is more available, portable, and accessible across state lines; in which patients' rights are respected and their information under their control; and one in which people may save more in tax-exempt Health Savings Accounts. I believe we must also assist those who need help in getting health coverage by offering a tax credit, for example, to help people pay for insurance. We also need more transparency of prices and quality measures so patients can make informed choices. This is why real reform must provide incentives for a national market — including the reimportation of pharmaceuticals — that offer greater transparency about effective patient care, options for preventative care and therapies, and prices so that competition in the health care market makes it easier for individuals and families to navigate toward better quality and lower cost. I will demand reform to medical malpractice laws to curb abusive lawsuits that squeeze doctors, prevent innovation, and drive up the cost of health care. Finally, I encourage our states to continue exploring with their own health care reforms to see what works and what doesn't. American health care is the best in the world, but I believe we can do much better with this kind of reform.

Q: What specific changes would you make to the Social Security program?

A: No government program is the object of more political posturing and spin than Social Security. Americans have the right to know the truth, no matter how bad it is. The current Social Security system is unsustainable. A half-century ago, sixteen American workers supported every retiree. Today, it's just three. Soon, it will be only two. If we don't make some tough choices, Social Security either won't be there for our children and grandchildren or we will have had to raise taxes so dramatically to support them that we will have crushed the prosperity of average Americans. I believe that we may meet our obligations to the retirees of today and the future without raising taxes, and I support supplementing the current Social Security system with personal accounts — but not as a substitute for addressing benefit promises that cannot be kept.

People in both parties agree that we must make the hard decisions to restore solvency to these programs. As President, I'll submit a plan to save Social Security, and I'll ask Congress to do the same. I'll work on a bipartisan basis to make the hard choices; to protect the retirement security of the American worker, and the growth of the American economy. And if Congress is afraid to make those choices, then they can just let me do it. I'll take the heat. I'll ask Congress to let me submit a comprehensive proposal. I'll prepare it carefully, fairly and honestly. And they can vote yes or no: no amendments; no filibuster; no tricks; no band-aid solutions; no more kicking the can down the road as the problem becomes harder and more expensive to solve; no more hoping that a future generation of leaders will have the courage we lack. If some of their constituents complain, and they will, they can put the blame on me.

Q: Do you support setting a deadline for either a withdrawal or a partial pullback of troops from Iraq? If so, what would be the date of that deadline?

A: Today, Americans are fighting bravely in battles that are as dangerous, difficult and consequential as the great battles of our armed forces' storied past. In Iraq, I know the war has not gone well, and the American people have grown tired of it. I, too, have been made sick at heart by the many mistakes made by civilian and military commanders and the terrible price we have paid for them. I want our troops home too, but I want our troops to return home with honor and in victory. We cannot react to past mistakes by embracing calls to begin troop withdrawals or to revive our previous failed strategy of a partial troop pullback that will be an even greater mistake, a mistake of colossal historical proportions, which will seriously weaken American security.

Q: Do you support affirmative action? If you do, why do you think it is a benefit to our country? If not, what do you think would be gained by changing or eliminating it?

A: I believe in the protection of civil rights and equal opportunity for all Americans. America must never relent in its pursuit of equality under the law. Regardless of race, ethnicity or gender the law should be equally applied. We must recommit ourselves to the ideal that every individual is

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Louisiana gains importance in Democratic delegate race



Vincent Sylvain

NEW ORLEANS – While a majority of the total delegates needed towards receiving the Democratic nominee is at stake on “Super Tuesday,” Louisiana joins the fray later this week. On Saturday, February 9, 2008, Louisiana’s democrats get to participate in the Democratic Presidential Primary. The Democratic candidates which remain on the ballot are U.S. Senators Joe Biden of Delaware, Hillary Clinton of New York, Christopher Dodd of Connecticut and Barack Obama

of Illinois. Former U.S. Senator John Edwards of North Carolina; U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio; and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson have each withdrawn from the race for the nominee.

Under procedures established by the Louisiana Democratic Party, a candidate must get at least 15 percent of the vote in a congressional district to win one delegate from that district.

There are a total of 67 delegates at stake statewide, 37 of the state party’s 67 delegates will be chosen in a party caucuses on March 1. The delegates are apportioned on the basis of the popular vote in each of Louisiana’s seven congressional districts. The other 30 delegates will be chosen by the party’s State Central Committee of which those members will also be elected on February 9. Through a formula used by the party, select party leaders are included in that number, some committed to a candidate and others

uncommitted.

Originally not expected to be a major player in the Democratic delegate race, but as Senator Barack Obama continues to surprise skeptics across the country Louisiana’s 67 delegates have gained more importance. Obama’s position on supporting the recovery of the Gulf Coast should make him the favorite among those affected by Hurricane Katrina.

Stephanie Kirchgaessner and Christopher Grimes of Financial Times write that Obama has been able to transcend racial lines like no other presidential candidate. They referenced one of his addresses in 2005 as an example, “The Bush administration’s ineptitude in handling the crisis, he declared on the Senate floor in 2005, was “color blind”. It was not racism, Mr. Obama said, but bad assumptions - that Americans could all load up their sports utility vehicles with \$100 of petrol and a credit card and find their way to

safety - that were to blame.”

They go on to point out that, “The statement, which drew distinctions between race and class that are not often articulated in American politics - serves as a poignant example of why Mr. Obama today is considered the first viable black candidate for president. While other politicians - both black and white - saw Katrina as an example of the nation’s indifference to poor blacks, he offered another point of view: one that could allow white America to examine its responsibility for the tragedy without feeling the stinging accusation of racism, a rebuke that often creates a divide that is impossible to bridge.”

Yet with voter pride remaining high for among Black voters and Louisiana’s high percentage of African American voters, Senator Obama should do well in the Pelican State. African Americans make up 44% of the total registered Democrats and 29.8%

of the combined total of Democrats, Republicans and others in Louisiana. The Boston Globe reports that, “Obama has won the African-American vote in all the Democratic primaries and caucuses so far, and based on that performance is expected to win it again in the 22 states that hold Democratic ballots today (Tuesday, February 05, 2008)... If Obama wins by big margins in heavily black areas, he could gain a trove of delegates to the party’s national convention that would be the equivalent of winning several small states,” thus also giving more significance to Louisiana’s 67 delegates this Saturday.

In Louisiana only voters registered as being affiliated with the Democratic or Republican Party may vote for the following offices in their respective party; Presidential Nominee, State Central Committee members and Parish Executive Committee members.

Election Special, Continued from page 14.

created equal in the eyes of God and every individual must therefore be treated equally under the law. Fully embracing this ideal means providing every American the ability to compete on a level playing field where individual creativity, hard work and initiative are rewarded. It means aggressively enforcing our nation’s anti-discrimination laws. It means taking seriously our commitment to educate all of America’s children. It also means rejecting affirmative action plans and quotas that give weight to one group of Americans at the expense of another. Plans that result in quotas, where such plans have not been judicially created to remedy a specific, proven act of discrimination, only result in more discrimination and violate the concept of equality of opportunity. As President, I will use to power of my office to promote economic opportunity and to strengthen the fabric of our nation. I also believe that rather than engaging in unnecessary, divisive political debates, it is far more constructive to engage in dialogue and cooperation, focusing our mutual efforts on providing all Americans the chance to fulfill their expectations.

Q: Would you roll back tax cuts that were supported by the Bush administration?

A: We should keep income taxes low by making the President’s tax cuts permanent and eliminating the threat of a crippling tax increase in 2011. Raising taxes is wrong headed. In fact, we should make it more difficult for Congress to raise taxes on Americans by requiring a three-fifths, supermajority vote in order to pass a tax increase. This will ensure that if Democrats want to raise America’s taxes, they will have to get a lot more than 51 votes to do it. Additionally, we certainly do not need two separate tax systems, a regular tax and an Alternative Minimum Tax. I am committed to repealing the AMT before millions of American families are forced to devote even more of their hard work to paying for Washington’s spending sprees. Consistent with these principles, I seek permanent reform of the estate tax, and I support raising the exemption from taxation on estates up to \$10 million while cutting the tax rate to 15 percent.

Q: Do you support the Roe v. Wade decision or would you like to see this decision overturned? Why or why not?

A: As someone who has consistently and strongly been pro-life, I fully believe that Roe v. Wade is a flawed decision that should be overturned. Roe v. Wade is the most egregious example of judges who impose their own views by legislating from the bench rather than strictly rule what the Constitution says. The Supreme Court ruling on the horrific practice of partial-birth abortion in April was a victory for those who cherish the sanctity of life and integrity of the judiciary. It also clearly speaks to the importance of nominating and confirming strict constructionist judges who interpret the law as it is written, and do not usurp the authority of Congress and state legislatures. Although critical, I also believe that the reversal of Roe v. Wade would represent only one step in the long path toward ending abortion.

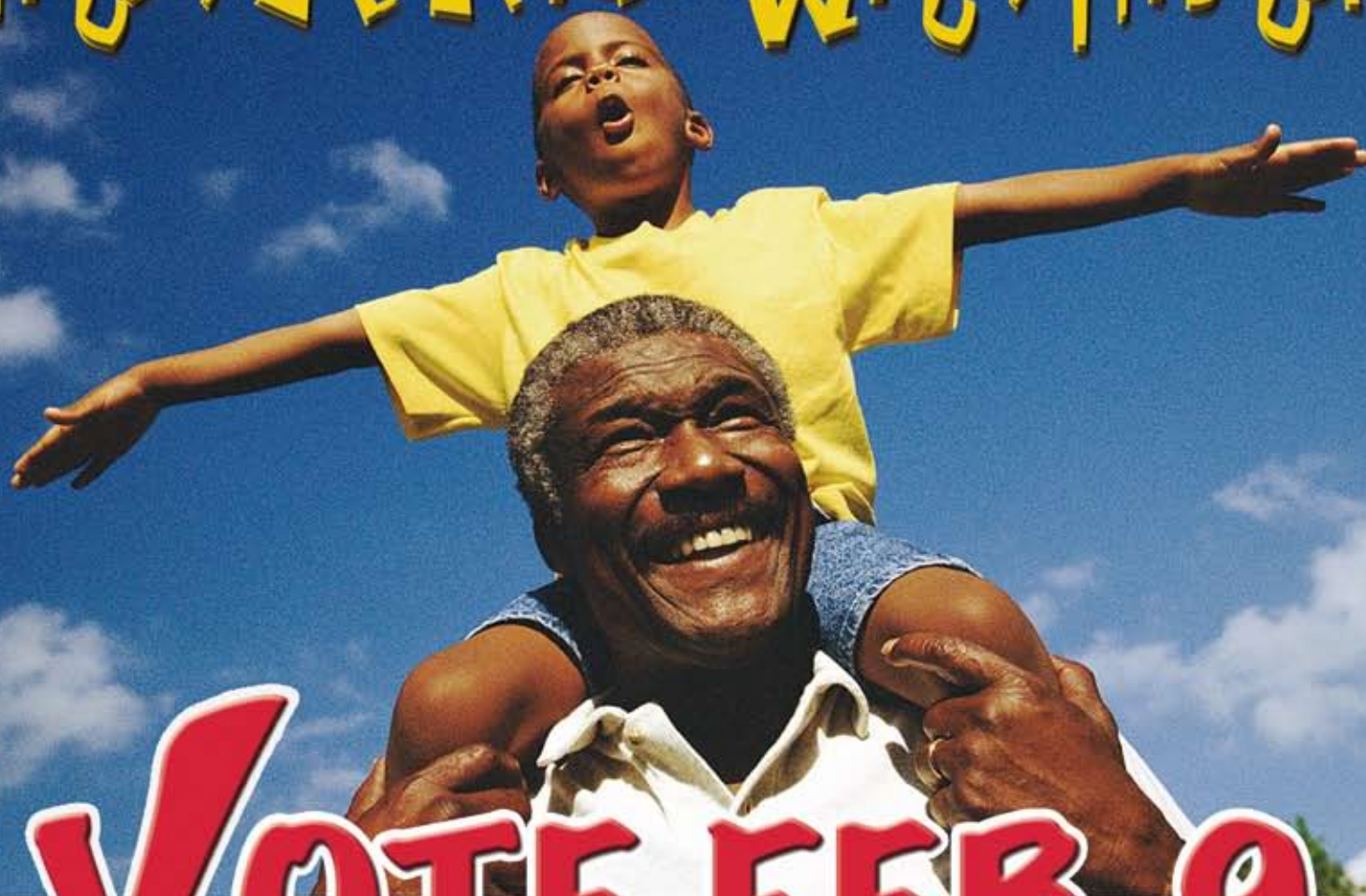
Q: What would be your top three overall priorities if elected?

A: Winning the War Against Islamic Extremists: As president, I would take all my responsibilities to the American people seriously. But I would have one responsibility that would outweigh all the others and that is to protect the security of this great nation

from all enemies. In particular, we must understand that we confront a lengthy struggle against Islamic extremism that will not be won quickly or easily. But we will win it. While our ultimate victory is not in doubt, the length and intensity of this struggle remain to be determined. It’s up to us. We must recognize that our enemies are in this fight to win, and I assure you that I would employ all instruments of national power - military, intelligence, law enforcement, economic and political - to defend our nation and defeat them. Reforming Government: Americans have lost trust that their government and its elected officials will serve America’s interest, not their own. I would use my presidency to restore that trust. I would fight to ensure a political process worthy of the sacrifices that have been made by so many to keep us free and proud. I would see to it that the institutions of self-government are respected pillars of democracy, not commodities to be bought, bartered, or abused. Special interests have too much influence in Washington. That will end. I will secure the border, bring spending under control, veto pork-barrel spending bills, and keep taxes low. I would reform a tax code that is too complex and too

burdensome. I will work to modernize Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid and bring accountability, choice and competition to underperforming schools, so our children are equipped for the best jobs of the 21st century. Reforming Health Care for all Americans: I would address health care in America, an issue that touches every family in this nation and impacts our economy and fiscal outlook. I believe we can fix our health care system and lower costs without sacrificing quality. But I know the answer is not to increase the amount of bureaucracy through a government-controlled health care or single-payer system. The answer is to, for example, enhance the ability of the market participants to offer affordable and portable insurance options for as many Americans as possible and to help those without insurance to access the health care system with the dignity and quality care that all Americans expect and deserve.

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