

Black Leaders: Misleading the Black Community

Wanted

A few good black leaders to lead their
community in a direction towards overcoming
black issues



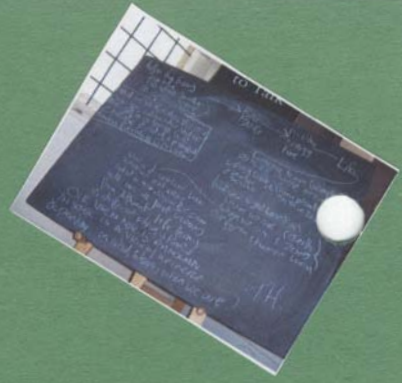


Dedication

I dedicate this zine to my people - my family, my peers, musicians, lovers, Christians, African-Americans, Caucasians, women, students, thinkers, dreamers, strugglers, wishers, fighters, laughers, Criers, travelers, workers, partiers, dancers, ramblers, agitators, and "problems" all around the world - because my people are a reflection of me.



I created this zine after taking an English class at Duke University during the first semester of my freshman year. This class, called "To Be a Problem," explored what it means to be a problem in a society restricted by race, class, gender, and sexuality norms. After researching the shortcomings of black leaders for a midterm paper, I became more and more interested in black leaders and the state of the black community. The first issue of this zine will take a look at a few of our national, state, and local leaders.



Issues Plaguing the Black Community Today

HIV/AIDS

Teen Pregnancy

Welfare

Misogyny in Hip Hop

Hurricane Katrina

High School Drop-outs

Unemployment/Poverty

Drugs

Rape

Racism

Healthcare



Why Does it Seem Like Today's Black Leaders Are Doing Nothing for Their Community?

I believe that today's black leaders are overwhelmed. They see and acknowledge the problems facing the black community, but I don't think that any of them have sound solutions. I don't think it is because they don't want to, but because there are so many problems that it is impossible to satisfy the entire community's needs. I also feel that our black leaders lack unity. They spend so much time criticizing what other leaders do wrong, when they should be working towards finding common ground so that they can do things right. It is impossible to help others when you can't help yourself. There are also many black leaders who are only about their own personal gain, so through their selfishness, they often make matters worse. Many of them lack the enthusiasm and genuine desire to help others as well. Our leaders have a huge responsibility in improving the state of the black community, and only when they become truly passionate about their community will it be possible for us to see change.

CoMMeNtary 1

America's Black Rightwing Forum

The grotesque devolution of a Black news program
by BC co-publishers Glen Ford and Peter Gamble

To step into the world of America's Black Forum, the TV show, is to enter a carnival house-of-mirrors. African American political realities are distorted beyond recognition. The floor tilts crazily rightward as clowns in blackface jump into view to parrot George Bush and Jerry Falwell, then straighten up and hum "Lift Every Voice" as they lock arms and sway with a sneering Pat Buchanan and his blond, junior conservative companion.

The Hard Right has thoroughly infested what began, 25 years ago, as the first nationally syndicated Black news interview program on commercial television. Since the mid-Nineties, ABF has devolved into a menagerie of professional Black propagandists in service of the most vicious elements of the Republican Party. White ideologues of the Right regularly reinforce their darker partners on the set, providing their own peculiar analysis of the Black condition. For a time, Pat Buchanan, whose name is synonymous with "Nazi" in many circles, seemed to be a regular on the show. Obscure clones of racist commentator Ann Coulter share insights on world and national politics for the benefit of a Black commercial television audience. It is a bizarre experience.

FOX in the chicken coop

America's Black Forum is hosted by Juan Williams, a favorite Black political conjure-artist of Republican-managed FOX News, and alternate host James Brown, a FOX sportscaster with no background in news whatsoever. FOX News has had a special relationship with ABF since the 1996 ascension of chairman Roger Ailes, best described as a "pit-bull Republican media strategist turned television tycoon." Ailes has made a career of creating an electronic environment amenable to racism of the rawest kind, to accommodate the policies of his clients. His influence is tangible on the set of ABF.

The show's most compelling on-air presence is Armstrong Williams, possibly the most noxious Black personality in broadcasting. He lovingly embraces arch-racist Senator Strom Thurmond, who decades ago gave the servile yet ambitious young Armstrong an internship, as both "friend" and "mentor." Williams has served the interests of apartheid South Africa, wallowed in the largess of every Hard Right foundation and think tank in the land, and reveled in long weekends with white supremacists. Williams' broadcast deals entangle him with the Christian Right's unholy electronic pulpits. He is the premiere Black political whore in America, and the central fixture on America's Black Forum.

Armstrong Williams' protégé is Niger Innis, rising son of gangster "civil rights" caricature Roy Innis, head of the family business criminally referred to as the Congress of Racial Equality. CORE is a tin cup outstretched to every Hard Right political campaign or cause that finds it convenient - or a sick joke - to hire Black cheerleaders for their cross burning events. As the bearer of such lineage, Niger Innis is a prince among Black political scavengers - he even fancies himself an interpreter of what he believes to be Hip Hop culture's conservative characteristics. Niger Innis advertises his political "consultant" wares on America's Black Forum, in the shadow of Strom Thurmond's protégé, Armstrong Williams.

ABF is incapable of generating news, the primary function of Sunday TV interview programs. Despite its claim to be the "only credible weekend news source for African American perspectives on national issues," ABF is quoted by... no one. The program's actual function is to provide a stage on which the two Williamses, Juan and Armstrong, can demonstrate their distance from (Juan) and contempt for (Armstrong) prevailing Black opinion and leadership. The trappings of journalism are meant to convey authenticity to what is essentially a weekly exercise in Black-bashing, thankfully punctuated by celebrity interviews of no consequence. In recent years, the show's handlers have become so



bold as to invite white ultra-conservatives to join in the fun.

Niger Innis fills Armstrong Williams' seat when the senior mercenary is summoned to perform other duties on behalf of his long list of Republican clients. The Hard Right's message, as formulated by the reactionary think tanks that nurture both Williams and Innis, is indispensable to the program. Whether delivered in blackface or from the lips of visiting white commentators, an ultra-conservative version of reality dominates America's Black Forum.

Off to the side, in every meaningful sense, sits Julian Bond, the progressive window dressing on the set. It is a demeaning place to be, and of doubtful justification or utility as a counterbalance to the program's rabidly rightwing voices. As chairman of the NAACP, Bond is hobbled by the organization's non-political legal status. Williams, Innis and their white allies slick the studio floor with anti-Black spittle, encouraged by the more-closeted host Juan Williams (or the clueless sportsman,

James Brown), while Bond strains in his political straitjacket.

Progressive Black journalists Deborah Mathis and Julianne Malveaux occasionally join or substitute for Julian Bond as panelists, with much the same results. Armstrong Williams, abetted by Juan Williams' rigged framing of the issues (or James Brown's total lack of political references), bullies the conversation ever rightward. The dialogue starts and ends in a political space few Black people inhabit.

The spectacle is surreal. ABF has succeeded in creating an illusory world in which the views of mainstream Black America, approximately represented by Julian Bond and the NAACP, are howled down by hired guns who speak for *no significant body of African American opinion*, including the one-tenth of Blacks who identify themselves as Republicans. Not content with this triumph of minstrelsy, ABF routinely recruits white ultras to join the cast - a gratuitous insult to Black sensibilities that would be unthinkable in representative African American venues. America's Black Forum is a Hard Right production, groveling and transparent.

This Guy is Speaking Out...

"Where is the leadership?"

"there was this void in the social and political discourse. ... I really like to make fun of people and no one was making fun of the people I wanted to make fun of."

-Aaron McGruder



Opinion

DeWayne Wickham

'Boondocks' comic echoes African-American thoughts

By DeWayne Wickham

Aaron McGruder just might be the most dangerous black man in America. But you won't find his mug shot on the FBI's "10 most wanted" list, and the CIA isn't stalking his trail. McGruder is neither a threatening al-Qaeda operative nor a ruthless crack-cocaine drug lord. He's a cartoonist.

DeWayne Wickham writes weekly for USA TODAY.

THE BOONDOCKS



Black cartoonist Aaron McGruder, born in Chicago, Illinois in 1974, is speaking out against black leaders and black issues in his controversial cartoon, "The Boondocks." McGruder first created "The Boondocks" for the school newspaper, The Diamond Back, during his enrollment at University of Maryland. The cartoon became an instant hit. Later, after receiving a little help from a fellow student, Rhyme Anderson, McGruder made the comic strip available online. In 1998, the hip-hop magazine, "The Source" published "The Boondocks," but removed it after 3 months. McGruder received several offers for his comic strip to be published in national newspapers, and finally agreed on Universal Press Syndicate. The comic became controversial right away. Blacks called it "stereotypical and derogatory," and whites claimed it to be "outright racist, hurtful, and divisive." However, the comic strip gained as much support as criticism, as the black community saw it as an opportunity to have their voices heard. McGruder has had his characters speak about topics from black leaders, such as Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton, all the way to interracial marriage and child labor.

McGruder has recently made his comic available on national television. He developed the strip into a cartoon, which premiered on the Cartoon Network's "Adult Swim" in November 2005. The cartoon contains the same characters and content as the comic strip.

Fruit of the Poisoned Tree

The Hard Rights Plan to Capture Newark NJ

"Vouchers are a pernicious, steal-from-the-poor-and-give-to-the-rich scheme. They take money from our public school students, give it instead to private schools, and abandon many of our children in the process" - NAACP executive director Kweisi Mfume

"The privatization of schooling would produce a new, highly active and profitable industry." - Milton Friedman

The billionaires who fund the American Hard Right are salivating over the prospect of seizing control of City Hall in Newark, New Jersey, May 14. They have found their champion: Cory Booker, Black mayoral candidate from the city's Central Ward, a cynical pretender who attempts to position himself as the common people's defender while locked in the deep embrace of institutes and foundations that bankroll virtually every assault on social and economic justice in America. His benefactors sponsor anti-affirmative action referendums, press for near-total disinvestment in the public sector, savage what's left of the social safety net, and are attempting to turn public education over to private suppliers. Along the way, Booker's soul mates are busy ravaging the environment and trampling civil liberties everywhere they find them.

Booker owes his growing national prominence to this crowd, whose influence has provided the 32 year-old with a campaign war chest rivaling that of four-term incumbent Sharpe James.

Never has a Newark election been more closely watched by the super-rich and their political network. Booker is their Black Hope for electoral legitimacy. Although only a first-term councilman from a medium-sized city, the former Rhodes scholar is already at the top of the Right's list of New Black Leaders.

Republicans have a lot riding on Booker, a nominal Democrat. Despite over two decades of financing inept and unattractive Black hired guns, most of them hustlers from academia, ultra-conservatives have failed to place an African American of their own at the controls of a mostly non-white city. The practical and propaganda effects of such a coup would be dramatic - and possibly devastating to the Democratic Party, nationally.

Booker's anointment as a prince in the Hard Right pantheon is based on his support of public vouchers for private schools. This "movement," the creation of right-wing paymasters like the Bradley Foundation, of Milwaukee, and the Walton Family Foundation, Bentonville, Arkansas, hopes to drive a wedge between urban Blacks and the teachers unions. Without amicable relations between these two Democratic pillars, the Party, as we know it, is finished.

Booker is the Right's eager ally. He is adored in the corridors of the Heritage Hoover, Manhattan and American Enterprise Institutes, think tanks that handle publicity and publication for the Bradley and Walton moneybags.

DEROY MURDOCK

Senior fellow, Atlas Economic Research Foundation & syndicated columnist, Scripps Howard News Service

Without forgetting our past, Black History Month also should be about our future. While the black middle class has grown steadily and quickly, there still are many black folks who have been left behind.

How do we bring them along? The usual non-solutions from the usual suspects will not suffice. Greater reliance on the same government that has let us down will get us nowhere, fast.

Black Americans should focus on school choice, including charter schools and vouchers. Failing government schools do not graduate young adults who must go to the University of California at Irvine rather than Princeton or Georgetown. Tragically, they produce millions of young men and women who are marred for life with limited skills and stunted prospects. The fact that the so-called "black leadership" can look at this outrage and shrug is beyond contempt. Immediately passing federal legislation to establish a voucher system in the Washington, D.C. schools will create a perfect pilot program for other cities to follow.

Blacks and whites must lift standards for black students. Expecting anything less than excellence from them is patronizing, demeaning and, yes, racist. This applies to condescending whites as well as black adults who expect failure from black boys and girls and treat them accordingly.

The Harlem Educational Activities Fund demonstrates regularly that poor, fatherless black kids on public relief can graduate from high school and enter Yale, Bryn Mawr, Cornell and other prestigious schools. HEAF does this while equipping these students not to scrape by, but to trounce suburban white kids and other activities. If HEAF can work its magic with the support of philanthropists like New York's Joanna and Daniel Rose, its example can be implemented anywhere.

Entrepreneurship is vital to the black community. Eliminating foolish regulations

that stymie black businesses should be a priority for Congress, the Bush administration and governors and mayors across America. Would-be commuter van drivers should not have to beg city hall or pay six-figure sums for permission to ply their trade.

Capital formation is vital as well. President Bush should promote his Social Security plan as a way for black families to begin estate planning, capital formation, and the sorts of financial activities that white folks take for granted. Bush's idea for personal retirement accounts will help black Americans gain the economic independence that is becoming a reality for so much of the rest of the country.

Finally, black Americans should reject the concept of "black leaders" such as Jesse Jackson and Maxine Waters. Who are the white leaders, exactly? Like any other segment of the American family, we should be able to debate among ourselves and hold a variety of opinions rather than being "led," like sheep, and always by some of the most hardened socialists on the political landscape. Allowing intellectual diversity within black America will go far to bring us fully into this wonderful country's mainstream."

why focus on school choice? why not focus on poverty, drugs, & other issues that can cause black students to perform poorly in schools?

What do these two men have in common? The desire to privatize public schools, which means that public schools will basically remain public, but the inequality of schools will increase, because the schools must compete for students and are able to choose/exclude whomever they want. They transfer public dollars into the hands of private investors, and therefore must conform to the principles of exclusion & competition of privately run enterprises. But I find Murdock's emphasis on Ivy League + other prestigious schools more disturbing. Yes, I think it's great for black students to set the highest goals possible for themselves, but I don't think that attending these schools is necessary for success.

Right-Wing Black Leaders Praise Bennett, Criticize Katrina Evacuees

A People For the American Way Foundation Report

A group of self-proclaimed ultra-conservative Black leaders gathered at the Heritage Foundation to discuss the state of Black America and, in the process, condemned African Americans' moral character, denigrated civil rights leaders, and bashed Democrats as "Godless."

On Tuesday, October 11, 2005, African American right-wing think tank Brotherhood Organization of a New Destiny (BOND) held a panel discussion with The Heritage Foundation to discuss the state of Black America, mainly the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina and the comments from former Education secretary Bill Bennett. BOND is a 15-year-old non-profit religious organization, which claims dedication to "Rebuilding the Family By Rebuilding the Man." Fox News Channel's Sean Hannity of Hannity & Colmes, ultra-conservative economist Walter E. Williams, and right-wing radio talk show host Dennis Prager are on BOND's Board of Directors. The panelists were Dr. Shelby Steele, Senior Fellow, The Hoover Institution; Linda Porter, Hurricane Katrina Survivor and Founder of Jochebed Education Project; Joseph C. Phillips, actor and columnist; and LaShawn Barber, freelance writer and blogger.

Moderator Rev. Jesse Lee Peterson criticized Hurricane Katrina evacuees for what he deemed their "lack of moral character." Said Peterson, "I find that many of those people have lots of things. They have nice clothes to wear, they're fat as a pig, they're driving nice cars, big old color TVs. I think the reason many stayed there is because they lack moral character." [To view Peterson's statement about Hurricane Katrina evacuees lack of moral character, forward video to 54:00] Yet Peterson had only praise for former Education Secretary Bill Bennett, who has been widely condemned for his recent comment that aborting all black babies would be a way to bring down the crime rate, though it would be reprehensible. Peterson said of Bennett, "He has a right to speak about things. He has a right to point out right and wrong. I don't know why you say that he should not have, that he was clumsy in saying it. I think he was right to say it. I would've said it too." [To watch Peterson's comments on Bill Bennett's statement, forward video to 1:10:06]

These far right "leaders" also took every chance they could to bash Jesse Jackson, Al Sharpton, other African American leaders and the Democratic Party. Peterson criticized Black mayors around the country, especially New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, saying citizens of New Orleans were "out of your mind to wait on a Black Mayor to come help you. Those people had to know not to depend on the mayor." [To watch clip of Peterson's assertion that Black mayors are incompetent, forward video to 42:45] Rev. Peterson said "You're not born of God if you're a Democrat... A real Christian can't vote for a Democrat, the Democratic Party." Rev. Peterson went on to say that he could not identify with the "Democratic, Godless Party." [To view Peterson's calling the Democratic Party, the Godless Party, forward video to 2:38:00]

When I first read this article, a number of things Jesse Lee Peterson said disturbed me. First of all, his accusation of the Hurricane Katrina evacuees' "lack of moral character." He said that he finds that "many" people have "lots" of things and "they're fat as a pig." WHAT? I don't really care what "many" people have, and I'm still trying to figure out what size has to do with anything. Plenty of people remain in their homes because they simply don't want to leave just because a hurricane hits. They try to "ride it out," & I'm sure that's what many of these people tried to do. But what about those who didn't have cars? Or those who had cars but couldn't afford gas or a hotel to stay in once they left.

Second of all, does this guy really support Bill Bennett's comment about aborting black babies. And did he really go to the extent of saying that he would have said it too? Maybe this country would be a happier place if his mother had aborted him!!!

Third of all, I know plenty of Christians who vote democratically. I have a tendency to agree with democratic views. I also thought I was a Christian. Now I'm just confused...

*Percentage of New Orleans residents living below the poverty level in 2003: **20.8**

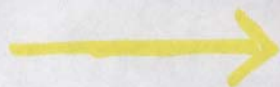
*Percentage of evacuees in Houston shelters who had not heard about the evacuation order before the hurricane hit: **25**

*Ratio of African-American households in New Orleans that did not have access to a car in 2000: **1 in 3**

*Percentage of African Americans living in poverty in New Orleans: **34.9**

This was a design for a t-shirt being sold online for \$19.00.

I wonder if Peterson has one... If not, someone should definitely buy him one.



ARREST BLACK BABIES



before they become criminals

Jesse Lee Peterson... Again...

I recently read an article written by Jesse Lee Peterson called "Black Americans die while their leaders fiddle." The article talks about how black Americans are being attacked by Hispanic gangs in schools, prisons, and on the streets. He provides several incidents of Hispanic on black violence. He condemns Al Sharpton, Jesse Jackson, and other black political leaders, saying they "promote the false illusions that blacks and Hispanics are united, while they ignore the cold reality that blacks are being targeted daily."

He goes on to say "If blacks were under this kind of attacks from whites, these same hypocrites would be marching the streets." Granted that I do agree somewhat with this statement, I feel like Peterson is looking for reasons to criticize these leaders, because he wrote a book called Scam: How the Black Leadership Exploits Black America, where he tries to expose these leaders as con artists & promoters of racial tension & class warfare.

At the end of his article, Peterson says "If blacks held onto the moral character and family unity they once had before they allowed the federal government to become the 'daddy' of the family, they would not sit idle and allow themselves to be driven out of their communities." (By Hispanics) "Black Americans are getting what they deserve. If they don't get their act together and return back to family, character, and love of country, they will once again become a slave class, if they survive at all."

To me, it just sounds like this man is confused. First he blames black leaders for the problem, then he seeks to place the blame on black Americans themselves? Which is it? And rather than sitting around playing "the blame game" he should provide a real solution since he seems so "passionate" about the problem. Then maybe we black Americans can save ourselves from becoming a slave class again...

HaHaHa!!

IN THE 70's, 80's, 90's:

BEING A BLACK PERSON IN THIS COUNTRY IS NO PICNIC ...



... BELIEVE ME ...



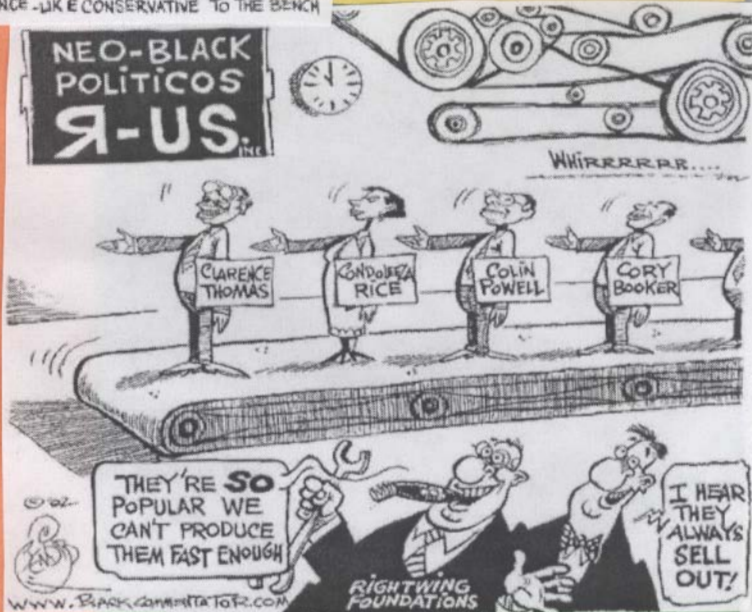
NOW:

... I USED TO BE ONE!



NEWS ITEM: BUSH NOMINATES CLARENCE - LIKE CONSERVATIVE TO THE BENCH

NEO-BLACK POLITICOS R-US INC.



A Female Clarence Thomas for the DC Federal Court?

A statement by People for the American Way and the NAACP.

The following is a joint press release from People for the American Way and the NAACP.

'Far Right Dream Judge' Janice Rogers Brown Joins Lineup of Extremist Appeals Court Nominees

California Supreme Court Justice Janice Rogers Brown, one of President Bush's most recent nominees to the federal appeals court, has a record of ideological extremism and aggressive judicial activism that makes her unfit to serve on the appeals court, according to an in-depth analysis of her record released by People For the American Way and the NAACP. Brown, nominated to the DC Circuit Court, is one of many Bush judicial nominees that could come before the Judiciary Committee and full Senate this fall.

"Janice Rogers Brown is the far right's dream judge," said People For the American Way President Ralph G. Neas. "She embodies Clarence Thomas's ideological extremism and Antonin Scalia's abrasiveness and right-wing activism. Giving her a powerful seat on the DC Circuit Court would be a disaster."

"Janice Rogers Brown has a record of hostility to fundamental civil and constitutional rights principles, and she is committed to using her power as a judge to twist the law in ways that undermine those principles, said Hilary Shelton, director, NAACP Washington Bureau. "For the administration to bring forward a nominee with this record and hope to get some kind of credit because she is the first African American woman nominated to the DC Circuit is one more sign of the administration's political cynicism."

The report, "Loose Cannon," notes that when Brown was nominated to the state supreme court in 1996, she was found unqualified by the state bar evaluation committee, based not only on her relative inexperience but also because she was "prone to inserting conservative political views into her appellate opinions" and based on complaints that she was "insensitive to established precedent."

The report carefully examines Brown's record since she joined the court, especially her numerous dissenting opinions concerning civil and constitutional rights. Brown's many disturbing dissents, often not joined by a single other justice, make it clear that she would use the power of an appeals court seat to try to erect significant barriers for victims of discrimination to seek justice in the courts, and to push an agenda that would undermine privacy, equal protection under the law, environmental protection, and much more.

In speeches, Brown has embraced the extreme states' rights and anti-federal-government positions of the Federalist Society, the organization of lawyers and judges working to push the law far to the right. She has said that what she has called the "Revolution of 1937," when the Supreme Court began to consistently sustain New Deal legislation against legal attack, was a "disaster" that marked "the triumph of our socialist revolution."

Civil Rights, Equal Opportunity, and Discrimination

According to the report, "Justice Brown's opinions on civil rights law are perhaps the most troubling area of a very troubling body of work. These opinions reveal significant skepticism about the existence and impact of discrimination and demonstrate repeated efforts to limit the avenues available to victims of discrimination to obtain justice. Brown's opinions in this area reveal a troubling disregard for precedent and stare decisis – even in the context of case law that has been settled by the U.S. Supreme Court."

The report examines Brown opinions in cases involving racial discrimination, discrimination against people with disabilities and older Americans, and affirmative action. California's Chief Justice criticized one of her opinions as arguing that "numerous decisions of the United States Supreme Court and this court" were "wrongly decided" and as representing a "serious distortion of history."

Free Speech and Association

Brown's free speech opinions illustrate her tendency to rule in favor of corporations and seek to provide broad protections for corporate speech, while sometimes giving short shrift to the First Amendment rights of average citizens.

In one dissent she listed as one of her ten most significant decisions, Brown sought to expand the contexts in which corporations could make false or misleading statements without any effective legal mechanism for holding them accountable. In another case discussed in the report, Brown argued that a corporation should be granted an injunction against a former employee sending emails critical of the company's employment practices to some of his former colleagues.

Her vigorous support of strong legal protections for even false and misleading corporate speech is even more disturbing when contrasted with her willingness to enforce a very broad injunction severely restricting the ability of Latino youth who were alleged to be gang members to gather in certain neighborhoods.

Privacy, Family Rights, and Reproductive Freedom

As a state supreme court justice, Brown has issued only one opinion dealing with abortion, but it raises serious concerns about her judicial philosophy concerning women's constitutional right to privacy and reproductive freedom. In her dissent, Brown argued that the federal Constitution somehow restricts the privacy protections that may be provided by the state constitution, a position far outside the mainstream of judicial thought. She argued that the court majority's decision ruling unconstitutional a restrictive parental consent law for minors seeking abortions would allow courts to "topple every cultural icon, to dismiss all societal values, and to become final arbiters of traditional morality."

Brown partially dissented from an important ruling this year upholding the validity of second-parent adoptions in California, a ruling that was vitally important to children and parents involved in as many as 20,000 adoptions in the state, including many by same-sex couples. Brown said the ruling "trivialized family bonds," even though the majority explained that it would encourage and strengthen such bonds.

Worker Rights, Consumer Protection and Private Property Rights Several cases raise serious questions about Brown's willingness to enforce provisions intended to protect the average person against the power of the government or large corporations. Brown has signaled her approval of broad drug-testing provisions even in situations in which a majority of the California Supreme Court found the tests to be clearly unconstitutional, and even where it would have required explicitly rejecting U.S. Supreme Court precedent. She also wrote an opinion as a judge on the Court of Appeal that would have struck down the fee system the state had instituted to ensure that paint companies help pay for state efforts to provide for screening and treatment of children exposed to lead paint, an opinion that was overturned by the California Supreme Court. She has dissented from several rulings protecting the rights of investors and other consumers, arguing that previous precedents should be abandoned.

In dissents from decisions on rent control and a decision upholding a city ordinance protecting against displacement of low-income residents, she articulated an extremist view of property rights that would, if she were given the power of a seat on the DC Circuit, have dangerous and far-reaching consequences for environmental protection and government regulation of businesses.

She vigorously dissented from a case concerning a San Francisco rule requiring residential hotel owners seeking permission to eliminate residential units and convert to tourist hotels to help replace the lost rental units. Brown's dissent said the ruling approved "theft" and said it turned democracy into a "k Democracy." Brown's theory that regulations are not allowed unless property owners agree they would benefit them economically would preclude much economic or environmental regulation. "Nothing in the law of takings," wrote the majority, would justify an appointed judiciary in imposing that, or any other, personal theory of political economy on the people of a democratic state."

In several speeches and one of her opinions, Brown has attacked the long-established principle that governmental action infringing on fundamental rights is subject to strict judicial scrutiny while general social and economic legislation is upheld if it has a rational basis. According to Brown, that fundamental principle is "highly suspect, incoherent, and constitutionally invalid."

How Does the Future Look?

BARACK OBAMA

A Message from Barack



Watch Barack's statement on forming a Presidential Exploratory Committee

So it looks like Obama and I share some of the same views. Although he speaks for the country as a whole and not just the black community, he has acknowledged that there are many problems and that until leaders stop focusing on themselves, no problems will be solved.

As many of you know, over the last few months I have been thinking hard about my plans for 2008. Running for the presidency is a profound decision - a decision no one should make on the basis of media hype or personal ambition alone - and so before I committed myself and my family to this race, I wanted to be sure that this was right for us and, more importantly, right for the country.

I certainly didn't expect to find myself in this position a year ago. But as I've spoken to many of you in my travels across the states these past months; as I've read your emails and read your letters; I've been struck by how hungry we all are for a different kind of politics.

So I've spent some time thinking about how I could best advance the cause of change and progress that we so desperately need.

The decisions that have been made in Washington these past six years, and the problems that have been ignored, have put our country in a precarious place. Our economy is changing rapidly, and that means profound changes for working people. Many of you have shared with me your stories about skyrocketing health care bills, the pensions you've lost and your struggles to pay for college for your kids. Our continued dependence on oil has put our security and our very planet at risk. And we're still mired in a tragic and costly war that should have never been waged.

But challenging as they are, it's not the magnitude of our problems that concerns me the most. It's the smallness of our politics. America's faced big problems before. But today, our leaders in Washington seem incapable of working together in a practical, common sense way. Politics has become so bitter and partisan, so gummed up by money and influence, that we can't tackle the big problems that demand solutions.

And that's what we have to change first.

We have to change our politics, and come together around our common interests and concerns as Americans.

This won't happen by itself. A change in our politics can only come from you; from people across our country who believe there's a better way and are willing to work for it.

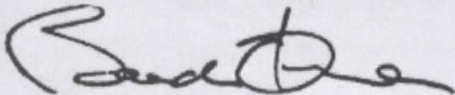
Years ago, as a community organizer in Chicago, I learned that meaningful change always begins at the grassroots, and that engaged citizens working together can accomplish extraordinary things.

So even in the midst of the enormous challenges we face today, I have great faith and hope about the future - because I believe in you.

And that's why I wanted to tell you first that I'll be filing papers today to create a presidential exploratory committee. For the next several weeks, I am going to talk with people from around the country, listening and learning more about the challenges we face as a nation, the opportunities that lie before us, and the role that a presidential campaign might play in bringing our country together. And on February 10th, at the end of these decisions and in my home state of Illinois, I'll share my plans with my friends, neighbors and fellow Americans.

In the meantime, I want to thank all of you for your time, your suggestions, your encouragement and your prayers. And I look forward to continuing our conversation in the weeks and months to come.

Sincerely,



U.S. Senator Barack Obama

A CBS News poll earlier
this year gave Hilary
Clinton 52% of the vote
vs. 28% for Obama.

Who will you vote for

November 4, *2008*

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