



# The NAACP Advocate

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## Remembering Hurricane Katrina: NAACP Focuses on Housing in the Gulf Coast Region One Year Later

When Hurricane Katrina brought utter devastation to residents of the Gulf Coast in August of 2005, America promised a rebuilding effort that would surpass the revitalization seen in New York after 9/11. Despite these promises and the commitment of billions of aid dollars, the reinvigoration of the region remains unrealized largely due to the failure to restore adequate housing. As the Gulf Coast region passes the one-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, thousands of still ruinous homes and a dire lack of affordable housing are clear evidence that our government's promise has not been fulfilled.

A full year after the storm hit, the Brookings Institute estimates that in

New Orleans alone 278,000 people remain displaced from their homes. Over 100,000 hurricane-evacuated households still live in FEMA trailers, with 1,800 travel trailers in Alabama, 34,000 in Mississippi, and the majority—68,000—in Louisiana. These trailer communities are geographically-isolated, leaving residents with limited access to the opportunities, resources and community they need to start rebuilding their lives. A recent USA Today/Gallup poll of Katrina survivors who have come home to the Gulf Coast finds that 32 percent of returnees are unable to create a sustainable life there and believe they will leave their communities yet again.

The crisis in housing is borne by the region's poorest residents. In Louisiana, 88 percent of rental units damaged or destroyed by Katrina were those affordable to low income households. Low-wage workers and families across the region are disproportionately impacted because a lack of affordable housing pushes low-wage workers further from job sites, increasing transportation costs and further reducing household income. While there are encouraging signs of reconstruction such as the rising number of building permits and demolitions of condemned structures, housing remains unaffordable for many of the region's most vulnerable

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*Coping with flood waters after Hurricane Katrina.*

*Photo: The Washington Times*

## The NAACP Advocate

*A Publication of the Research,  
Advocacy & Training Division*

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## Health

# International AIDS Conference Declares: “Time to Deliver”

## NAACP Delegation Joins with Other African American Leaders to Make AIDS in Black America a National Priority

For the first time in the history of the International AIDS Conference—and indeed in the larger community—leaders from eight of black America’s most venerable institutions openly talked about HIV/AIDS and agreed on what they needed to do collectively to move forward. The XVI International AIDS Conference, themed “Time to Deliver,” was held August 13-18, 2006 in Toronto, Canada and focused on the “promises and progress made to scale-up treatment, care and prevention,” especially in resource-limited settings ([www.aids2006.org](http://www.aids2006.org)).

The NAACP delegation—Julian Bond, Chair of the NAACP National Board of Directors; Willis Edwards, Member of the NAACP National Board of Directors and Chair of the NAACP CARES Committee; and Myisha Patterson, NAACP National Health Coordinator—joined with other African American delegates from across the country. Each of the delegates represented civic, political, religious, social service, media, education and civil rights groups spanning the nation that have a tradition of serving the African American community. The delegation was organized (and a subsequent Marshall Plan was developed) by the Black AIDS Institute as a kick-off to the widespread effort to form a

National Black Mass AIDS mobilization aimed at dramatically reducing the number of HIV infections among African Americans by 2011.

The Black Leadership delegation’s goal of reversing the high rates of infection among blacks may seem ambitious, but leaders said to aim for anything less would be immoral. Each of the groups represented at the International AIDS Conference left Toronto with a commitment to hammer out the specifics of integrating the Plan’s declarations into their organizational agendas. The broader goals of the mobilization include efforts to cut infection rates, increase the percentage of blacks who know their infection status, get more blacks into appropriate care and end the stigma associated with HIV/AIDS.

“The convergence of global stakeholders at AIDS 2006 has provided an ideal opportunity to examine the gap between what society is capable of doing in the face of this unprecedented humanitarian crisis and the actual level of response,” said Conference Co-Chair Dr. Helene Gayle, outgoing President of the International AIDS Society (IAS) and President and CEO of CARE USA. “Despite important momentum over the past few years, the slow pace of progress has led to growing impatience. My hope is that we will use what we’ve learned here in Toronto to strengthen the global response.”

The International AIDS Conference is the biennial gathering of the global AIDS community. For more information on the Conference or about the HIV/AIDS epidemic, please visit [www.aids2006.org](http://www.aids2006.org).



## NAACP to Help Minority Communities “Kick the Habit”

The NAACP Health Department has teamed with Hilton Publishing to create *Kick the Habit*, an interactive smoking cessation plan designed to educate minority communities on the dangers of smoking. The program was unveiled during the NAACP’s 97<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention in July.

*Kick the Habit* is a multi-level program that enables smokers to better understand their addiction. It is a culturally sensitive and motivating interactive CD that details: 1) the many benefits of quitting; 2) how smoking harms people, now and in the future; 3) why people start smoking, and why they continue; 4) the short- and long-term risks of smoking; 5) the treatment options available, from nicotine patches to lifestyle changes; and 6) the dangers of second-hand smoke. Also included is a successfully proven five-step program to help smokers quit, as well as a journal to track progress.

“Each year more than 45,000 African-Americans die from smoking related diseases—these are unnecessary and preventable deaths. Smoking has an adverse effect, not only on those who smoke, but also on everyone around them,” says Myisha Patterson, National Health Coordinator for the NAACP. “The NAACP has partnered with the American Legacy Foundation and teamed with Hilton Publishing to create this guide in order to raise awareness about smoking and its effects and to provide hands-on tools and guidance for smokers to quit. This modern spin on smoking cessation is sure to draw in audiences in the Black community across all age groups. The NAACP believes that this tool will be effective in ameliorating the deaths



that are caused by smoking and encourages its use widely.”

Through a grant funded by the American Legacy Foundation, the NAACP is a part of a larger coalition—The African American Partners for a Tobacco Free Society—comprised of the NAACP, National Urban League, Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc. (CBCF), National Association of Neighborhoods (NAN), National Confer-

ence of Black Mayors (NCBM), and the National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA). The coalition is a collaborative strategic partnership to raise the consciousness of the coalition members on the economic, social and health impacts associated with tobacco use in the African American community. “Kick the Habit” will be distributed to coalition members and their constituencies to aid in disseminating the message regarding the ills of smoking and supporting those who wish to make a critical change in their lives by quitting smoking.

To receive copies of “Kick the Habit” for distribution, please contact the NAACP National Health Department at (410) 580-5672.

## School Integration Challenged: A Half Century of Progress in the Balance?

The United States Supreme Court recently agreed to hear two cases that could potentially reverse the gains of *Brown v. Board of Education* and affirmative action policies in education across this nation. The cases challenge school integration plans that were instituted in Louisville and Seattle to foster greater integration and enhance the educational experience for all students. Despite decades of research and practice establishing that important educational benefits accrue to children of different races and backgrounds when they are educated together, the U.S. Department of Justice has decided to support the plaintiffs in these cases.

In Louisville, Kentucky, a majority-white school district worked for more than thirty-five years to end segregation and to prevent black students from being confined to racially segregated, isolated, and inferior schools. Given that approximately 34 percent of the Louisville student population is African American, the current plan forbids any school from becoming more than 50 percent black or less than 15 percent black. However, Crystal Meredith, a local white parent, challenged the plan. Meredith argued that the plan prevented her son from attending his neighborhood school because it had too many white students.

In Seattle, Washington, local residents voluntarily instituted a school integration program that allows students to list which high schools they would prefer to attend. When a local high school has more applicants than classroom seats, the district can then use a series of tiebreakers, including race, to decide who gets into

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## NAACP Releases *Building on a Dream*—A Joint Housing Report with the National Association of Home Builders

On August 30, 2006, the NAACP and the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) hosted a press conference to announce the key findings and policy recommendations contained in *Building on a Dream*, a joint housing report focused on the state of minority housing opportunity in America. The press conference, which was held at the National Press Club in Washington, DC, featured NAACP President and CEO Bruce S. Gordon and NAHB Executive Vice President and CEO Jerry Howard.

Several corporate, non-profit, and governmental representatives, including HUD Assistant Secretary of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity Kim Kendrick, were in attendance to support this groundbreaking initiative.

“Owning a home is the foundation of prosperity and conveys to families many social and economic benefits,” stated NAACP President & CEO Bruce S. Gordon. “Yet for minority families, African American families in particular, great variances remain in homeownership rates and affordable housing opportunities. It is time to bridge that gap. The NAACP and NAHB have chosen to make a difference, one family at a time, one community at a time.”

*Building on a Dream* begins by examining the current state of minority housing opportunity. The report highlights several key statistics, including the current 26.2 percentage point difference in homeownership rates between African Americans and non-Hispanic white Americans, and the fact that as of 2003, only 30.6

percent of lower-income minority single parents were homeowners..

The report goes on to discuss barriers to housing choice and affordability, which primarily fall into two categories—racial discrimination and lack of affordable housing. Discriminatory policies by government and private institutions primarily come in the form of predatory lending, which includes deception, fraud, and manipulation in lending, and Fair Housing Act violations, including racial steering and discrimination in the



loan approval process. Lack of affordable housing, on the other hand, is frequently the result of local government-created “Not in My Backyard” regulations regarding development and land-use regulations that often prohibit (or significantly delay) the production of affordable housing.

The report also speaks to the widespread economic and social benefits that result when minority households become homeowners. For example, the construction of 100 single-family homes generates \$11.6 million in new income to local businesses, creates 250 jobs, and raises \$1.4 million in additional local taxes and fees *in the first year of construction alone*. Additionally, the report explains that it is imperative that all communities provide a mix of housing in a wide range of prices to ensure that homeownership is within the economic reach of the teachers, police officers, firefighters, healthcare workers, and service and retail employees who serve these communities.

The report concludes with nine policy recommendations. Some of these recommendations focus on: 1) providing home-buyer education, 2) eliminating predatory lending practices, 3) preventing racial discrimination through increased enforcement of the nation’s Fair Housing laws, 4) increasing funding for federal housing programs like HOME, Section 8 rental assistance vouchers, and Community Development Block Grants, 5) maintaining existing housing preferences in the federal tax code, and 6) promoting the production of new affordable housing.

Recognizing that the above policy recommendations are simply words on paper unless the NAACP and the NAHB commit to working together in the policy arena, the report also provides action steps that the NAACP and NAHB can take as advocates to address housing disparities. These actions steps include:

- working with local chapters to coordinate home buying education opportunities,
- providing local chapters with educational materials that explain the benefits of affordable housing,
- working with legislative bodies to eliminate predatory lending,
- pursuing legal and other actions against agencies that violate the Fair Housing Act,
- providing local chapters with the necessary information to help planning and zoning agencies, and
- signing joint letters of support for homeownership and affordable housing to members of Congress.

For more information on the state of minority housing in America, and to download a copy of *Building on a Dream*, please visit the NAACP Web site at [www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org) or the National Association of Home Builders Web site at [www.nahb.org](http://www.nahb.org).

## NAACP Goes Cyber with Training Agenda

The NAACP recently entered into a one-year agreement with WebEx Communications, Inc. WebEx is a provider of Web conferencing systems that allows individuals to conduct meetings, make presentations and share information over the Internet. In essence, WebEx allows groups of people to “get together” in a much more convenient fashion than ever before, and this is essential given the wealth of information the Association has the potential to share and receive.

This exciting partnership will allow the NAACP Training Unit to provide more effective, efficient, and accessible training and information-sharing opportunities to NAACP units and constituents. Through WebEx, the Association has taken a solid step into

the 21<sup>st</sup> century by providing online trainings, not only to its members, but also to the general public. “By incorporating the WebEx system into its training structure, the NAACP will not only build its training capacity in an efficient, fast and low cost manner; but it will help to increase the Association’s advocacy capacity and help the Association to benefit from today’s knowledge economy,” said Johnette Ruffner-Ceaser, NAACP Policy Training Director.

The National Civic Engagement Department recently completed its first round of 2006 Mid-Term Election Trainings using the WebEx system. These training sessions included Regional Directors, State Conference Presidents and Political Action Chairs

from across the country. By using WebEx, these individuals were able to receive training quickly, save time and money, and take advantage of the training in their comforts of their offices and homes.

In addition to WebEx, the NAACP Training Unit is developing a CD-ROM Toolkit, which is another training tool designed to increase the NAACP’s advocacy capacity at the state and local level. The CD will highlight five (5) of the NAACP’s main content areas (Civic Engagement, Criminal Justice, Economic Empowerment, Education, and Health) and will provide advocacy techniques for addressing issues related to those areas.

Amplify the  
Sound of  
Your Voice!



NAACP  
Voter Empowerment  
Goal:  
Increase African  
American Voter Turnout  
by 5%



Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV)

### 2006 Upcoming Elections Calendar by State

- AZ ... September 12, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate and Governor)
- DC ... September 12, 2006 ..... Primary
- DE ... September 12, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate)
- FL .... September 5, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate and Governor)
- FL .... October 3, 2006 ..... Runoff
- HI .... September 23, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate and Governor)
- LA ... September 30, 2006 ..... Primary
- MA ... September 19, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate and Governor)
- MD ... September 12, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate and Governor)
- MN ... September 12, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate and Governor)
- NH ... September 12, 2006 ..... Primary (Governor)
- NY ... September 12, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate and Governor)
- RI .... September 12, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate and Governor)
- US ... November 7, 2006 ..... General Election
- VT .... September 12, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate and Governor)
- WA .. September 19, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate)
- WI .... September 12, 2006 ..... Primary (Senate and Governor)

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residents.

Rent prices in the Gulf region have increased 39 percent in the year since Katrina. This means a family that paid \$750 in rent in August of last year would pay \$1,042 today. Meanwhile, Brookings reports that 23 percent of those displaced by Katrina remain unemployed. This is four times the national unemployment rate of 5.5 percent. A return to permanent housing has become a permanent illusion for too many Gulf Coast residents.

NAACP units in the Gulf Coast and the newly formed NAACP Gulf Coast Advocacy Center take calls every day from residents desperate for housing and other basic services. There is frustration, confusion, anger, and a sense that they are being ignored by policymakers at every level. These residents want an opportunity to be heard, and the NAACP is providing this opportunity.

In Louisiana, the NAACP Gulf Coast Advocacy Center is sponsoring community forums throughout the

months of August and September where residents can share their stories, voice their concerns, and ask questions about the state of housing in New Orleans post-Katrina.

On August 26<sup>th</sup>, the Mississippi State Conference of the NAACP, in partnership with Oxfam America, hosted a town hall meeting in Mississippi to discuss rebuilding efforts in the area. Panelists included NAACP President Bruce Gordon, Oxfam America President Ray Offenheiser, actor/activist Danny Glover, and Executive Director Barbara Arnwine, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. On August 27<sup>th</sup>, the Gulf Coast Advocacy Center hosted a town hall meeting on housing in New Orleans where elected officials and policy makers were invited to take part in the forum discussion, ensuring that the voices of residents were heard and received a meaningful response from the people most empowered to make a difference.

The Gulf Coast Advocacy Center and the Mississippi State Conference

have also each released reports on the continuing crisis in the Gulf Coast and the disproportionate impact it has had on low-income and minority populations, specifically in Mississippi and Louisiana.

The Mississippi report entitled *Envisioning a Better Mississippi: Hurricane Katrina and Mississippi One Year Later* was prepared by Rutgers University for the Mississippi State Conference of the NAACP. The Louisiana report entitled *Housing in New Orleans One Year after Katrina* was a collaboration between the Gulf Coast Advocacy Center, the Opportunity Agenda, and the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity.

Both reports analyze conditions in the area prior to the storm, progress made since, and areas in which the rebuilding effort has fallen short. In addition, they offer practical recommendations to ensure that further reconstruction is faster, fairer, and more effective. To access these reports, please visit the NAACP web site at [www.naacp.org](http://www.naacp.org).

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the school. The 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit court had previously upheld Seattle's right to use race as one of the deciding factors arguing that "the district has a compelling interest in securing the educational and social benefits of racial (and ethnic) diversity." Nonetheless, the plan was challenged by Parents Involved in Community Schools (PICS) insisting that it was unfair for the school district to consider race as a tiebreaker.

The importance of the Brown v. Board of Education legacy to this country cannot be overstated. Ensuring that the educational experience is textured by different cultural experiences ultimately strengthens our democracy. To that end, those who value social justice must carefully consider what is at stake if the Su-

preme Court decides in favor of those who have challenged the current student assignment plans in Louisville and Seattle. In short, a decision in favor of the plaintiffs will make it more difficult for schools to legally justify the measures they undertake to achieve their integration goals. Perhaps most serious is the fact that with legal protections removed, poor and minority students could increasingly find themselves shut out of quality education in America as they are confined to under-resourced schools.

The NAACP has always believed in protecting access to quality education for all students. As such, we support the use of race as a factor in determining student assignment. Moreover, we believe the use of race

in the Louisville and Seattle cases meets an important and narrowly-tailored interest and does not violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. We believe that student assignment plans that take race into consideration are reflective of the highest traditions of advancing democracy and ensuring equal opportunity. It's time that the Supreme Court, the Department of Justice, and the Bush Administration join the movement to protect these high ideals. At the time of print, the Department of Justice had already filed an amicus brief on the part of the plaintiffs in the Seattle and Louisville cases. The NAACP will be filing its own amicus brief in support of the student assignment plans.

## S.C. State Conference Urges NCAA to Extend & Expand Ban

At the pressing of the NAACP South Carolina State Conference, the NCAA is considering expanding its ban of post-season competitions in South Carolina due to the presence of the Confederate battle flag on State-house grounds. This expansion could potentially affect the ability of South Carolina to host football and baseball championship events, among other sporting events.

Six years prior, the NAACP started an economic boycott of South Carolina because the Confederate flag was displayed in positions of sovereignty within the House and Senate Chambers and atop the Capitol dome. In the spring of 2000, the state's legislature voted to remove the flag. However, the flag was repositioned to a 30-foot pole in front of the State House. Despite the removal of the flag from the dome and chambers, the NAACP continued its boycott, saying the legislative action only shifted the offensive symbol to a more visible location.

In 2001, the NCAA announced a two-year suspension prohibiting schools in South Carolina from hosting any pre-assigned championship events. The NCAA has continued the ban indefinitely, saying in 2004 that significant change on the issue had not taken place in South Carolina.

"We support a total ban on NCAA sanctioned sporting events being held in South Carolina and join the Black Coaches Association in requesting a broader ban to include regional and super-regional events," NAACP President Bruce Gordon wrote to NCAA President Myles Brand. "These events violate our sanctions on tourism in South Carolina and project the NCAA as being only partially committed to fairness and justice."

Lonnie Randolph, Jr., South Carolina State Conference president, also supports a complete ban on NCAA events noting that, "we should never accept or support justice in a piecemeal fashion."

"In South Carolina," says Randolph, "symbolism is realism when it comes to issues affecting the lives of African Americans.

## State Policy Updates

### State-by-State News on Key Issues

#### VA Gov. Issues Executive Order to Help Small Biz

Virginia Gov. Tim Kaine has issued an executive order that will mandate that more state contracts and subcontracts go to small businesses. Kaine aims to gear 40 percent of the state's discretionary spending toward small businesses owned by women and minorities. State agencies will have to track subcontracts with targeted businesses; prior to this order, agencies only had to track primary contractors. Virginia has worked to help women- and minority-owned businesses for two years.

#### N.J. to Build 100,000 Affordable Housing Units

In response to skyrocketing housing costs in his state, New Jersey Gov. Jon Corzine has pledged to build 100,000 affordable housing units over the next ten years. Federal financing for housing has been stagnant and deed-restricted housing initiatives, such as Section 8, are beginning to expire. Corzine's plan aims to replace the affordable housing units that will disappear as a result of these expirations as well as mitigate the effects of rapidly-increasing costs of labor, land and construction of new housing.

#### N.C. Gov. Signs Law Creating Innocence Commission

Gov. Mike Easley has signed into law a bill that will establish the North Carolina Innocence Inquiry Commission to review claims of innocence by inmates who have evidence that was not presented at trial. The independent, eight-member panel will be comprised of judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, law enforcement, victims' advocates and citizens of the state. HB 1323, sponsored by Rep. Rick Glazier, is considered the first law of its kind in the nation; although

eight other states (AZ, CA, CT, IL, NC, TX, VA, WI) have innocence commissions, those bodies only study the causes of and remedies for wrongful conviction. The North Carolina commission will examine individual cases.

#### FL Voter Registration Law Blocked

A federal judge has declared unconstitutional a Florida voter registration law that blocks voter registration drives by non-profit organizations and other groups. The judge reasoned that prohibiting organizations from engaging in voter registration efforts strips Florida citizens of an important means of registering their vote. Many groups have argued that the law unfairly targeted third-party registration groups because it did not apply to political parties. (*OrlandoSentinel.com*)

#### Payday Lending Regulations to Take Effect in New Mexico

A number of payday lending regulations, filed by Gov. Bill Richardson and Attorney General Patricia Madrid, took effect in New Mexico last month. Under this new set of laws, payday loans will become interest-free, and lenders must cap fees at \$15.50 per \$100 borrowed. Only the consumer will have the discretion to renew loans, and only a maximum of two times. The amount of outstanding payday loans an individual owes to licensed lenders will be limited to 25 percent of their gross monthly income. A centralized computer database will monitor compliance with the new regulations, and a moratorium will be placed on all new payday lending licenses until all payday lenders adhere to the new regulations.

For more information on these state policy updates and others, visit the Center for Policy Alternatives at <http://www.cfpa.org/blog/>.



## 2006 NAACP State Convention Schedule

(AS OF 8/25/06)

DATE	STATE	CONVENTION LOCATION
September 6-9	Florida	Springs, FL
September 7-10	Ohio	Canton, OH
September 14-17	Michigan	Lansing, MI
September 21-23	Kentucky	TBD
September 21-23	Tennessee	Nashville, TN
September 22-23	Missouri	Springfield, MO
September 22-24	New Jersey	Somerset, NJ
September 29-Oct. 1	Illinois	Bloomington, IL
September 29-Oct. 1	NEAC	Natick, MA
October 4-8	Alabama	Montgomery, AL
October 6-8	New York	Uniondale, NY
October 12-14	Georgia	Jekyll Island, GA
October 12-14	North Carolina	Goldsboro, NC
October 12-14	South Carolina	Charlotte, NC
October 14-15	Kansas	Hutchinson, KS
October 20-22	Virginia	Hampton, VA
October 26-29	Maryland	Baltimore, MD
October 27-29	Indiana	Anderson, IN
October 27-29	Pennsylvania	Essington, PA
October 28	Connecticut	New Britain, CT
November 9-12	Mississippi	Tupelo, MS
November 11	MN/ND/SD	St. Paul, MN
November 18	Delaware	Wilmington, DE
November TBD	Wisconsin	TBD
December 2	Iowa/Nebraska	Des Moines, IA



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