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OPINION

An unlikely coalition that worked

It is doubtful that the arrival of Spring had anything to do with it, but last Monday's session of the Baltimore City Council was as brisk as any Spring breeze you are apt to encounter.

In a stunning display of independence a coalition of black and white councilpersons took full command of the councilmanic redistricting issue, and passed their own amended version of a redistricting bill. The general expectation had been that the proposal put forth by Mayor Schaefer in early February would automatically go into effect on March 31st, due to the Council's failure either to amend the mayor's bill or enact its own plan.

Mayor Schaefer's councilmatic redistricting proposal had drawn heavy criticism from virtually every corner of Baltimore's black political community. The mayor's proposal was widely reviewed as a conscious effort to weaken the chances for black representation in the Council.

Black community criticism of the Schaefer proposal was focused on the fact that, if enacted, the plan would have increased the black population totals in the already predominantly black 2nd and 4th Districts, while reducing the number of black residents in the 3rd and 5th Districts, both of which had experienced significant growth in the number of black residents over the last decade.

Despite the black community's criticism of the Schaefer redistricting proposal there was no genuine expectation that efforts to change the plan would be successful. Political pudants, both black and white, had predicted that even if the Council's six black members were able to unify their concerns they would not be able to muster the four additional votes required to make a ten-member majority in the 18-member council.

Come Monday, March 21st at 5:30 p.m. and "surprise! surprise!" there appeared on the council floor, what under any other circumstances would have been, a most unlikely coalition of ten members who proceeded to take charge and work their own will. The coalition consisted of the six black councilpersons: Nathaniel McFadden and Edwin Johnson, of the 2nd District; Victorine Q. Adams, Michael B. Mitchell and Kweisi Mfume of the 4th District; and Iris Reeves of the 5th District. The four white coalition members were Mary Clarke of the 2nd District and lo and behold, Dominic "Mimi" DiPietro, John Schaefer and John Hammen of the 1st District.

Monday's council agenda was scheduled to be routine business. However, as soon as the session was gaveled to order by Council President Clarence Du Burns, Councilman DiPietro rose to make a motion, to remove the mayor's redistricting bill 1436 from the jurisdiction of the Judiciary Committee, where it had been since the beginning of February and to bring it before the council for amendment and passage on second reader. "Mimi" colleague, Mr. Schaefer seconded the motion and the mini-revolution was underway.

Councilman Gallagher, chairman of the Judiciary Committee, immediately rose to oppose the motion, stating that his committee would make a report on redistricting at a special council session scheduled for last night (Thursday, March 24). Other council members rose in answer to Mr. Gallagher's remarks, and pointed out that by holding the bill until Thursday could have possibly meant the council would not have had sufficient time to pass a bill in final form prior to the March 31st deadline.

The motion was put to a vote, and the coalition prevailed by a vote, 10 to 8, with Council President Burns not voting. Council President Burns later explained that it would have been inappropriate for him to have voted for the "removal" issue, unless his vote was needed to break a tie. A vote by President Burns for the motion would have been a vote against himself, since all council committee's are responsible to him for their assignments. Had there been a tie vote President Burns was prepared to cast the tie-breaking tenth vote for the motion.

Bedlam broke out in the council chambers after the passage of the motion to bring the redistricting bill to the floor for a vote. Councilman Gallagher precipitated the turmoil by rising, without being recognized by President Burns, to move for immediate passage of the mayor's bill. President Burns cooly resorted to the council parliamentarian for a ruling as to the appropriate procedure to follow.

President Burns was given a choice of recognizing either Councilman Gallagher, an opponent of the coalition's effort, or Councilman Mfume, who had amendments to propose. President Burns recognized Councilman Mfume. The rout was on.

Councilman Mfume's amendments moved an overwhelmingly black precinct in the lower Park Heights area from the 4th to the 5th district and moved two overwhelmingly white precincts in the Hampden area from the 5th into the 4th District.

After an attempted filibuster by 3rd District Councilman Curran and particularly bitter remarks by 5th District Councilpersons Spector and Waxter, the Mfume amendments passed by the same 10 to 8 margin.

Councilman Schaefer then offered a set of amendments affecting the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Districts, which had the effect of increasing the number of black residents in both the 2nd and 3rd Districts. The Schaefer amendments were also passed by the coalition by a 10 to 8 vote.

After defeating additional delaying tactics by its opponents the coalition approved the redistricting plan, as amended by its 10 to 8 vote margin.

Bitterness ran high among opponents of the coalition efforts. Both Councilwoman Spector and Councilman Waxter spoke in terms which deprecated the removal of white residents from their district. Both councilpersons seemed to have conveniently forgotten that they both enjoyed significant support from black voters in their 1979 election bids. Whether such support will be present in 1983 will be shown after the polls close on September 7th.

Contrary to media reports elsewhere the prime architect of last Monday night's proceedings was one of the council's newest members - 2nd District Councilman Nathaniel McFadden.

Although he remained quiet throughout the evening's turmoil, it was councilman McFadden who had laid the groundwork for the coalition, and orchestrated the surprising upset. In late February, Councilman McFadden had met with the 1st District delegation to determine their level of dissatisfaction with certain provisions of the mayor's proposal.

He then joined with councilman Schaefer in developing a set of recommendations to accommodate the desired changes in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Districts. Having satisfied the 1st District's needs, while at the same time meeting the need for black population increases in the 2nd District, Councilman McFadden then brought on board his colleagues in the 2nd, and 4th Districts, and Iris Reeves in the 5th District. Once the necessary ten votes were cemented, McFadden initiated the move to bring the bill to the council floor.

As the AFRO goes to press the final chapter of the 1983 councilmanic redistricting battle is being fought in the council chambers. By the time this article hits the newsstands, we will know if General McFadden and his troops have won the entire war, in addition to winning the key battle.

Parren J. MITCHELL

Emergency Mathematics

Amid some of the more unpopular moves being undertaken by the Congress, I am happy to share one positive initiative with you which I have supported.

This measure is aimed at our youth and providing essential educational tools so that they might be prepared for the job market.

The Emergency Mathematics and Science Education Act (H.R. 1310) was passed by the House of Representatives on March 2. This bill is pending by the Senate.

This legislation authorizes $300 million in fiscal year 1984 and such sums as necessary in fiscal year 1985 to improve math and science education and $100 million in each fiscal year 1984 through 1988 to provide a national policy for training engineering, technical and scientific personnel.

This bill is essential if we are going to ensure that all youth are prepared for the technological jobs which will dominate future markets.

It is no secret the majority of the existing and new job opportunities will require proficiency in mathematics, science and related disciplines.

The government must provide appropriate monies to guarantee that our youth can acquire those skills. Let us look briefly at the provisions of H.R. 1310.

Title I, Part A would authorize $350 million for fiscal year 1984 and necessary sums for fiscal year 1985, to improve math and science education at the elementary and secondary levels.

At least 75 percent of each state's funds must be allocated to local educational agencies (SEA's) may reserve up to 20 percent for state-run programs and administration.

The primary purpose of both the state and local programs is to improve the in-service teacher training projects in math and science by improving the skills and knowledge of current teachers and by recertifying teachers of other subjects as math and science teachers.

After meeting teacher training needs, LEA's may use their funds for other activities such as curriculum development, acquisition of instructional materials and equipment, including computers, and activities with private businesses, museums, libraries and other organizations and agencies.

SEAs are required to set aside 20 percent of their funds for an incentive grant program for matching grants to LEA's for joint programs with private businesses or other organizations.

State and local programs funded under Title I, Part A, must provide for the participation of private school children and teachers, must ensure equal education opportunity and the full participation of underrepresented groups, including women, and minorities.

Title I, Part B would authorize $50 million in fiscal year 1984 for several programs to improve post secondary education in mathematics, science foreign languages.

The bill authorizes up to 5,000 teaching scholarships in the 1984 1985 academic year and 10,000 scholarships in the 1985-1986 academic year.

Scholarship nominations would be apportioned by state, based on population and recipients must agree to teach two years for every year of scholarship assistance. Up to 5 percent of these scholarships may be reserved for teachers who currently are in school systems for one year of study at an institution of higher education.

Awards to current teachers may not exceed $5,000 to cover the cost of attendance and related expenses.

The bill also authorizes summer institutes to be funded on a competitive basis to improve both the discipline content and instructional skills of elementary and secondary math and science teachers.

Grants for curriculum development and faculty improvement; a math science and foreign language education research program; and the Minority Institutions Science Improvement Program through fiscal year 1985 at the current level of $5 million.

Title II would establish a national policy and programs for the training of technical engineering and science personnel.

The Bill would authorize $100 million in each fiscal year 1984 through 1988 for an Engineering and Science Personnel Fund to be administered through the National Science Foundation (NFS).

NSF could expend money for grants, research fellowships, capital equipment, salaries, and instrumentation.

Funds for grants would be made available through a system of matching grants with private or other public sector funds, on a 50-50 basis, for the following activities:

- Recruitment and retention of new engineering faculty; - two year and community college faculty and instructor development in high technology fields; - instructional instrumentation programs for post-secondary level;
- Precollege math and science

More letters

Maryland State Retirement System

Dear AFRO:

The issue is the Maryland State Retirement System.

Put aside arguments of a contractural obligation, put aside arguments of a moral commitment to those who are presently members of the system.

You are on the verge of gutting education throughout our state. The mood in the schools is grim and the potential effect of the passage of S.B. 606, the Steinberg freeze and switch bill, is beginning to hit home.

Teachers are angry. Those with 25 years or more of experience are seriously thinking of leaving the classroom for they see no advantage in continuing under the proposed split system.

Their younger colleagues, many of whom gave up pursuing more lucrative occupations for the promise of a fine retirement system, feel betrayed.

Let's make the ultimate impact of this clear with one example. In less than six months, up to 20 percent of all teachers in Baltimmore County could retire, with more perhaps choosing to resign.

The resulting influx of new inexperienced teachers, with the loss of the skill and expertise of those who would depart, will place a tremendous burden on those left behind.

It will drastically decrease the quality of education now and for years to come.

If you doubt the accuracy of this prediction, it is only because of your distance from the schools. In recent days I have heard the same attitudes expressed by almost every educator with whom I have spoken.

I repeat, it's real and its potential devastating.

STEPHEN H. SIRKIN

Funding for WIC Program

Dear AFRO:

There has been considerable misunderstanding about the status of the WIC program in FY 83. The regular Maryland allocation for WIC was $14.8 million and, on the basis of these revenues, a caseload of about 47,000 was supported.

Toward the end of that year, there was an unanticipated additional distribution from the Department of Agriculture in the amount of $435,000.

It is in our interest to use these funds (and in fact there is a penalty for not doing so); therefore, by extending the categories of individuals served, the caseload was expanded to some 53,000 as of October, 1982.

On March 3, 1983, the U.S. House of Representatives approved an additional $100 million for WIC in H.R. 1718, Emergency Expenditures to Meet National Needs, the Jobs Bill.

Only if this proposal is adopted and signed by the President will we be able to continue to serve the expanded list. Otherwise, as individuals come up for recertification in the program, the categories served will be contracted and we expect that the caseload will back off gradually to the ongoing 1982 levels.

Unlike food stamps, the WIC program is targeted to provide nutrition supplements to those who have a special health need.

Federal law specifically lays down the criteria of eligibility for the additional food as follows:

1) Individuals with nutritionally related medical problems—pregnant women, breast-feeding women and infants under 1 year.

2) Infants under 6 months born to women eligible under (1).

3) Children 1-5 with nutritionally related medical problems.

4) Individuals with poor daily diet — pregnant women, breast-feeding women and infants up to 1 year.

5) Children 1-5 with poor daily diet.

6) Non-breast-feeding women after birth of child.

With the additional distribution, it was possible to dip for a time into classes 4, 5, and 6.

It has been pointed out to me that the last three classes do not call for a documented health problem that could be laid to a nutritional deficiency.

At this time, we expect to continue to serve all of the first four groups, which include, in the belief of staff of the Preventive Medicine Administration, the most vulnerable of our people.

With reference to a review of Block Grant allocation, the WIC program is separate from the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant (MCHSBG).

There has been discussion on the Federal level of the incorporation of WIC, but this has not occurred. Federal law does not permit inter-block transfer in the case of the MCHSBG.

The General Assembly, of course, appropriates the MCHS Block Grant funds and the bulk of the monies are shown simply as a revenue source, along with general funds, for three programs:

The Case formula grants to local health departments ($1.3M); the Maternal and Child Health Division of the Preventive Medicine Administration ($4.5M); and Crippled Children's Services ($1.2M).

The Preventive Medicine Administration in turn passes funds through to such local health programs as the Children and Youth Centers and Maternal and Infant Care Centers in Baltimore City. In all cases, the monies are fungible and cannot be identified with particular services in any receiving unit.

It may be noted that exclusive of WIC, the Maternal and Child Health Division budget in 1981 equalled $11.6 M of which $2.1 M was State money; the figures for FY 84 are $9.8 M of which $3.1 M came from the State.

In the case of Crippled Children's Services, in 1981, total expenditure was $5.0 M of which $3.4 M was State money and, in 1984, $5.15 M is proposed of which $3.7 M will be paid by the State.

I believe the significance of the numbers is that funds in the WIC program dwarf State expenditures for programs serving many of the same individuals, programs that have already experienced decreased funding.

Your special attention to these programs for our needy citizens is appreciated. Dr. Joanne Finley, Assistant Secretary for Health, will be glad to discuss any details with you.

GOVERNOR HUGHES
DEL. LARRY YOUNG

Letters

AFRO readers write about the AFRO

Dear AFRO:

I would like to be able to read my AFRO, without also reading my Dictionary at the same time, so that I can understand what I am reading.

I refer to the Article by Frances Murphy on page 4 of March 15 AFRO edition on workfare:

One word in the first paragraph stopped me because I did not know what it meant. It should have been in plain language everybody could understand.

What is this kind? Apocryphal Welfare Queen?

It could have said, "By the Fictitious Welfare Queen," and everybody would have known what it meant. Everybody is not a Language Professor or has a dictionary in their home.

Please keep it simple so that all can understand what is written in your paper!

LILLIAN THOMPSON

It would seem to parallel the Germans in more ways than one. We see the idiot fringe, the hate groups growing larger in their attempts to exterminate races of people, the Hispanics, the Jews and the blacks.

Those who have had to shake this so-called pride to accept Food Stamps and welfare must stop thinking so much of their little wor(d)s. They must begin to question how all this has come about, and to wonder why this sense of shame has occured in the first place.

We cannot forget that racism, the survival of the fittest mentalities, the adoration of John Wayne and the old West fantasies have become part and parcel of the American Dream.

The Horatio Alger stories merely have brainwashed the ordinary white American into believing that anyone could make it if he or she wanted to. What dream do they have now?

They like all of us however who hang on by a thread with shaky pensions systems; with reduced benefits from Social Security; with cuts in benefits and pay in order to keep companies going just to hold on to fragil employment, are pawns in the war games of capitalism, where caring about environmental protection and manufacturing arms and poison gas are not compatible.

and manufacturing arms and poison gas are not compatible.

It's like being moved about on a game of Monopoly.

Moreover, unless we connect what is going on nationally and internationally with this deadly game, then more of us will fall by the wayside, either in "pacification" attempts in El Salvador, or in the stepped up repression of surveillance and brutality of police forces; of the FBI; of the CIA, so that the game of Monopoly can be played with more intensity, brutality and violence.

We must ask ourselves, in a country where wealth is pride, where technology, more advanced than in any other country, is king, how come the poor continue to increase?

How come the inevitability of war is this society's subconscious, subliminal message?

Will this be the cynical way of weeding out the unfit, of insuring the survival of the fittest; of cranking down welfare programs?

And out of desperation, as a quick fix, will we poor slobs welcome war as the ultimate maniacal suicide?

Madeline MURPHY

Survival of the fittest

A recent newspaper article describing the trials and tribulations of white women who find themselves out of work, unable to make both ends meet without husbands, continually brings up the question of welfare and pride as if both of them go together.

It seems that one woman having been offered ten dollars for food stamps, retorted that the social worker could keep them because that would not be enough to put meat and potatoes on the table for herself and her son.

Aside from the old cliches: "pride goeth before a fall" and "what goes around comes around" (which have negative and vindictive connotations) there are two thoughts that cross the mind.

The first is that welfare and the system started in the Depression of the thirties, was meant not to demean, but to fill the gap for those who could not look out for themselves.

Rather the compassion that should have been the "milk of human kindness" shown toward the less fortunate, is now lost on those new beneficiaries, who incidentally in better times looked down with scorn upon those less fortunate.

How often was the cry then that they should go out and look for a job, instead of "lounging around" letting someone else pay the taxes to look after them. The words describing those people were "lazy", shiftless", "unwilling to work."

Now there are those presently who have found themselves in need and perhaps these very ones, who now talk about pride, out of guilt, one daresay, and out of suddenly finding themselves in the same positions of those whom they so soundly derided and ostracized.

The second is that what Psychohistorian Howard Stein wonders about is the connection between the new physical fitness craze and the tough neo-Darwinian politics of Reagan's American between "trimming off excess fat on the body to "trimming off the excess fat on the body politic" which aims at the poor and the weak.

He suggests that there might be a new "wellness fantasy" that stresses the notion that only the lean, fit (and wealthy?) are worthy of survival, of help!

He asks: "Is our new spirit best shown in such ads as the recent one which shows a naked infant and an inch high caption reading: "We're all created equal. After that, baby, you're on your own."

Might we soon begin to talk about "superfluous, expendable people...are we playing, asks Dr. Stein, with the notion of two classes, "they" who are not worthy of receiving school lunches, unemployment compensation, Food Stamps, and so on, and "we" who are full of healthy vitality?

Finally he asks, "Are we passing through a milder version of group-fantasies of the Germans in the inter-war period?"

All indications from the White House about unemployment, that we should not expect it to go lower under nine million, supports the theory that the survival of the fittest may be the answer to our economic problems.

As we look at the bag ladies, the elderly poor, the men in line at soup kitchens, how much younger they are getting, the creeping mortality rates of infants and children, one can only expect the next call will be for a "super" race where these newer disciples of the right wing, will raise the level of patriotism not unlike Hitler's Germany. Where once again the brave young people will be exhorted to become cannon fodder.

Already signs of this phenomenon are seen in tying student loans at universities and colleges to registration for the draft.

AFRO Survey

Sencerray Jones

Reginald Ingram

Gloria Belton

Should Judge Billy Murphy run for mayor?

AFRO photographer Paul A. Greene took to the streets this week to ask passers-by this question: "Should Judge William H. (Billy) Murphy, Jr. run for mayor?"

Here is what he was told:

Gregory Lawson, 31, former stevedore

"I believe that Judge Murphy at this point in his life was really striving for blacks. But now, (since he has become a judge), I feel that Murphy's enthusiasm has died down."

Dora Greene, 27, salesperson

"If he can do a good job, fine."

Arnett Evans, 49

"I think that it is fine. Judge Murphy is a learned man."

Sencerray Jones, 29, clerk at Social Security Administration

"I think that it is a great idea. I hope that he gets elected."

Reginald Ingram, 29, contractor

"I don't think that he could take Mayor Schaefer's place. He needs more experience. But in the future, better candidates like Kurt Schmoke will be available."

Frederick Watts, 25, media coordinator

"There is no way that Murphy could beat Schaefer in an election because the mayor has done so much for Baltimore that everyone is behind him."

Mildred Addison, 54, employee at Walter P. Carter Center

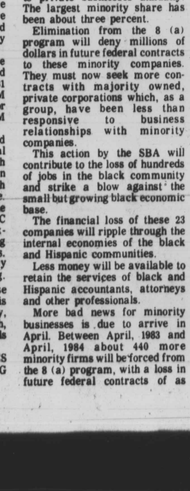
"I believe that Judge Murphy would win over Schaefer and do a better job, plus generate more jobs for people."

Gloria Belton, 37, Social Security Administration worker

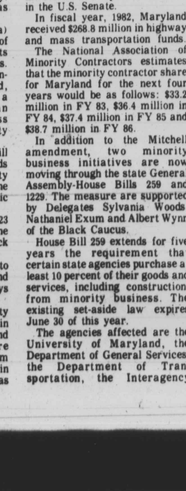
"I believe that Judge Murphy would be a good mayor and that he would be competent. I also feel that we need a black mayor."

Vincent Kelly, 33, Social Security Administration employee

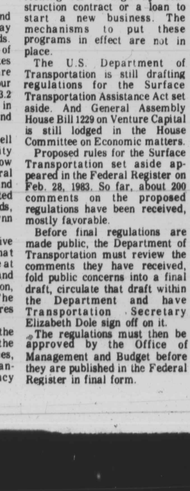
"I believe that Judge Murphy needs more experience and that there are more experienced blacks who could do a better job."



Gregory Lawson



Mildred Addison



Arnett Evans

Legislative review

Black business: help wanted

By David Ruffin

President Reagan promised last December to expand the number of minority firms participating in Federal Small business programs. But actions by the Small Business Administration (SBA) show that the President has fallen short of living up to his promise.

In a Dec. 17, statement on minority business, Reagan said his administration was "taking measures designed to expand the number of minority firms participating in Federal procurement programs."

But, 23 minority-owned businesses have since been eliminated by the SBA from participation in the "8(a)" contract procurement program of the federal government.

Most of the 23 firms are owned by blacks or Hispanics. Two are based in Maryland.

These firms are among the largest of more than 2,000 companies providing goods and services to the federal government through contracts set aside for minority businesses as part of the program.

The federal government awards more than $100 billion in contracts to private businesses annually. The largest minority share has been about three percent.

Elimination from the 8 (a) program will deny millions of dollars in future federal contracts to these minority companies. They must now seek more contracts with majority owned, private corporations which, as a group, have been less than responsive to business relationships with minority companies.

This action by the SBA will contribute to the loss of hundreds of jobs in the black community and strike a blow against the small but growing black economic base.

The financial loss of these 23 companies will ripple through the internal economies of the black and Hispanic communities.

Less money will be available to retain the services of black and Hispanic accountants, attorneys and other professionals.

More bad news for minority businesses is due to arrive in April. Between April, 1983 and April, 1984 about 440 more minority firms will be forced from the 8 (a) program, with a loss in future federal contracts of as much as $860 million. Thousands of jobs will be eliminated as a result.

While this is a gloomy picture, it is not hopeless.

Black Maryland legislators are leading the fight to preserve and expand minority business opportunities in the U.S. Congress and Maryland General Assembly.

Last fall, U.S. Representative Parren Mitchell succeeded in amending the "Surface Transportation Assistance Act of 1982," Public Law 97-424, to include a minority contract set aside provision.

The five cents a gallon gas tax provision of the Act will raise approximately $70 billion to be administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation for construction of roads, highways and urban mass transportation systems.

The Mitchell amendment requires 10 percent or about $7 billion to be spent among "small business concerns owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals" through fiscal year 1986.

U.S. Senator Alan Cranston introduced a companion measure in the U.S. Senate.

In fiscal year, 1982, Maryland received $268.8 million in highway and mass transportation funds.

The National Association of Minority Contractors estimates that the minority contractor share for Maryland for the next four years would be as follows: $33.2 million in FY 83, $36.4 million in FY 84, $37.4 million in FY 85 and $38.7 million in FY 86.

In addition to the Mitchell amendment, two minority business initiatives are now moving through the state General Assembly-House Bills 259 and 1229. The measure are supported by Delegates Sylvania Woods, Nathaniel Exum and Albert Wynn of the Black Caucus.

House Bill 259 extends for five years the requirement that certain state agencies purchase at least 10 percent of their goods and services, including construction, from minority business. The existing set-aside law expires June 30 of this year.

The agencies affected are the University of Maryland, the Department of General Services, the Department of Transportation, the Interagency Committee on Public School Construction, the State Lottery Agency and the Department of Budget and Financial Planning.

Each agency of the state government would be required to submit annual reports to the Governor's Office of Minority Affairs on the "total number and value of its purchases from minority business enterprises" and the percent of those purchases among total agency contracts.

The office of Minority Affairs is charged with enforcing the 10 percent set aside law.

A new Venture Capital Guarantee Program set up by House Bill 1229 would guarantee loans made by banks and other financial institutions to cover start-up costs for new business located in Maryland.

The revolving loan fund would guarantee 80 percent of the principal and interest of loans up to $500,000, and would grant borrowers up to ten years to repay. No new loans could be made under the program after July 1, 1986. The Maryland Industrial Development Financing Authority would administer the loan program.

Do not run out on Monday looking for a highway construction contract or a loan to start a new business. The mechanisms to put these programs in effect are not in place.

The U.S. Department of Transportation is still drafting regulations for the Surface Transportation Assistance Act set aside. And General Assembly House Bill 1229 on Venture Capital is still lodged in the House Committee on Economic matters.

Proposed rules for the Surface Transportation set aside appeared in the Federal Register on Feb. 28, 1983. So far, about 200 comments on the proposed regulations have been received, mostly favorable.

Before final regulations are made public, the Department of Transportation must review the comments they have received, fold public concerns into a final draft, circulate that draft within the Department and have Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole sign off on it.

The regulations must then be approved by the Office of Management and Budget before they are published in the Federal Register in final form.

NOTICE

Elizabeth M. Oliver's column, For All We Know, begins running in the National AFRO and all subsequent editions with special news on Hawaii for the many servicemen who look forward to the AFRO like a "letter from home." Also included is other national news, the coming NOBLE convention bringing high ranking police officials from across the nation to Baltimore and Atlantic City.