Permanent Interests:

THE EXPANSION, ORGANIZATION, AND RISING INFLUENCE OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN CONGRESS, 1971–2007

The modern era of African Americans' nearly 140-year history in Congress began in 1971. Black Members enjoyed a tremendous surge in numbers, at least in the House, reflecting a larger historical process, as minority groups and women exercised their new freedom to participate in American society. Fully 71 percent of all African Americans who have served in Congress entered the House or Senate after 1970 (84 Representatives and two Senators).[1] These startling gains derived from the legacy of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and its subsequent extensions, as well as from Supreme Court decisions requiring legislative redistricting so that black voters could be represented more equitably.

Greater numbers of African-American Members provided renewed momentum for convening a formal group and, in 1971, 13 individuals created the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC).[2] The CBC became a focal point for addressing issues important to blacks nationally by acting as an advocacy group for African Americans within the institution and forming a potent bloc for pushing legislative items. A growing influence, more focused and forceful than in previous generations, accompanied the organizational trend. The electoral longevity of African-American Members (boosted by districts that were drawn with black majorities), coupled with the CBC's lobbying of House leaders and progressive

On January 4, 2005, the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) swore in its first male Senator, Barack Obama of Illinois. Representatives Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas and Donald Payne of New Jersey take the CBC oath in the foreground. Since 1971, the CBC has played a major role in advocating African-American issues and advancing black Members within the institution of Congress.

Image courtesy of AP/Wide World Photos

The 13 founding members of the newly formed CBC gathered for a picture. Standing left to right are: Parren Mitchell of Maryland, Charles Rangel of New York, William L. (Bill) Clay, Sr., of Missouri, Ronald Dellums of California, George Collins of Illinois, Louis Stokes of Ohio, Ralph Metcalfe of Illinois, John Conyers, Jr., of Michigan, and Walter Fauntroy of the District of Columbia. Seated left to right are: Robert Nix, Sr., of Pennsylvania, Charles Diggs, Jr., of Michigan, Shirley Chisholm of New York, and Augustus (Gus) Hawkins of California.

Image courtesy of Moorland–Spingarn Research Center, Howard University

institutional reforms in the 1970s, placed many black Members in key committee and party leadership positions. Over time, black advancement within the institution changed Members' legislative strategies. "Many of the [early] Black Caucus members came out of the heat of the civil rights struggle," William (Bill) Gray III of Pennsylvania observed. "We have a group of new members whose strategies were shaped in the post-civil rights movement—who use leverage within the system. We see ourselves not as civil rights leaders, but as legislators . . . the pioneers had made it possible for us to be technicians."[3]

The post-1970 generation of black Americans in Congress marked a watershed in American history—a transition from a period of prolonged protest to full political participation. Similar to other minority groups on Capitol Hill entering a stage of institutional maturity, African Americans faced new and sometimes unanticipated challenges resulting from their numerical, organizational, and leadership successes. Redistricting that dramatically boosted the numbers of African-American Members in the early 1990s evoked opposition that sought to roll back or dilute black voting strength. Moreover, by the end of the decade, redistricting had largely run its course in areas where black votes could be concentrated with a goal of electing more African Americans to Congress. The net result was that the number of African Americans in Congress leveled off by the early 1990s and hovered in the high 30s and low 40s for eight election cycles from 1992 through 2006. Although organizational trends provided African-American Members a forum to discuss their legislative agendas and strategies, black Members disagreed about many issues, partially because each Member represented the interests of a unique constituency. Finally, while African-American Members enjoyed unprecedented leadership strength for most of this era, greater power often placed black leaders in a quandary when the imperatives of promoting the leadership or party agenda conflicted with perceived "black interests."

Background and Precongressional Experience

Like earlier generations of black legislators on Capitol Hill, the 86 African Americans who entered Congress in the period from 1971 through 2007 generally ranked far above the norm in terms of education, professional attainment, and civic achievements. Successful careers in state government propelled the large numbers

of African Americans elected to Congress in the 1990s.[4] Like all the previous generations of black Members, these individuals were typical of their peers among the general membership of the House and Senate—composed largely of business, law, public service, and other professional elites. They were exceedingly well educated, as was the general congressional membership, and their level of education ranked far above the statistical averages for the general U.S. population.[5] They also largely experienced trends that were prevalent among the general congressional population, including a decline in prior military experience and a higher median age at first election.[6]

Civil Rights Activism

A defining precongressional experience for many in this generation was their shared background in local and national civil rights protests. Many of the Members from this era, especially those first elected in the 1970s and 1980s, came of age during the civil rights movement. Some were prominent figures. John R. Lewis of Georgia (elected in 1986) cofounded and led the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), which became a pillar of the movement—staging sit-ins in segregated stores, participating in the Freedom Rides of 1961, and helping to organize the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. Andrew Young of Georgia (elected in 1972) was a principal aide to Martin Luther King, Jr., serving as executive director and executive vice president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC). King also tapped a young Washington minister, Walter Fauntroy, as director of the city's SCLC bureau. As the SCLC's congressional lobbyist, Fauntroy (elected the District of Columbia's Delegate in 1971) honed his skills as a coalition-builder.

Early in their political careers, some future black Members of Congress also grappled with internal divisions in the civil rights movement between those who embraced King's nonviolent protests and those who preferred a more aggressive and militant stance (such as Stokely Carmichael, who succeeded Lewis as head of SNCC).[7] Out of this schism came the Black Power movement and the more

In 1963, civil rights leaders, from left to right, John Lewis (future Georgia Representative), Whitney Young, Jr., A. Philip Randolph, Martin Luther King, Jr., James Farmer, and Roy Wilkins met at the Hotel Commodore in New York City for a strategy session.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

Redistricting:

The redrawing of U.S. House districts within states, following the constitutionally mandated decennial census and the apportionment of seats. State legislatures draw new districts based on the need to accommodate population declines or increases that result in the addition or subtraction of House seats apportioned to the state.

Ronald Dellums of California, who ran as a peace candidate and Vietnam War opponent, won a seat on the Armed Services Committee in 1973. The first African American to serve on the committee, Dellums's goal was to rein in the military's budget.

Image courtesy of Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

Harold Washington of Illinois used his seat in the House as a springboard for his successful effort to become the first black mayor of Chicago.

Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

radical black nationalist factions of the latter 1960s, such as the Black Panthers. "Black Power" had different meanings within the movement. For Carmichael's cohorts, Black Power expressed frustration and rage with intransigent racism and advocated black separatism and the use of violence, if necessary, to achieve a measure of independence for African Americans. Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., of New York, who served in the House in 1966 when Carmichael first employed the term, briefly allied himself with the "new black militants" and defined Black Power as "a new philosophy for the tough, proud young Negroes who categorically refuse to compromise any longer for their rights."[8] John Lewis, who resigned from SNCC in July 1966 because of its militancy and confrontational rhetoric, recalled that SNCC had used a similar phrase during the Selma protests but that "it had more to do with self-reliance than with black supremacy." Lewis added that as articulated by Carmichael, Black Power "tended to create a schism, both within the movement itself and between the races. It drove people apart rather than brought them together."[9]

Ronald Dellums of California, who represented an Oakland–Berkeley House district, found himself at the center of a virtual war between Black Panthers and the Oakland police force in the late 1960s. "The Black Panther Party for Self Defense" had been formed in 1966 by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale to counter what both men believed to be a long history of police abuses against African-American citizens of Oakland. As a member of the Berkeley city council, Dellums once convinced Seale to disperse an angry, agitated crowd of Panther supporters at a council meeting, probably avoiding bloodshed. Dellums noted that juggling the complex and competing agendas of radical factions developed his political acumen by forcing him "to employ all the skills at my command to build legislative majorities." A former member of the Chicago Black Panthers, Bobby Rush, who quit the group in the early 1970s because of its violent tactics, served a decade as a Chicago city councilman before winning election to the U.S. House in 1992.

Prior Elective Office

This generation's elective experience differed significantly from that of previous generations. The vast majority of African Americans who entered Congress after 1970 held prior elective office (68 of the 86, or 79 percent), with a substantial increase in the numbers with service in state legislatures. Half (43) of the African Americans elected to Congress from 1971 through 2007 served as state legislators, 19 in the lower chamber, six in the upper chamber, and 18 in both chambers of their respective statehouses. Of these, several performed leadership functions in their respective chambers, including Barbara Jordan (president *pro tempore* of the Texas senate), Harold E. Ford, Sr., (majority whip of the Tennessee house of representatives), and Carol Moseley-Braun (assistant majority leader of the Illinois house of representatives).[11] This development, perhaps more than any other precongressional characteristic, brought black Members of Congress into near-total congruence with the experiential background of the general population of House and Senate membership.

Voting rights reforms and redistricting drove diversity trends in the state legislatures in the decades after Congress enacted civil rights legislation. For instance, between 1970 and 1992, the number of African Americans serving in state legislatures increased 274 percent (from 168 to 463). The growth occurred fastest in the South—where the largest number of blacks lived and where voting rights legislation and court decisions provided greater access to the ballot. From 32

seats in 1970, blacks held 226 in 1992—a gain of 894 percent.[12] These trends have continued, albeit more slowly, in the last 15 years. According to 2003 figures from the National Conference of State Legislators, 595 African Americans held seats in the upper or lower house in state legislatures, accounting for 8.1 percent of all (7,382) state legislators nationwide.[13]

At the state and the national levels, these gains have been particularly striking among women. Over time, African-American women have accounted for an increasing percentage of the sum total of black legislators in state capitals and in Washington, DC. For instance, in 1970 there were only 15 black women state legislators—accounting for less than 10 percent of all African-American state legislators. By 1992, the number of black women state legislators had increased to 131, or roughly 28 percent of all black state legislators. As with other women in Congress, legislative experience at the state level provided a vehicle for election to the U.S. Congress. In 1971, there was only one African-American woman in Congress—Shirley Chisholm of New York—among a total of 14 blacks in Congress. By late 2007, African-American women accounted for nearly one-third of all the sitting black Members of Congress.[14]

State legislatures were just one avenue to attain higher office. Traditional experience in local and municipal elective office also typified this post-1971 cohort of black Members of Congress. Fifteen served on city councils, and five were elected county council members or commissioners. Four persons served as mayors, nine served as local or municipal judges, and several others held other elected positions, such as school board member, recorder of deeds, and justice of the peace. Three individuals held high-ranking state or territorial positions: Mervyn Dymally, lieutenant governor of California; Melvin Evans, governor of the Virgin Islands; and G. K. Butterfield, North Carolina supreme court justice. Finally, several individuals held prominent federal positions prior to winning their first congressional election, including Eleanor Holmes Norton, commissioner of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in the 1970s and Diane Watson, U.S. Ambassador to the Federated States of Micronesia from 1999 through 2000.

Barbara Jordan became the first black female state senator in the United States when she was elected to the Texas senate in 1966. This 1968 photograph shows Jordan at a White House meeting with President Lyndon B. Johnson (not pictured) and other legislators. When Jordan was elected to the U.S. House in 1972, Johnson persuaded congressional leaders to assign Jordan to the influential Judiciary Committee.

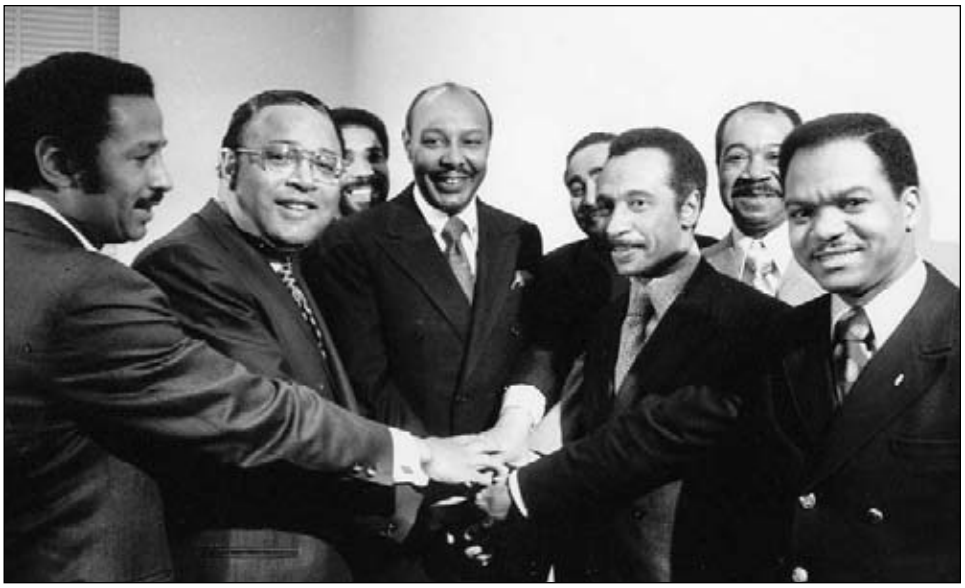
Photograph by Yoichi R. Okamoto, Courtesy of LBJ Library

Creation and Evolution of the Congressional Black Caucus

As the number of African Americans serving in Congress grew, a long-desired movement to form a more unified organization among black legislators coalesced. When Charles C. Diggs, Jr., of Michigan entered the House of Representatives in 1955, he joined black Members William Dawson of Illinois and Adam Clayton Powell—the largest delegation of African Americans on Capitol Hill since Reconstruction. "In Congress, there was little, if any communication between Dawson and Powell," Diggs noted. "Their styles were different. In terms of exercise between them, there was not any."[15] Diggs keenly felt the isolation endured by black Members due to their small numbers in Congress and, in some cases, an inability to connect on a personal level. Frustrated that black Representatives lacked a forum to discuss common concerns and issues, Diggs proposed the organization of the Democratic Select Committee (DSC) at the opening of the 91st Congress (1969–1971), maintaining that the DSC would fill a significant void by fostering the exchange of information among the nine African Americans serving in Congress, as well as between black Representatives and House leadership. "The sooner we get organized for group action, the more effective we can become,"

More women joined the first black Congresswoman, Shirley Chisholm of New York, on Capitol Hill during this period. Pictured from left to right are: Cardiss Collins of Illinois, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke of California, and Chisholm. In the 110th Congress (2007–2009), women account for one-third of the total number of African-American Members.

Image courtesy of Moorland–Spingarn Research Center, Howard University



John Conyers, Jr., of Michigan, Charles Diggs, Jr., of Michigan, Bill Clay, Sr., of Missouri, Louis Stokes of Ohio, Charles Rangel of New York, Parren Mitchell of Maryland, George Collins of Illinois, and Walter Fauntroy of the District of Columbia gathered as a show of unity among black Members of Congress of the 92nd Congress (1971–1973).

Image courtesy of U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

Caucus:

A meeting of party members in each chamber (House Republicans, Senate Democrats, and Senate Republicans refer to their respective gatherings as "Conferences"). These meetings are used primarily to select candidates for office and to consider other important business for furthering party interests. The term also describes an organization of House and Senate Members that is devoted to a special interest or legislative area.

Diggs remarked.[16] The informal group held sporadic meetings that were mainly social gatherings and had no independent staff or budget.

Newly elected Members and beneficiaries of court-ordered redistricting, William (Bill) Clay, Sr., of Missouri, Louis Stokes of Ohio, and Shirley Chisholm embraced the concept of a group for black legislators to "seize the moment, to fight for justice, to raise issues too long ignored and too little debated"—all of which quickly translated into a more influential association for African-American Members.[17] Representative Clay and Stokes formed a fast and enduring friendship. Their close personal relationship boosted momentum to craft a permanent organization. Stokes drew upon his efforts to forge an independent political organization within his own district. "The thrust of our elections was that many black people around America who had formerly been unrepresented, now felt that the nine black members of the House owed them the obligation of also affording them representation in the House," Stokes explained. He added that "in addition to representing our individual districts, we had to assume the onerous burden of acting as congressman-at-large for unrepresented people around America."[18]

With the opening of the 92nd Congress (1971–1973), the number of black Representatives rose to 13—the greatest number of African Americans ever to serve simultaneously in Congress. The DSC met on February 2, 1971, and accepted a recommendation put forth by Clay to create a nonpartisan, formal network for African-American Members.[19] Charles Rangel of New York, who narrowly defeated longtime Representative Powell in 1970, thought of a new name for the group: the Congressional Black Caucus.[20] The CBC elected Diggs as its first chairman. "Black people have no permanent friends, no permanent enemies … just permanent interests," Clay declared—a theme that set the tone for the CBC during its formative years and evolved into its motto.[21] Unlike many Members of Congress, Clay surmised, the participants in the new caucus did not owe their elections to traditional liberal or labor bases of support. "We were truly uninhibited, really free to decide our own issues, formulate our own policies, and advance our own programs," Clay recalled. "Our mission was clear. We had to parlay massive voting potential into concrete economic results."[22]

In the midst of its transition to a more formal organization, the CBC waged its first public battle during the early months of 1971.[23] Upset with President Richard M. Nixon's refusal to meet with the group, African-American Members made national headlines when they boycotted the January 1971 State of the Union address. "We now refuse to be part of your audience," Clay wrote on behalf of the caucus, explaining that it perceived the President's persistent refusal to grant them a White House meeting as symptomatic of the administration's abandonment of African-American interests.[24] The group won a public relations victory when Nixon agreed to a March 1971 meeting. "Our people are no longer asking for equality as a rhetorical promise," Diggs declared. "They are demanding from the national Administration, and from elected officials without regard to party affiliation, the only kind of equality that ultimately has any real meaning—equality of results."[25] Press coverage provided instant national recognition for the CBC.[26] The CBC thereafter skillfully used such tactics to wield clout and build a reputation as a congressional irritant.[27]

After an August 1974 meeting with President Gerald R. Ford, the CBC posed for a picture. Standing from left to right are: Ronald Dellums of California, Robert Nix, Sr., of Pennsylvania, John Conyers of Michigan, Shirley Chisholm of New York, Andrew Young, Jr., of Georgia, Assistant to the President Stan Scott, Ralph Metcalfe of Illinois, Walter Fauntroy of the District of Columbia, Barbara Jordan of Texas, Louis Stokes of Ohio, Charles Diggs, Jr., of Michigan. Seated left to right are: Gus Hawkins of California, Cardiss Collins of Illinois, Charles Rangel of New York, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke of California, Bill Clay, Sr., of Missouri, and Parren Mitchell of Maryland.

Image courtesy of Moorland–Spingarn Research Center, Howard University

A rapid transformation took place in the organization's early years as it began a maturation process. Heavy expectations were placed upon the group, initially leading the CBC to adopt a collective approach to representation to present a unified voice for black America.[28] The CBC collected and disseminated information on African-American preferences regarding policy, assisted individual black Americans with a range of requests by providing casework services, and spoke on behalf of special interest groups within the black community.[29]

Countervailing currents pushed and pulled at the CBC membership, who represented diverse constituencies and practiced individual legislative styles. Representative Diggs, a strong backer of the collective leadership model, attempted to organize a national black political convention in 1972. Ultimately, the caucus declined to sponsor the event for fear it would lead to future obligations in which the CBC would not have direct oversight.[30] Shirley Chisholm's 1972 presidential campaign also proved disuniting. The only woman among the CBC's founders, Chisholm claimed that her gender, in addition to her willingness to form coalitions with liberal whites, Hispanics, and women, irritated her CBC colleagues. Indeed, some felt she betrayed the unified mission of the caucus by reaching out to other groups and undermined the effectiveness of the organization by placing gender

The first African-American woman to campaign for the presidency, Shirley Chisholm of New York ran with the slogan of "Unbought and Unbossed." This 1972 campaign poster featured her famous mantra.

Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

above race. Only Ronald Dellums and Parren Mitchell of Maryland publicly endorsed Chisholm for President.[31]

Given the burdens and tensions that arose from collective representation, the organization shifted its emphasis. CBC members began classifying themselves as "just" legislators—moving away from the national spotlight and back to responding to the needs of their constituencies.[32] That shift in priorities occurred largely under Stokes's leadership after he succeeded Diggs in 1972 as CBC chairman.[33] During his two terms leading the CBC, Stokes downplayed the role of the caucus as a champion of African-American issues. "We had to analyze what our resources were, what we should be doing, and how best to do it," he explained. "And our conclusion was this: if we were to be effective, if we were going to make the meaningful contribution to minority citizens in this country, then it must be as legislators. This is the area in which we possess expertise—and it is within the halls of Congress that we must make this expertise felt."[34]

According to political scientist Marguerite Ross Barnett, after spending its early years reacting to events, the CBC entered another stage of maturation in 1975 when it sought to foster a proactive, anticipatory method for crafting a legislative agenda. Key elements of the earlier organizational strategies informed this approach. By balancing collective leadership with individual representation, the CBC fully embraced the challenge of the dual role African-American legislators faced—speaking for the concerns of black America while simultaneously representing unique constituencies. Political scientist Carol Swain maintains that the group followed this blended leadership approach into the 1990s.[35]

During this period the CBC also confronted questions about its identity and core values. In 1975, Fortney (Pete) Stark, a white Member representing a congressional district in Oakland, California, with a substantial African-American population, asked to join the all-black caucus. After intense deliberation, the group rejected Stark's application. "The caucus symbolizes black political development in this country," CBC Chairman Charles Rangel explained. "We feel that maintaining this symbolism is critical at this juncture in our development."[36] The CBC retained its unwritten rule to limit membership to African Americans but briefly allowed whites to join as nonvoting associates. In 1988, 41 white Representatives joined the CBC when the caucus instituted its new policy.[37]

Institutional Advancement

Member Characteristics: Electoral Longevity

Incumbency:

The holding of an office or the term of an office (usually political).

Incumbency success rates for Members of Congress have risen throughout the 20th century for the entire congressional population. African Americans, of course, have been elected in their greatest numbers in an era in which incumbency rates have remained consistently at 95 percent (the rate in 1970) or greater—indeed in the late 1980s and the 1990s it reached 98 percent.[38] While the longevity of all Members of Congress increased, African-Americans' longevity has exceeded the norm. From the World War II Era forward, black Members have served longer than the general membership.[39]

The average length of service for former African-American Members elected between 1964 and 2004 reached 10.1 years—higher than the 8.65-year average for the entire congressional population during that time span.[40] Of the black Members who entered Congress after 1970, Charles Rangel has had the longest span of

service: nearly 37 years at the end of 2007. In the history of African Americans in Congress, Rangel ranked second only to John Conyers of Michigan (also a current Member of the 110th Congress, 2007–2009), a Member for nearly 43 years by late 2007. During this era, Bill Clay, Sr., and Louis Stokes also accumulated more than three decades of service, with 32 and 30 years, respectively, at their retirements. By the 110th Congress, active African-American Members held an even more consequential service advantage: While the average length of service for the entire congressional population was at a near all-time high of 10.1 years, black Members averaged 12 years.[41]

Member Characteristics: Seniority and Leadership Posts

Longevity meant that many black Members of Congress in this era benefited from the long-standing tradition of parceling out desirable committee assignments and leadership positions to those who had accrued the most years of continuous service. The trend that awarded perquisites based on committee seniority solidified in the second decade of the 20th century in the House and remained dominant through the 1970s (and still figures prominently in the way assignments are distributed).[42] "When I first came to Congress, I was opposed to the seniority system," District of Columbia Delegate Walter Fauntroy remarked. However, he later said, "The longer I am here, the better I like it."[43] Indeed, seniority boosted the influence of black Representatives and that of the CBC in the latter part of the century. "We don't really think that racism in this country has so diminished that given the opportunity to vote on individuals based on their experience and ability that we could overcome that without the assistance of the seniority system," Representative Rangel acknowledged.[44]

Between 1971 and 1975, African-American Members eclipsed long-standing barriers on the three elite House committees: Appropriations, which originates all federal spending bills; Ways and Means, with power over taxation and revenue measures; and Rules, which reviews and structures bills passed by various committees in preparation for debate and vote by the full House. In 1971, Louis Stokes won a seat on the Appropriations Committee, becoming the first of 12 African Americans to serve on the panel in this era (the first black woman, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke of California, joined the committee in 1975). Stokes eventually served as one of the Appropriations "cardinals."[45] As chairman of the Subcommittee on Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies in the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), Stokes oversaw a huge percentage of the discretionary spending in the annual federal budget. The first African American to lead an Appropriations subcommittee was Representative Julian Dixon of California, who chaired the District of Columbia Subcommittee beginning in the 97th Congress (1981–1983).

During this period, black House Members capitalized upon decentralizing reforms to solidify and extend gains in terms of committee assignments and leadership positions. In 1974, control of committee assignments of Democratic Members was transferred from the Ways and Means Committee (then chaired by Wilbur Mills of Arkansas) to the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, chaired by the Speaker of the House. The CBC used the opportunity to pressure House leaders, including Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma, to place African Americans on prominent committees. Under Representative Rangel's leadership, the group struck a deal with Speaker Albert stipulating that at least one African-

Representative Charles Rangel of New York, featured in this 2007 image, has the second longest career in congressional history among African Americans.

Image courtesy of U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

Seniority:

Priority or precedence in office or service; superiority in standing to another of equal rank by reason of earlier entrance into the service or an earlier date of appointment.

Representatives Yvonne Brathwaite Burke of California, Harold Ford, Sr., of Tennessee, Walter Fauntroy of the District of Columbia, and Louis Stokes of Ohio were members of the House Select Committee on Assassinations. The committee, chaired by Stokes, investigated the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and President John F. Kennedy. In this image of a committee hearing, Burke (upper left), Fauntroy (second from upper left), and Stokes (fifth from upper left) listen to witness testimony.

Image courtesy of U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

In the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), a large turnover among the House Membership allowed Lucien Blackwell of Pennsylvania to make the largest jump in seniority of any returning Member. Blackwell traded his assignment on Merchant Marine and Fisheries for a coveted position on the Budget Committee.

Image courtesy of *Philadelphia Inquirer*

American Member would serve on each of the major standing committees.[46] The ability of the CBC to attain more-attractive committee assignments was one of a handful of "clear achievements of black representatives organizing as a Caucus."[47] As a result of the new agreement between the CBC and the House leadership, each of the highest-ranking House committees included at least one African-American Member on its roster during the 94th Congress (1975–1977).[48]

Throughout its history, the CBC continued to rally to the support of individual black Members seeking to make institutional inroads that would better position them to secure some of their legislative goals. One example was the case of Ronald Dellums, a vocal critic of the Vietnam War, who faced resistance when he announced his interest in serving on the Armed Services Committee, chaired by longtime southern Democrat F. Edward Hébert of Louisiana. The CBC, led by Stokes and Clay, drafted a letter to the Democratic leadership on behalf of Dellums. When Speaker Albert informed Stokes that the CBC could have a black Member on Armed Services, but not Dellums, Stokes angrily replied that "white people don't tell black people who their leaders are."[49] With the backing of the CBC, Dellums became the first black to serve on the Armed Services Committee.

Rising rank within the committee system had a reinforcing effect on the CBC. By the 99th Congress (1985–1987), CBC membership had grown to 20—only seven more than the original number in 1971.[50] But despite this modest numerical gain, African Americans chaired an unparalleled five standing committees, two select committees, and 16 subcommittees in the 99th Congress.[51] "We don't have to go hat in hand begging anybody," Representative Clay observed. "In fact, it's just the reverse. Now a lot of people have to come hat in hand [to us] asking us for favors."[52]

Of the 18 African Americans who have held House committee chairmanships in congressional history, 16 attained those positions in the post-1970 era. Five have held at least two chairmanships, and Augustus (Gus) Hawkins of California held chairmanships on four committees: Education and Labor; House Administration; Joint Committee on Printing; and Joint Committee on the Library.[53] Additionally, of the 46 African-American Members who have chaired subcommittees in Congress, 41 attained those posts for the first time in the post-1970 period.[54] Such presence within the echelons of the leadership constituted a significant base of institutional support. In summary, these developments indicated that African Americans were now represented throughout the committee structure of the House—ranging from constituency-oriented panels to power committees—and provided powerful evidence of their assimilation into the institution.[55]

During the era from 1971 through 2007, black Members made history by attaining posts in the leadership ranks of both major parties in the House. John Conyers made the first effort to attain a leadership post by challenging then-Majority Leader Carl Albert for the speakership in 1971. Conyers lost the Democratic Caucus vote 220 to 20 in what was widely described as a symbolic undertaking.[56] But African-American Members made inroads in other leadership routes during this era. Barbara Jordan of Texas, Ralph Metcalfe of Illinois, and Harold E. Ford, Sr., of Tennessee, for instance, were early appointees to the Democratic Steering and Policy Committee, which set the parameters of the party's legislative agenda in addition to parceling out committee assignments. In 1983, Speaker Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill of Massachusetts chose Representative Rangel as a Deputy Majority Whip, making the

New York Representative one of the most powerful Democrats in the House. John Lewis later served as Chief Deputy Democratic Whip.[57]

Just four African Americans have held elected positions within the Democratic Caucus and Republican Conference. Shirley Chisholm held the position of Democratic Caucus Secretary in the 95th and 96th Congresses (1977–1981). Bill Gray made the most dramatic climb up the leadership ladder: After winning the position of Democratic Caucus chairman in December 1988, he made history six months later when his colleagues elected him Democratic (Majority) Whip. As the first African American to hold the post, Gray was the third-ranking Democrat in the House. Others followed his lead. In 1999, J. C. Watts of Oklahoma became the highest-ranking African American in the history of the Republican Party when his GOP colleagues elected him Chairman of the Republican Conference; he held the position until his retirement from the House in 2003.[58] James Clyburn of South Carolina served as Chairman of the Democratic Caucus for part of the 109th Congress, relinquishing that post to Rahm Emanuel of Illinois in November 2006, and becoming the second African American to hold the position of Majority Whip.[59]

Legislative Interests

The legislative agendas of African-American Members in the post-1970 era reflected the diversity of their committee assignments and the range of interests within the general membership of Congress. Most sought to advance a broad progressive legislative agenda supported by advocacy groups such as the National Urban League and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)—extending voting rights protections, improving educational and economic opportunities, fostering urban renewal, and providing access to better health care. With greater frequency, some departed from traditional "black interests" and pursued legislative agendas that reflected the unique needs of their constituencies or their personal positions on issues.[60]

Voting Rights

Extensions of civil rights era voting protections were a touchstone for African-American Members of Congress. Efforts to retain and expand upon the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965—which Barbara Jordan once referred to as the "frontispiece" of the civil rights movement—provided continuity between Members of the civil rights generation and their successors in the post-1970 generation of Black Americans in Congress. Two extensions were of particular importance: the Voting Rights Acts of 1975 and 1982.

The Voting Rights Act of 1975 (P.L. 94–73) strengthened the provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (as well as its 1970 extension).[61] The House passed the act on June 4, 1975, by a vote of 341 to 70. After Senate passage, and House acceptance of some Senate amendments, President Gerald R. Ford signed the measure into law on August 6, 1975, the 10th anniversary of the original landmark bill. As with earlier acts, jurisdictions covered by the 1975 extension had to submit to the U.S. Attorney General any changes in local and state election law for "preclearance"—a determination of whether the modification had discriminatory intent. The 1975 act also increased jurisdictions covered by the act to include locations in the North and West. Moreover, it applied not just to African Americans, but also "language minorities," including Spanish speakers, Native Americans, and Asian Americans.

In 1994, J.C. Watts of Oklahoma received the Republican nomination for his district and won election as one of only five black Republicans to serve in Congress in the 20th century. "I knew what I was doing would not be popular," Watts recalled. "It created some strain, even in relationships I had built over the years. But I knew in my heart that this was the right road, the honest road for me to take and remain true to my own principles."

Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

Whip:

An assistant House or Senate Floor leader who helps round up party members for quorum calls and important votes. Coined in the British Parliament, this term is derived from "whipper-in," a person who kept the dogs from straying during a fox hunt.

As leaders in Congress, Barbara Jordan of Texas (left foreground) and Ronald Dellums of California (center background) sought to build coalitions inside and outside of the CBC.

Image courtesy of Moorland–Spingarn Research Center, Howard University

It required bilingual elections in areas where there were large numbers of minorities whose English literacy was below the national average.[62]

African-American Members played a prominent part in this debate. "The voting rights act may have overcome blatant discriminatory practices," noted Barbara Jordan, testifying before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Constitutional Rights. But she added, "it has yet to overcome subtle discriminatory practices." Charles Rangel agreed that the protections were needed. "Malevolent local government must not be exposed to any temptation to take back the political rights and powers that have so recently come to southern blacks," Rangel said.[63] Andrew Young pointed to vastly improved registration numbers in the seven southern states covered by the original 1965 act (29 percent registered in 1964 had expanded to 56 percent in 1972) as well as in the number of elected black officials in the South (72 in 1965 compared with 1,587 in 1975). "The remarkable effect of this act is that it has a preventative effect," Young observed. "There are some reports that the threat of suing examiners has a deterrent effect—that local registrars began to register black voters so that federal examiners would be kept out."[64]

The 1982 Voting Rights Act (P.L. 97–205) extension provided another victory for the civil rights movement and also paved the way for the expansion of Black American representation in Congress in the 1990s.[65] During floor debate prior to overwhelming passage by the House, a number of black Members of Congress spoke on behalf of the bill. Representative Bill Clay, Sr., cast the debate in broad terms: "Are we willing to continue our forward momentum in America's bold and noble attempt to achieve a free and just democratic society? Or, will we embrace the politics of reversal and retreat; the super rich against the wretchedly poor, the tremendously strong against the miserably weak?"[66] The bill extended the act's major provisions for 25 years. It also established a procedure by which jurisdictions that maintained a clean voting rights record for at least a decade could petition a panel of judges to be removed from the preclearance list. The bilingual election materials requirements established in the 1975 act were also enacted for another decade. Mickey Leland, who succeeded Representative Jordan in her Houston-centered district, addressed the House in Spanish to make a point about the need

As a Member of the U.S. House, Mickey Leland of Texas successfully lobbied Congress to create the Select Committee on Hunger in 1984. Leland was killed in a 1989 airplane crash while ferrying relief supplies to Ethiopia.

Image courtesy of Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

for extending those provisions. "Many of you cannot understand me," Leland said in Spanish, "and if you cannot understand me . . . nor can you understand 17 percent of all the adult workers in the Southwest. . . . And even though you cannot understand me when I speak Spanish maybe you can begin to understand the hypocrisy of our political system which excludes the participation of Hispanic-Americans only for having a different culture and speaking a different language."[67]

Most significant, the Voting Rights Act of 1982 established that certain voting rights violations could be proven to be the result of voting modifications, even if intent could not be established. That section of the bill overturned a 1980 Supreme Court decision in *Mobile v. Bolden* (446 U.S. 55) that found a violation could be proven only if the intent to discriminate could be substantiated. This legislative instrument provided the basis for a round of creating majority-black districts following the 1990 Census, particularly in southern states.

Economic Opportunity

Another primary area of legislative concern for numerous African-American Members of this generation was the desire to promote economic opportunities for blacks as a means to further the political civil rights advances won in the 1960s. Economic disparities among racial groups remained a problem throughout this time period. One of Congress's strongest supporters of urban economic aid, Representative Floyd Flake of New York noted, "We in America have created a Third World within our borders, if we conglomerate all of the rural and all of the urban communities in this Nation who are not able to provide the basic necessities for people who are part of those communities."[68] For instance, from 1980 to 1990 the unemployment rate for blacks was more than double that of whites. Throughout that decade, the median income for African Americans constituted just 60 percent of the median income for whites.[69] Many of the Members profiled in this generation supported an array of programs to advance African-American economic equality, including job training programs, urban renewal projects, affirmative action programs, and "empowerment zones" (urban and rural areas designated to receive federal grants and loans for job training and tax incentives for minority-owned businesses). At times these positions were championed by the CBC; at others, individual Members acted as policy entrepreneurs.

The CBC consistently made the economic advancement of African Americans a top priority in its legislative agenda. For example, the caucus strongly backed the extension of the Office of Economic Opportunity programs under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (P.L. 88–452).[70] From 1974 to 1975, Gus Hawkins and Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota drafted a measure to drastically cut unemployment in the United States, which reached 8 percent among the general population and more than 13 percent for nonwhites by the mid-1970s.[71] Concerned about the disproportionate joblessness rate for African Americans, each member of the CBC cosponsored the Humphrey–Hawkins Full Employment and Balanced Growth Act of 1978 (P.L. 95–523).[72] Among its provisions, the act declared the federal government's intention to promote full employment, real income gains, price stability, and a balanced budget. Signed into law on October 28, 1978, the final version of the bill failed to include the more ambitious full employment goals drafted by Humphrey and Hawkins, leading some analysts to describe the legislation as "an empty symbol."[73] But the CBC's ability to persuade President James Earl (Jimmy) Carter to publicly support a bill linked so closely to the caucus resulted in

Affirmative Action:

First used in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, a policy to promote opportunities for minorities and women by favoring them in hiring and promotion in government and private jobs, college admissions, and the awarding of government contracts as a means to compensate for their historic exclusion or underrepresentation.

The Humphrey–Hawkins Full Employment Act of 1978 attempted to resolve persistent unemployment in the United States. The CBC placed its support behind the bill. Civil rights activist Jesse Jackson, Sr., (center) marched to draw attention to the legislation.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

In 1950, Parren Mitchell of Maryland successfully sued the University of Maryland at College Park for admission. He became the school's first African-American graduate student. Mitchell eventually became a professor of sociology and taught at Morgan State College in Baltimore. In 1970, he was elected to the first of eight consecutive terms in the House, representing a Baltimore district.

Image courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration

a noteworthy victory.[74] "We would never have struggled so hard to get this act passed if we did not consider it significant," declared Representative Parren Mitchell.

Mitchell, the brother of longtime NAACP lobbyist Clarence Mitchell, Jr., used a networking strategy to help push legislation aimed at business development in African-American communities through the House. Primarily interested in promoting economic opportunities in inner cities, Mitchell assembled a "brain trust" of national advisers (mostly businessmen, lawyers, bankers, and economists) to make recommendations on policy and legislation.[75] The CBC embraced this approach, often calling upon subject experts for assistance in crafting legislation. Mitchell also employed his encyclopedic knowledge of House procedures—another facet of effective representation that many CBC Members refined during the period to promote the organization's legislative agenda. Called the "Little General" for his ability to organize and coordinate support for key legislation, the Maryland Representative attached an amendment to a $4 billion public works program that required state and local governments applying for federal contracts to reserve 10 percent of the money for minority-owned companies.[76] Signed into law in 1977, the measure constituted not only a personal triumph for Mitchell but also a significant early legislative victory for the CBC. That success lent credibility to the group's coalition-building efforts and burnished its reputation for using House procedures to achieve its legislative goals.

During the 1970s the CBC sporadically presented budget proposals that emphasized increased spending for domestic programs. However, in 1981 the group answered President Ronald W. Reagan's call for alternatives to his fiscal plan, which emphasized defense spending, by drafting their own detailed budget.[77] The CBC plan received national attention but little backing in the House. As an annual offering of the period, the CBC alternative included a consistent call to increase federal funding for domestic programs, to slash defense spending, and to raise taxes for the wealthiest Americans. "Even in defeat we have a responsibility to fight the

During President Ronald Reagan's eight years in office, he met once with the CBC. Pictured at the White House on February 3, 1981, the CBC sought Reagan's assistance on domestic issues.

Image courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration

fight," Dellums remarked about the persistent failure of an alternative annual budget to attract meaningful support in the House. "We have to articulate the alternative."[78]

District of Columbia

Another issue of ongoing importance to black Members of Congress was the matter of representation and "home rule" (self-government) for the city of Washington, DC. Since its creation after the Residence Act of 1790, the capital had been administered by a patchwork of governing mechanisms: an appointed mayor and elected city council (both a board of aldermen and common council); briefly, a territorial government in 1871, when the city was designated the "District of Columbia"; a presidentially appointed commission; and congressional committees. After 1960, because of its new majority-black urban population, congressional debates about representation and the administration of the District resonated within the larger African-American community.

Representative Charles Diggs, an ardent advocate for Washingtonians, became chairman of a District of Columbia subcommittee in 1967. Six years later, he chaired the full committee, symbolically marking the end to the exclusive history of white congressional control over the capital. In 1970, with Diggs's leadership, the House passed the District of Columbia Act, which reinstituted the post of Delegate to represent the city in the House.[79] In March 1971, District residents elected Walter Fauntroy, a minister and civil rights activist, as the city's first congressional Delegate in a century.

Fauntroy tirelessly advocated "home rule" in the District of Columbia. The CBC, seeking to increase the independence of the predominantly African-American population, joined him. Fauntroy oversaw a lobbying campaign aimed at building support from white Members who represented southern districts with a substantial black constituency. The effort prevailed. In December 1973, Congress passed a compromise measure—the District of Columbia Self-Government and Governmental Reorganization Act—that gave the District limited self-rule, permitting citizens to elect a mayor and a city council.[80]

Based partially on the success of the "Fauntroy strategy," the CBC later created the Action-Alert Communications Network (AACN) to mobilize support from nonblack legislators on a range of policy issues affecting black Americans.[81] Encompassing the National Black Leadership Roundtable and the Black Leadership Forum, the AACN tapped into a network of national black organizations suited for grass-roots campaigns capable of applying pressure on white leaders with large African-American populations. "We are organizing ourselves to impact the political process, to reach out on a very careful basis in coalition with those whose interests coincide with ours," Fauntroy remarked.[82]

Other African-American Members played key roles in later decades. Julian Dixon, a District native who represented a Los Angeles-area district, became chairman of the House Appropriations Committee's Subcommittee on the District of Columbia. During the 1980s and 1990s, Dixon was one of the city's primary congressional allies during an era of budget woes. In 1991, after Fauntroy's retirement from the House, Eleanor Holmes Norton won election as Delegate. An advocate for full congressional voting rights for the District, Norton has served as the District's Delegate since then.

Walter Fauntroy, the former Southern Christian Leadership Conference's congressional lobbyist, became the District of Columbia's first Delegate in nearly 100 years.

Image courtesy of Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

Delegate:

A Member of Congress who represents a U.S. territory. Able to serve and vote in committees, Delegates cannot participate in the final vote on a bill.

Floyd Flake, a proponent of urban economic development in the 1990s, served on the influential House Budget Committee.

Image courtesy of Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

Conflicting Interests

Some Members promoted policy positions that put them at odds with the majority of their CBC colleagues—either because they were required to balance the unique demands of their constituencies or because of their individual ideological beliefs. For instance, Mike Espy of Mississippi was elected from a farming district in the 1980s with considerable cross-over support from white voters, making him the first black Representative from that state in more than a century. His legislative agenda reflected the conservative ideological contours of his rural constituency. Consequently, Espy belonged to a group of centrist Democrats; he opposed gun control measures and supported the death penalty—positions that were largely contradictory to those of black Representatives from urban areas.

Welfare policy proved to be a contentious subject during the latter decades of the 20th century. The CBC often found itself in conflict with the Reagan administration during the 1980s. Reagan met only once with the CBC—a marked reversal from the Carter administration, which, while it did not always back the organization's initiatives, regularly consulted with African-American Members.[83] At the heart of this struggle lay the CBC's fundamental disagreement with President Reagan's core agenda: vastly increasing the defense budget to outpace the Soviets in a climactic Cold War arms race while scaling back social programs established in the 1960s.

Not all African-American Members were consonant on welfare. As chairman of the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Public Assistance in the 1980s, Harold E. Ford, Sr., proposed a welfare overhaul plan that linked benefits to work. Dubbed the "Family Support Program," it required parents of children six and older to participate. In many respects Ford's plan foreshadowed welfare reforms enacted in the mid-1990s.[84] Representative Floyd Flake, a minister representing a constituency in Queens, also staked out an independent position on welfare reform. Flake's bipartisanship with the new Republican majority in Congress in the mid-1990s caused friction with black colleagues. Republican House Speaker Newt Gingrich of Georgia convinced Flake to cosponsor the Community Renewal Act in 1997, which offered tax breaks and school vouchers (credits given to parents for partial or full reimbursement for their children to attend private school) to poor, urban neighborhoods.[85] Flake's support of school vouchers, partially on the grounds that such schools had better graduation rates and that vouchers might force public schools to craft better curricula and focused budgets, drew the most criticism from his fellow Democrats.[86] "We get caught up in group-thought ideology, and we think that we all have to think alike, speak alike, say the same things, do the same things," Flake observed after abruptly resigning from the House to return to the ministry. "I've never seen a leader who allows himself to be kept in the box. I am beyond race and party now."[87]

After many decades of near-exclusive Democratic Party affiliation among African Americans, three black Republican Members were elected to the House: Delegate Melvin Evans of the Virgin Islands (1979–1981), Representative Gary Franks of Connecticut (1991–1997), and Representative J. C. Watts (1995–2003). During his brief tenure in the House, Delegate Evans made history by becoming the first Republican member of the CBC. Franks, the first Republican African-American Representative elected to the House since Oscar De Priest, joined the CBC in the 102nd Congress (1991–1993). His contentious relationship with the organization revealed a new dynamic of conflicting partisan affiliations in the CBC. From

its inception, the overwhelmingly Democratic organization billed itself as being nonpartisan, but the CBC denied Franks access to strategy sessions, and some individual members complained his presence undermined their mission. Franks eventually opted to skip CBC meetings, though he refused to resign.[88] Watts chose not to join the group.

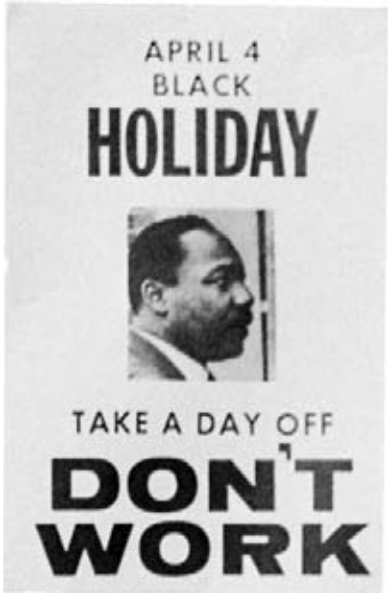
Commemorative Legislation

African-American Members of Congress often used their influence to pass legislation commemorating great leaders and seminal events in the civil rights movement and to call attention to unrecognized black contributions to American history. Such efforts included the designation of February as Black History Month and, in the 1990s, the awarding of Congressional Gold Medals to distinguished African-American citizens. Some African-American Members also called for Congress to apologize for the institution of slavery and to study remedies, including reparations, for the harm done to blacks by slavery and subsequent racial discrimination.[89]

One landmark commemorative achievement was the designation of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday as a national holiday. That effort began only days after King's death in 1968 when Representative Conyers introduced legislation to designate a federal holiday in his honor; Conyers sponsored similar measures in each successive Congress for the next 15 years.[90] Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts offered a compromise measure in the Senate to mark King's birthday as a "day of commemoration" when it became clear that Conyers and the CBC could not rally enough support for their bill in the House.[91] His alternative measure failed to make headway in the Senate. By the mid-1970s, the CBC had elevated the King holiday to a major legislative priority. The caucus directed a successful campaign to build congressional support and to increase public knowledge of the bill.[92] In 1979, the legislation had enough support to pass the House; however, the CBC withdrew the bill when an attached amendment called for a Sunday observance of the holiday instead of the originally proposed observance of King's birthday on January 15, a compromise measure for Members concerned about the high cost of shutting down the federal government.[93]

Freshman Representative Katie Hall of Indiana, chairwoman of the Post Office and Civil Service's Subcommittee on Census and Population—the panel with jurisdiction over the bill—provided the necessary spark in the 98th Congress (1983–1985) when the CBC tapped her to introduce the legislation and to serve as the floor manager. Hall courted detractors by moving the proposed public holiday from a fixed date—King's January 15 birthday—to the third Monday of January to prevent government offices from opening twice in one week, thereby saving money.[94] The House passed her version of the King holiday bill by a vote of 338 to 90; the Senate followed suit, 78 to 22. President Reagan, who initially opposed the legislation, signed the bill into law on November 2, 1983.[95] Some viewed the episode as a symbolic victory, but it constituted an important triumph for the CBC, which marshaled public support and exerted decisive institutional pressure to overcome an unsupportive President and also organized opposition in the Senate.

African-American Members also undertook numerous other efforts to recognize civil rights icons and distinguished public figures. In 1977, singer Marian Anderson became the first Black American to be awarded a Congressional Gold Medal—the highest honor the nation can bestow on outstanding citizens.[96] Representative Julia



Congress enacted legislation in 1983 to commemorate the birth date of Martin Luther King, Jr., as a national holiday—marking a major legislative triumph for the CBC. This hand bill, noting the anniversary of King's 1968 assassination, sought to rally public support for the creation of the holiday.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

Carson of Indiana played a central role securing legislation to recognize Rosa Parks, whose act of civil disobedience (refusing to give up her seat on a segregated bus in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1955) galvanized the modern civil rights movement. Additionally, Congress conferred an unprecedented honor on Parks by passing a resolution to have her body lie in honor in the Capitol Rotunda from October 30 to 31, 2005—a right normally reserved for Presidents, military leaders, and other statesmen. Parks was the first woman ever accorded this honor.[97]

In the 21st century, African-American Members of Congress pressed successfully for greater recognition of blacks' contributions to congressional history in the art of the Capitol. Portraits of pioneering Representatives Joseph Rainey of South Carolina and Shirley Chisholm, as well as Senator Blanche K. Bruce of Mississippi, were commissioned. Congress also created a task force to document the work of enslaved African Americans who labored to build the Capitol itself.

On June 15, 1999, civil rights icon Rosa Parks, (center) next to Speaker J. Dennis Hastert of Illinois, received the Congressional Gold Medal in a ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda. Minority Leader Richard Gephardt of Missouri (left) and President William J. (Bill) Clinton (right) attended the event.

Image courtesy of U.S. House of Representatives Photography office

Foreign Policy: Africa and Apartheid

Since the 1950s, black Members of Congress perceived the Cold War through a complex frame of reference. Even the most outspoken Members, such as Adam Clayton Powell, broadly endorsed the Cold War containment strategy and the necessity to combat communist international aggression. But African Americans were keenly aware of the gap between American rhetoric about the necessity to defend democratic freedoms abroad and the practice of racial segregation at home. Further, they questioned Washington's generous support for authoritarian regimes abroad, particularly in sub-Saharan African nations emerging from the yoke of decades of European imperialism. In the post-1970 period, leading African-American Members of Congress questioned the massive budgetary outlays that funded America's decades-long struggle against the Kremlin.[98] Representatives Dellums and Mitchell warned that excessive spending on Cold War initiatives was especially detrimental to minority groups, postponing or eliminating long-delayed domestic social programs and urban renewal projects. Dellums opposed the military buildup under the Reagan administration in the 1980s and sharply criticized

nuclear weapons programs such as the MX missile—a land-launched weapon that could deliver multiple, independently targeted nuclear warheads when it re-entered the earth's atmosphere.

No single foreign policy issue united African Americans in Congress more than their efforts to overturn the South African government's system of apartheid, the strict segregation of the races that began in 1948 and was imposed by whites descended from colonial immigrants. Even before the formation of the CBC in 1971, Charles Diggs used his position as chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa to call attention to racial discrimination in South Africa. Other black Members followed suit, and ending apartheid became a central policy concern. During the next 15 years the CBC oversaw a torrent of activism to enact economic sanctions against South Africa.

According to political scientist Alvin Tillery, Representative Powell kindled Diggs's interest in African foreign policy.[99] Diggs, who became the first black Member to travel to Africa (1957) and the first to serve on the Foreign Affairs Committee (1959), was known as "Mr. Africa" because of his knowledge of Sub-Saharan issues. When the Detroit-area Representative was appointed chairman of the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa in 1969, he effectively used his position to draw attention to the continent. "I think if I had any one priority, it is to try to put Africa in proper perspective, to try to get the attention of policy makers in the government, the attention of the American investors in Africa and the attention of the American public, in general, and to arouse the substantive interest of black Americans," Diggs remarked.[100]

Diggs held a series of hearings on South Africa and led many fact-finding missions during his tenure on the Foreign Affairs Committee to highlight what he described as "an appalling amount of racial injustice in South Africa—a blatant, ever-present, and all-pervasive discrimination based on race, color, and creed."[101] From 1969 to 1971, he led an unsuccessful charge against the renewal of a special U.S. sugar quota for South Africa. "I have been in over 37 African countries, and the first question that is always asked at a press conference is when we are going to implement our pronouncements in the United Nations, and stop being inconsistent, by providing this kind of subsidy to South Africa, which is one of the most racist countries in the world."[102] Diggs cosponsored legislation calling for an end to the subsidy.[103] He also kept apartheid in the congressional spotlight with his criticism of the labor conditions of American companies in South Africa. He faulted the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and major U.S. carmakers for the discriminatory practices in their South African facilities. In 1971 he introduced a measure to implement fair employment practices for U.S. firms eligible for government contracts. Diggs also urged an end to new American investment in South Africa to protest apartheid.[104]

With the establishment of the CBC in 1971, Diggs cultivated the group's international agenda. "Diggs being the great leader that he was reckoned that getting us involved in foreign policy would make a big splash on the Hill," Representative Clay recalled.[105] The CBC adopted this strategy to lend credibility to the fledgling caucus, and from its inception, the CBC took an active stance in the anti-apartheid movement.[106] In February 1971, Ronald Dellums introduced the first legislation for U.S. economic sanctions against South Africa, on behalf of the CBC.[107] Though the measure had little chance of passing the House, Dellums recollected, "Nonetheless,

A leader behind the congressional movement to end apartheid in South Africa, Charles Diggs, Jr., of Michigan was an authority on African-related issues. Representative Diggs and a House Page posed for this image in his office in the 1970s.

Image courtesy of U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

we had raised the issue before the elected representatives of the American people, and our resolution provided an organizing device for those on the outside to use to begin to build pressure on Congress for legislative action."[108] The anti-apartheid bill emerged from a petition drafted by employees from a major U.S. camera and film company, who demanded that the corporation cease operations in South Africa. Responsible for producing photographs for the mandatory identity passbooks carried by blacks in South Africa—a major symbol of the racial oppression prevalent in the country—the corporation eventually bowed to public pressure and withdrew its business.[109]

In 1975, the CBC helped establish the Black Forum on Foreign Policy, a legislative support group interested in better representation of black interests abroad. The Black Forum's early mission epitomized a "detached study group" rather than a formal lobbying assembly.[110] At a 1976 CBC conference, caucus members recognized the need for a more influential vehicle to shape American foreign policy in Africa and the Caribbean. The new lobbying group, renamed TransAfrica, began operations in Washington, DC, in 1978. TransAfrica employed a grass-roots strategy that mobilized local black leaders who were interested in foreign policy. The group

President Jimmy Carter hosted members of the CBC at this 1978 White House meeting.

Image courtesy of Jimmy Carter Presidential Library

also adopted an aggressive posture on South Africa, refusing to accept donations from U.S. corporations with business ties to South Africa and calling for tough economic sanctions against the African nation.[111]

TransAfrica received a boost when Representative Andrew Young, one of the primary architects of the Black Forum on Foreign Policy, resigned from Congress in 1977 to accept President James Earl (Jimmy) Carter's appointment as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. Young became a conduit for black lobbyists to the Oval Office. But while TransAfrica advocated a boycott by American businesses in South Africa, Young and the Carter administration maintained that promoting U.S. economic involvement in South Africa would have a liberalizing effect on the white-controlled regime.[112] At the time, the internal resistance movement against apartheid had been sparked by the Soweto uprising of June 1976. When students gathered for a mass protest to oppose a new government regulation that instructors teach school

in Afrikaans, the government brutally dispersed protestors; in the ensuing riots, hundreds were killed, including many children. The event shocked international observers and initiated a long period of internal turmoil in South Africa.

In 1981, the Reagan administration implemented a policy of "constructive engagement," or maintaining diplomatic and economic relations with South Africa while advocating domestic reforms. Fearful that Reagan's 1984 re-election would be interpreted as a mandate for the status quo of racial discrimination in South Africa, TransAfrica's executive director Randall Robinson changed the tenor of the movement.[113] On November 21, just weeks after the President's landslide victory, Robinson, DC Delegate Walter Fauntroy, and Mary Frances Berry from the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights staged a sit-in at the South African Embassy in Washington, DC.[114] The resulting arrests of the high-profile protesters garnered national attention and sparked a new "direct action" approach by TransAfrica and the CBC. Fauntroy described the demonstration as an act of "moral witness" and indicated that a "national campaign" against apartheid would follow; a few days after the incident, Robinson, Fauntroy, and Berry formed the Free South Africa Movement (FSAM) to publicize racial inequality in South Africa and pressure the Reagan administration to toughen its stance toward the apartheid regime.[115] The FSAM orchestrated a series of demonstrations outside the South African Embassy that tapped into the long domestic civil rights tradition of nonviolent protest. Representative Charles Hayes of Illinois, Clay, and Dellums were among the first Representatives who were arrested. "I knew immediately why Fauntroy was calling," Dellums remarked, recalling the coordinated effort by the FSAM to draw attention to South Africa. "'Hello, Walter' I said. 'It's a good day to go to jail. Where do you want me to be and what time?' He laughed. 'How did you know?' 'I just knew that it would one day be my turn, so when you called it was pretty easy to figure out why.'"[116] The movement drew black and white Americans from all walks of life: national and local leaders, celebrities, teachers and students, and even Members of Congress who had been ambivalent about the issue. "It was very interesting to see colleagues from both sides of the aisle and of all races, who had previously paid little attention to our efforts, scramble to get arrested in front of the South African embassy and introduce sanctions when the [effects of the] movement hit home in their districts," Dellums later observed.[117] The protests, which eventually spread beyond the South African Embassy in Washington, DC, to other American cities, kept apartheid in the public eye.[118]

More than any other congressional cohort, African-American Members consistently drew attention to apartheid. Between the 92nd and 99th Congresses (1971–1987), black Representatives introduced more than 100 pieces of legislation concerning South Africa, encompassing issues such as diplomatic relations, economic sanctions, and trade restrictions.[119] Representative Bill Gray, chairman of the House Committee on the Budget, compared the situation in South Africa to the history of segregation in the United States. "It took us 200, 300 years to eradicate apartheid here by law," Gray observed. "People forget that only 20 years ago, when I came here to Washington, DC, as a boy, I couldn't go into the downtown hotels. . . . We are only 20 years away from our own story, and that plays a part in our double standard" toward South Africa.[120] In 1985, Gray introduced a bill endorsed by the House leadership banning new loans and implementing limited economic sanctions in South Africa to "stop the future financing of apartheid."[121] The House approved

Serving a total of nearly 13 years in the House, William (Bill) Gray III, of Pennsylvania became the first African American to serve as Majority Whip. House Democrats elected him in 1989.

Image courtesy of Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

the Anti-Apartheid Act of 1985 by a vote of 295 to 127, but soundly defeated a stronger disinvestment substitute put forth by Representative Dellums and backed by the CBC. The next month the Senate overwhelmingly passed a weaker version of the House anti-apartheid bill by a vote of 80 to 12.[122] Wary of the mounting public pressure for action against South Africa, the President avoided a direct confrontation with Congress and a potential veto override by signing an executive order in September that included some of the congressionally approved sanctions. Gray described the action as "an ill-disguised and ill-advised attempt to circumvent an overwhelmingly bipartisan consensus in Congress."[123]

The push for a comprehensive sanctions bill against South Africa reached a crescendo in the second session of the 99th Congress. Gray's anti-apartheid bill made it to the House Floor again for a vote, where it was expected to pass. For a second time, Dellums offered a substitute. In an unexpected move, the House approved Dellums's measure by a voice vote. The bill called for a trade embargo and total disinvestment; it was the first legislation that mandated a withdrawal of American companies to pass either chamber. Elated and stunned, Dellums proclaimed, "We haven't simply altered the debate on apartheid, we've changed the environment. Whatever the dynamics of that moment, its effect can't be changed."[124] A Senate bill sponsored by Richard Lugar of Indiana, which passed 84 to 14, resembled Gray's more modest anti-apartheid legislation. In the interest of securing passage of a sanctions bill, CBC members, including Dellums, supported Lugar's measure, which passed the House in September 1986 by a 308 to 77 vote.[125] President Reagan vetoed the anti-apartheid legislation, but on October 2, 1986, the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act (CAAA) of 1986 became law when the Senate overrode the veto, following the House.[126] The historic legislation marked the first congressional override of a presidential veto on a major foreign policy issue since the enactment of the War Powers Resolution in 1973.[127] Mickey Leland observed, "This is probably the greatest victory we've ever experienced. The American people have spoken and will be heard around the world."[128]

After the passage of the CAAA, black Members continued their fight to abolish apartheid. In 1986, for instance, Gray led a delegation of Representatives to tour South Africa and observe the effects of the sanctions.[129] Leading the anti-apartheid movement on the Hill, Dellums persisted in introducing legislation for comprehensive economic sanctions.[130] When President George H. W. Bush considered rescinding sanctions against South Africa, Dellums and the CBC remained firm in their conviction that "sanctions should be lifted only when the oppressed people of South Africa say they should be lifted."[131] With the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 and the establishment of majority rule in South Africa in 1994, the CBC achieved its longtime goal of contributing to the abolishment of apartheid.[132]

Crafting an Identity on Capitol Hill

As African-American Members entered Congress during this era, they encountered an institution that, like American society generally, was becoming more accessible and offered more opportunities for minority participation. Though there were exceptions, the culture of overt racism of earlier decades—discrimination in the House Restaurant and barbershop, insulting floor tirades by pro-segregationist Members, and many other, unspoken slights—had largely vanished. Black Members

now embarked on the mature phase of their institutional advancement by accruing service, winning better committee assignments, and gaining the attention and trust of House and Senate leadership. However, their ascent in Congress was accompanied by new challenges and questions about their identity and legislative strategies on Capitol Hill.

Like their predecessors in the previous century, African-American Members of Congress who served after 1970 generally perceived themselves as surrogate representatives for the larger black community. In the CBC's 1971 meeting with President Nixon, Representative Diggs said, "Our concerns and obligations as members of Congress do not stop at the boundaries of our districts, our concerns are national and international in scope. We are petitioned daily by citizens living hundreds of miles from our districts who look on us as Congressmen-at-large for black people and poor people in the United States."[133] Cardiss Collins, one of the few women members of the caucus in its early years, agreed: "Our main goal is to have greater influence. It's that simple. When we represent black people in our districts, we are representing all black people because their needs are very similar."[134]

Never a monolithic group, the black Members of Congress became, if anything, more fragmented in the modern era because of their changing stature and growing numbers within the institution. While most black Members understood and accepted their role as surrogate representatives, there was no consensus on how to pursue the legislation that was important to their broad constituency. "We all have basically the same goals," Mickey Leland observed. "The question is how to attain those goals."[135]

Some, such as Barbara Jordan, chose an insider route that often took precedence over racial or gender issues. "I sought the power points," she once said. "I knew if I were going to get anything done, [the congressional and party leaders] would be the ones to help me get it done." Jordan was careful not to align herself too closely with the agenda of any special interest group, including the CBC and the Women's Caucus, both of which she nevertheless joined. "I am neither a black politician nor a woman politician," Jordan said in 1975. "Just a politician, a professional politician." Her choice of seating in the House Chamber was revealing. Jordan chose to sit in the center aisle (away from the section customarily occupied by the CBC) because she could hear better, be seen by the presiding officer, and save a seat for colleagues who wanted to stop and chat. Her seating preference as well as her loyalty to the Texas delegation agitated fellow CBC members, but both were consistent with Jordan's strategy for seeking congressional influence.[136] Similarly, Julian Dixon accrued influence in the institution by working quietly with various factions. Syndicated political columnist David Broder observed, "Dixon is a fascinating example of the emerging alternative style of black leadership: a person who makes his way not by the militance of his advocacy of civil rights or other racially linked issues, but on the basis of personal and intellectual qualities that cross racial and ideological divisions and make an effective bridge-builder."[137]

In many respects, Representatives Jordan and Dixon introduced a new legislative style that emerged among black Members during this generation: In de-emphasizing race, they served to foster a consensus-crafting approach among various factions. One political observer described this shift among black House Members in the 1980s, suggesting they bore "striking similarities" to their "independent" contemporary colleagues in both major parties. "First, they worked painstakingly to

Following the unexpected death of George W. Collins of Illinois, his widow, Cardiss Collins, won the special election for his seat. Congresswoman Collins served nearly 24 years in Congress.

Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

In 1976, Barbara Jordan of Texas, a captivating public speaker, became the first woman and the first African American to deliver a keynote address at a Democratic National Convention.

Image courtesy of Library of Congress

In this 1971 photograph, freshman House Members and outspoken peace advocates Ronald Dellums of California (center) and Bella Abzug of New York (in hat, at Dellums's left), speak to reporters about their proposal to conduct an unofficial inquiry into alleged U.S. war crimes in Vietnam. Two years later, at the insistence of House leaders who overrode Chairman F. Edward Hébert of Louisiana, Dellums earned a seat on the House Armed Services Committee, which had jurisdiction over every facet of the defense establishment.

Image courtesy of Moorland–Spingarn Research Center, Howard University

build their own organizations to win election," political commentator Richard Cohen wrote. "Once in the House, they have become issue activists and coalition builders eager for influence, not necessarily inclined to await the delayed rewards of the seniority system."[138] Political scientists also noted a gradual shift in the style of African-American representation during this era. During the 1960s and 1970s, legislative reformers and civil rights advocates emphasized the need for "descriptive" representation, i.e., electing more blacks to Congress with the goal of providing better representation for the African-American community. But by the latter part of the 20th century, many black Members of Congress had a new focus: "substantive" representation, which involved a connection between constituents and their Representatives that was based on legislative agenda and achievements rather than solely on the color of their skin.[139]

Even those who were elected to Congress because they dissented from the prevailing political establishment underwent a process of institutional integration that conferred upon them legislative success and leadership positions. Several Members adapted their activism to prevailing institutional norms. Elected to Congress from the epicenter of the anti–Vietnam War movement, Ronald Dellums was a prime example. Soon after being elected to the House, he introduced legislation to investigate alleged U.S. war crimes in Southeast Asia, as well as a measure to impose penalties on the apartheid regime in South Africa. Dellums declared, "I am not going to back away from being called a radical. If being an advocate of peace, justice, and humanity toward all human beings is radical, then I'm glad to be called a radical."[140] He worked his way onto the Armed Services Committee largely to try to curb vast Pentagon expenditures. Dellums was literally denied a seat at the table when he first joined that panel: He was forced to share a single chair with Patricia Schroeder of Colorado (then the only woman on the committee) by Chairman F. Edward Hébert of Louisiana as a sign of contempt.[141] But Dellums's activism was tempered by the need to craft legislation through compromise. Contrary to opponents' expectations, Dellums forged a reputation as an effective coalition builder to achieve his legislative goals; for instance, he allied with fiscal conservatives to halt production of the controversial B-2 bomber in the early 1980s. In 1993, partially reflecting the degree to which the Bay Area Representative had mastered institutional politics, Dellums became the senior Democrat and assumed the chair of the Armed Services Committee. "If you are around the House long enough, you learn its rules and customs and come to understand that no point of principle is served by remaining a permanent outsider," Dellums reflected in retirement. "My constituency, like any other, had sent me to Washington to legislate. I owed them nothing less than my best."[142]

Other Members of this generation followed a similar trajectory. For instance, Delegate Walter Fauntroy drew upon his experience in the civil rights movement and as a community activist in Washington, DC, to develop effective coalitions in the House on issues ranging from apartheid to home rule in the District of Columbia; he eventually chaired more than a half-dozen House subcommittees.[143] As supporters, and in some cases, participants, in the civil rights movement, many of the founding members of the CBC initially believed that working outside the system—following Powell's militant example during his House career—would best serve African Americans. But gradually it became apparent that working with House leaders, particularly with high-ranking Democratic Members, could produce

measurable and substantive results. Mickey Leland, a self-described "revolutionary," explained that many of his black colleagues could now bargain for legislative goals from a position of strength. "We understand that in order to get our point across we don't have to jump up and down on the table or shoot off fireworks to get the attention of the leadership," Leland remarked. "We go in and negotiate."[144]

Over time, black Members forged alliances with congressional groups with similar policy goals. "The technique now is coalitions," Julian Dixon remarked in the 1980s. "I don't think we want to stand alone on the issues. The numbers tell us we won't be successful."[145] Representative Schroeder, a cofounder of the Women's Caucus, acknowledged the necessity for cooperative efforts among minorities in Congress during the 1980s: "It seemed that the three chairpersons of the women's, black and Hispanic caucuses have been sewn together around issues of equal concern, such as hunger, the feminization of poverty, the extension of the Voting Rights Act and the reauthorization of the civil rights commission."[146]

African-American politicians' electoral success in the latter half of the 20th century presented new challenges. New black Members, including more women and southern blacks, altered the gender and the geographic composition of the CBC. In 1997, Maxine Waters of California became the first woman elected to head the CBC since Cardiss Collins held the position in the 96th Congress (1979–1981), indicating the growing influence of women in the caucus; in the subsequent decade, Eddie Bernice Johnson of Texas (107th Congress, 2001–2003) and Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick of Michigan (110th Congress) also chaired the CBC.[147] The influx of new Members from rural and suburban districts modified the substance of the caucus, which historically had fielded Representatives from northern cities.[148] New committee assignments and issues that were significant to southern and rural districts, such as support for the space industry and tobacco farmers, were included in black Members' more diversified approach to the political landscape.[149]

Consequently, the CBC had difficulty sustaining the collective voice envisioned by its founders in 1971. Although most black Members still represented majority-black districts, the swelling membership of the caucus and the conflicting opinions of its individual members resulted in internal divisions.[150] Still, the group managed to focus on the common goals of opposing racism and backing equal opportunity. "Like coalition building in any context, holding the Black Caucus together required fluidity and flexibility, the constant search for common ground, and no rigid tests of membership," Representative Dellums later noted, "otherwise the fate of other caucuses and coalitions that had arisen during the same period would have befallen the CBC as well."[151]

In 1992, with the election of the second Democratic President during the CBC's history, William J. (Bill) Clinton, political commentators believed the group would be able to advance a broad legislative agenda. Yet, much as with President Carter, the CBC was often at odds with the Clinton administration, particularly because of its willingness to compromise with conservatives on Capitol Hill.[152] Many black Members dissented from key administration policies, such as portions of the 1993 Clinton budget, the North American Free Trade Agreement, relations with Haiti, and the controversial nomination (and then withdrawal) of civil rights scholar Lani Guinier for Assistant U.S. Attorney General for Civil Rights. However, the CBC's clout ensured that the President seriously considered the group's point of view and often consulted the caucus regarding policy affecting African Americans.[153]

Representative Carolyn Cheeks Kilpatrick of Michigan presented the Tuskegee Airmen of World War II with the Congressional Gold Medal in 2007. In the 110th Congress, Congresswoman Kilpatrick chairs the CBC.

Image courtesy of U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

In June 1993, the CBC met with President William J. (Bill) Clinton. Though the CBC agreed with Clinton on many issues, the group sometimes was critical of the Democratic President because of his willingness to compromise with conservative lawmakers on efforts to reduce the federal budget deficit by curtailing entitlement programs.

Image courtesy of William J. Clinton Presidential Library

A reserved but influential advocate for civil rights, Gus Hawkins of California once said, "The leadership belongs not to the loudest, not to those who beat the drums or blow the trumpets, but to those who day in and day out, in all seasons, work for the practical realization of a better world—those who have the stamina to persist and remain dedicated."

Image courtesy of Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

After the Republicans won control of Congress in 1995—and a majority in the House for the first time in 40 years—the CBC's legislative momentum and hard-fought institutional gains dissipated. The institutional structure of the House, which favors the majority, relegated Democratic black Representatives to a secondary role, much like the status of their white Democratic colleagues. Nevertheless, many members of the caucus promised to continue their mission, regardless of the party change. "The Congressional Black Caucus has got to yell louder and scream or be steamrollered," asserted Cynthia McKinney of Georgia, epitomizing the pitched partisanship during the latter half of the decade.[154] Political scientist Robert C. Smith, writing shortly after the GOP takeover, voiced widely shared frustration with black Members' inability to advance a legislative agenda. Despite numerical gains, the attainment of leadership positions, and prominent civil rights efforts, "blacks in Congress are frequently an isolated, invisible, inconsequential minority unable to enact (or often even to get serious debate and deliberation on) proposals it deems minimally necessary to meliorate the problems of joblessness, crime and dispossession that plague its core constituency."[155]

Still, the change in party control—largely the result of southern white Democrats in the House being replaced by an insurgent Republican Party in the South—had ancillary benefits for black Members. In the minority Democratic Party, black Members now represented a larger percentage of the Democratic Caucus.[156] Given the relative electoral safety of their districts, this increase portended significant consequences for boosting blacks into a greater share of leadership roles in the party as they collectively accounted for greater percentages of the more experienced cadre of Democrats.[157]

Conflicting Imperatives: Black Interests Versus Party Agenda

While the institutional headway made by African-American Members during the 1970s and 1980s strengthened the collective authority of the CBC, it posed new challenges to the cohesiveness of the organization. Its success advancing black Representatives into the upper echelons of the institutional establishment raised expectations for the group and for individual Members to produce immediate, tangible results for Black Americans. Moreover, some black Members began to experience conflicting pressures between their allegiance to the CBC, their responsibilities as committee and party leaders, and their debt to the Democratic leaders who had placed them in positions of power. The development of conflicts between individual aspirations and collective goals was a sign of African-American institutional maturation, and other minority groups in Congress experienced such conflicts as well. A similar process unfolded among women Members of Congress, often creating tension between the institutional apprenticeship generation of the 1940s and 1950s, who had attained leadership positions, and the feminist activists who followed them.[158]

This theme recurs throughout the service of this generation of Black Americans in Congress. The career of Representative Bill Gray provides an illustrative example. As chairman of the House Budget Committee for the 99th and 100th Congresses (1985–1989), Gray asserted his independence: "I am not here to do the bidding of somebody just because they happen to be black. If I agree with you, I agree with you. I set my policy."[159] Once he rose to the chairmanship of the Budget Committee, Gray encouraged the CBC to continue submitting an alternative budget, although he did not publicly support it. His decision to vote "present" when the CBC

measure came to the House Floor disrupted the public solidarity of the organization and angered some of his black colleagues, who thought Gray was placing personal interests ahead of caucus goals.[160] Similarly, Julian Dixon, who chaired the CBC in the 98th Congress, refused to bring the Caucus's alternative budget to the House Floor for a vote. House leaders had asked Dixon, also a subcommittee chairman of the Appropriations Committee, to pledge his support for the House Budget Committee's budget proposal to attract rank-and-file Democrats' votes for the measure. Knowing he could extract some concessions for his support, the CBC chairman agreed. "Our purpose, hopefully, is not to go down to defeat with honor," Dixon explained. "Our purpose is to have some success."[161]

Investigations, Corruption, and Race

Concerns about public corruption became commonplace in the post-Watergate Era as the number of Americans who trusted their government decreased. That distrust was magnified by a growing adversarial relationship between the press and public officials. Throughout this period, a number of African-American officeholders, including a significant number of black Members of Congress, observed that federal investigations into political corruption unfairly targeted black politicians.[162] This perception may have been partially due to an increase in the total number of corruption probes conducted by the federal government, which soared more than 2,300 percent between 1970 (63) and 1991 (1,452).[163] Additionally, the number of black officials who held public positions increased from 1,469 in 1970 to 6,681 in 1987. Nevertheless, African-American officials seemed disproportionately targeted. One study found that of the 465 political corruption probes initiated by the Justice Department between 1983 and 1988, 14 percent investigated black officeholders—even though they represented just 3 percent of all U.S. officeholders.[164] Black Members of Congress often believed they were the targets of such investigations, asserting that they were singled out for scrutiny on racial grounds and were held to higher standards than their white counterparts. Some interpreted such scrutiny as a coordinated effort to silence black officeholders by "diluting [their] influence and credibility."[165] Representative Bill Clay, Sr., maintained that the legal problems encountered by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., and Harold Ford, Sr., were examples of a "pattern" of investigatory practices and "harassment."[166]

From 1981 to 1993, roughly half the members of the CBC were the subjects of federal investigations or indictments, though few were convicted.[167] Bill Clay, Sr., claimed that federal investigations and political corruption probes into the careers and personal lives of black officeholders were often part of a long-standing "conspiracy to silence dissent." According to Clay, business and "elite" interests—using government, judicial, and law enforcement mechanisms as well as a pliant press—sought to ruin the reputations of those who spoke out about racial, economic, or social inequality.[168] Some political observers did not fully agree with that viewpoint. "There is no question there is real racism in our country," said African-American journalist Juan Williams in 1987, but he added, "Unfortunately, it is not the case that racism explains all charges of corruption." Some prominent black officials, such as then-Virginia Governor L. Douglas Wilder and Representative John Lewis, publicly disputed the conspiracy viewpoint. An official from a black political organization succinctly described the relationship between blacks' new role in the political process and the increased scrutiny by public officials: "White folks are in a fishbowl; they get to swim. Black folks are in a test tube; they have to go straight up or down."[169]

Elected to the House at age 29, Harold Ford, Sr., of Tennessee later became one of the youngest Members ever to chair a subcommittee on Ways and Means. He left his position as chairman amid legal problems, but regained his seniority and chairmanship after his acquittal.

Image courtesy of Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

Former union leader Charles Hayes of Illinois won his first-ever campaign for elective office when he prevailed in a 1983 special election to succeed Harold Washington, who had been elected as Chicago's first black mayor.

Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

Apportionment:

The allocation of congressional seats in the House of Representatives in proportion to states' populations as tabulated by the U.S. Census Bureau every 10 years. Although the House determines the total number of Representatives, states determine the size and boundaries of their congressional districts based on population changes revealed in each census.

Within Congress, African-American Members were appointed to chair the House Standards of Official Conduct (Ethics) Committee more often than any other congressional panel.[170] In the 1980s and 1990s, respected insiders such as Representatives Stokes and Dixon led the Ethics Committee, once during a highly sensitive investigation into alleged standards violations by Speaker Jim Wright of Texas. The scandal with the strongest effect on black Members during this era occurred in 1992 when the press publicized General Accounting Office and House internal investigations revealing that dozens of lawmakers (some 220 former and current Members) had overdrawn their accounts at the informal House "Bank" run by the House Sergeant at Arms. Nine African-American Members revealed that they had written checks without sufficient funds, and five were on the list of the "worst offenders" that was released by the House Ethics Committee.[171] The occurrence of the scandal in an election year, with the economy in recession, magnified voters' discontent with incumbents. However, only one black incumbent, Charles Hayes, lost his primary re-election campaign in the Chicago district he had represented for a decade; his name appeared on a list that was leaked days before the contest.[172] As in the preceding generation, African Americans who faced such investigations or congressional disciplinary actions enjoyed unusually strong loyalty from their constituencies.

Redistricting and "Deracialization": Opportunities and Limits

The return of African Americans to Congress in the third generation (1929–1970) and the phases of rapid expansion (1971–1977, 1991–1995) in the fourth generation are attributable to unique historical forces, the intervention of the courts, and legislative remedies. These developments include the Great Migration, which concentrated blacks in northern cities; the passage and implementation of the landmark 1965 Voting Rights Act (and its extensions); and court decisions in subsequent decades that supported the creation of majority or minority congressional districts.

Title 2 of the Voting Rights Act Amendment of 1982 was critical to the development of racial redistricting after the 1990 Census. That provision marked a significant shift from an emphasis on "process-oriented" remedies, which focused on providing minority voters equal access and opportunity (such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965) to an emphasis on end results achieved by prohibiting electoral arrangements that had the intent or the effect of diluting minority votes. In addition, the growing number of African-American state legislators on key committees with oversight of election and redistricting issues (by one account, 17 percent of all black state legislators in 1992 served on such committees) significantly boosted black electoral prospects in the early 1990s.[173]

Redistricting imposed by the courts and the decennial reapportionment mandated by the Constitution were carried out by state legislatures and accounted for major changes in 1992, in combination with an anti-incumbent mood and the election of a Democratic President for the first time in 12 years. That year, more blacks were elected to Congress than in any previous decade (16 Representatives and one Senator), and 13 of the 16 newly elected black House Members were from districts that had been redrawn for black majorities. The other new black Representatives succeeded retiring or defeated black incumbents.[174] "I think the Congressional Black

Caucus has moved to a whole other level," Ronald Dellums observed. "We can win. We've gone beyond just being 'the conscience of the House.'"[175]

At the opening of the 103rd Congress African-American representation reached a then-historic high of 40, including the first black woman Senator, Carol Moseley-Braun. Moseley-Braun's election was significant for other reasons, too: She became just the fourth African American ever to serve in the upper chamber and the first to be elected as a Democrat. She won decisively in majority-black districts in Chicago but also drew broad-based support from voters from across the state, including a core black constituency, women, and liberal whites.[176] Her campaign strategy was essentially one of "deracialization," a term coined by political scientists to describe an African-American candidate running in a majority-white jurisdiction (often against a white opponent) and energetically seeking white voter support. Black candidates who employed this method avoided strong racial appeals. This strategy was not new; in the 1980s, House Members John Lewis and Mike Espy both won election in districts that, while majority black, required them to develop significant coalitions of both white and African-American voters.[177]

Nevertheless, African Americans seeking election to the Senate faced an obstinate, seemingly insuperable barrier. Lingering racial prejudices, difficulty in securing funding, and the diminished strength of black voting blocs in statewide elections cumulatively discouraged many qualified blacks from seeking a Senate seat. The major parties nominated only nine African Americans as Senate candidates in the 20th century, and these included Brooke and Moseley-Braun.[178] Reflecting on his career as the longest-serving African American in the chamber's history, Senator Brooke noted that when he came to Washington in 1967, Margaret Chase Smith of Maine, a former House Member, was the lone woman. But by 2007, 16 women served in the Senate—many of whom had served in the House. No such transition has yet occurred for black Members. To date, no African-American Representatives have been elected to the Senate, though several have attempted to make this transition, including Alan Wheat, Denise Majette, and Harold Ford, Jr. The lack of black representation in the Senate "deeply saddened" Brooke and, he added, remained "a blight on the American electorate that should be removed."[179] In 2004, Barack Obama—a theretofore little-known Illinois state senator—won election to a seat held by retiring incumbent Peter Fitzgerald, who had defeated Senator Moseley-Braun in her 1998 re-election bid. Employing a campaign strategy (running against African-American GOP nominee Alan Keyes) that echoed Moseley-Braun's efforts, the charismatic and energetic Senator Obama rapidly evolved into a serious contender for the 2008 Democratic presidential nomination. However, halfway through his first Congress he remained the only African-American Senator, as were his four African-American predecessors.

While race-based redistricting of the early 1990s dramatically boosted the number of black Americans in the House, it also produced a tide of lawsuits by voters whose former districts were bifurcated and dissected by state legislatures. In 1993, the U.S. Supreme Court rendered a judgment in *Shaw v. Reno* (509 U.S. 630) that reinstated a suit by five North Carolinians who charged that one of the state's new congressional districts (a district represented by Representatives Mel Watt that wound along the I-85 corridor and took in several urban areas) violated their 14th Amendment rights to equal protection under the law by diluting their votes. In a 5 to 4 decision, the court questioned the constitutionality of drawing congressional

The first black woman to serve in the U.S. Senate, Carol Moseley-Braun of Illinois won her 1992 campaign with a coalition of African Americans, women, and liberal white voters. In this image taken after she left the Senate, she is seen testifying during Senate confirmation hearings on her concurrent appointment in 1999 as U.S. Ambassador to both New Zealand and Samoa.

Image courtesy of U.S. Senate Historical Office

Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts (left) confers with Senator Robert Taft, Jr., of Ohio in this undated photograph. Brooke was the first popularly elected African-American Senator and one of just two to serve in the 20th century. Brooke later noted that the lack of black Senators was "a blight on the American electorate that should be removed."

Image courtesy of U.S. Senate Historical Office

districts with "bizarre" shapes. While the decision did not overturn a lower-court ruling that rejected the suit, it was returned to the lower courts with what seemed to be a new standard for scrutiny.[180]

Within a few years, *Shaw v. Reno* spawned redistricting challenges in a number of states, with the potential to affect the boundaries of roughly a dozen U.S. congressional districts represented by African Americans. On June 29, 1995, the Supreme Court struck down Georgia's congressional district map in the case of *Miller v. Johnson* (515 U.S. 900), a case brought by plaintiffs in a district represented by Representative Cynthia McKinney that stretched from Atlanta to the Georgia coast—some 260 miles away.[181] The judgment called into question the creation of any district in which race was the "predominant factor." Writing for the majority, Justice Anthony M. Kennedy explained, "just as the state may not, absent extraordinary justification, segregate citizens on the basis of race in its public parks, buses, golf courses, beaches, and schools," the government also "may not separate its citizens into different voting districts on the basis of race." The decision reconfigured McKinney's district, as well as that of another African-American Member from Georgia, Sanford Bishop. Over the course of the next several years, lawsuits challenged the boundaries of African American-held seats in Florida, Texas, Virginia, and South Carolina.[182]

Virtually all of the black Members whose districts were reconfigured midway through the decade emerged unscathed, and in many cases, reapportionment after the 2000 Census reinforced their positions. Cleo Fields of Louisiana, who spent much of his second term in Congress fighting redistricting challenges in court, was the only casualty. In 1996 a federal district court that relied on the *Shaw v. Reno* and *Miller v. Johnson* rationale struck down the Louisiana legislature's redrawing of Cleo Fields's Z-shaped district, which included jurisdictions in the state's northern, eastern, and southern quadrants. Fields's district was reconfigured so that it no longer had a majority-black population; of even greater significance, his hometown was outside the boundaries of the new district. Consequently, Fields declined to run against the longtime incumbent who represented the new district.

As the first African-American woman elected to Congress from the state of Georgia, Cynthia McKinney focused on human rights abuses and international relations during her House service.

Collection of U.S. House of Representatives

On January 6, 2001, members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) and other House Democrats gathered in the House Chamber to witness the Electoral College vote count that secured the presidency for George W. Bush. Unable to obtain the required support of a Senator to object formally to the results, CBC members later marched out of the chamber in protest.

Image courtesy of AP/Wide World Photos

The long-term impact of these decisions was ambiguous, with opinion closely divided over the issue. Racially gerrymandered districts remained a politically contentious electoral device on both sides of the political spectrum.[183] Liberals believed the districts offered "descriptive" rather than "substantive" representation, and those from the civil rights generation suggested that lumping blacks into specially designated districts ran counter to the movement's goal of fostering commonality among blacks and whites. In the mid-1990s, John Lewis expressed the concern that majority-black districts could "ensnare blacks in separate enclaves, the exact opposite of what the civil rights movement intended."[184] Conservatives have argued that the creation of the districts endorsed a kind of "racial apartheid" and, more pointedly, that those elected from such districts—which were created to express the interests of a particular racial group—would as a matter of practical politics place their primary allegiance with that group rather than the entire constituency.

Despite major gains in the 1990s, African Americans were still considerably underrepresented in Congress and the state legislatures. According to figures from the 2000 Census, African Americans constituted roughly 12.5 percent of the U.S. population, but accounted for 8.1 percent of the total number of state legislators nationally in 2003 and just 8 percent of the membership in the 110th Congress.[185]

Conclusion

The post-1970 generation of Black Americans in Congress exemplified the maturation of African-American influence on Capitol Hill in nearly every quantifiable measure. By the beginning of the 21st century, the number of black Members of Congress had increased dramatically, expanding their hold on leadership positions, practicing legislative entrepreneurship, developing important coalition- and consensus-building specialties, and winning key legislative triumphs. Despite the attendant growing pains, these were remarkable achievements in an institution that was often resistant to change.

The inception and growth of the CBC during this era marked a principal institutional development in the story of Black Americans in Congress. The caucus acquired stature rapidly, transforming itself from a congressional irritant to a potent bloc for advocating issues and promoting African Americans to positions of power within Congress. Examining the historic power of the CBC to shape legislation, political scientist Milton D. Morris observes, "There is no clear evidence of influence beyond routine advocacy and/or a contact point for the interested black public, but as a vehicle for articulating positions held by African American members of Congress it almost certainly strengthens their voice on selected issues."[186] The marked increase in the number of Black Americans in Congress during the 1990s renewed hope and expectations that the CBC would play a more influential role in Congress.

A new era began in the 110th Congress when the Democrats regained control of the House for the first time in 12 years. The change in party control amplified the power of the all-Democratic CBC. Once again, seniority positioned the longest-serving African Americans for influential roles throughout the committee system and the House leadership. When the 110th Congress convened in January 2007, African Americans held the chairmanships of five full House committees and 17 subcommittees. In all, 22 of the 43 African Americans in Congress—51 percent—held committee leadership positions.[187] Leadership positioning for African

Members of the CBC gathered for a group portrait on the House steps of the U.S. Capitol during the 110th Congress (2007–2009).

Image courtesy of U.S. House of Representatives Photography Office

Americans crystallized as a significant institutional strength—an ironic development in light of the immense power wielded just decades earlier by entrenched southern conservative committee chairs who used it to thwart civil rights legislation.

The debate about minority districts during the 1990s touched on a broader dialogue about representation in a democratic government. Whether descriptive or substantive representation best advanced the interests of African Americans was not resolved. Some believed majority–minority districts to be necessary for the democratization of the political process: Most important, they provide historically underrepresented African-American voters representation in Congress, and instead of promoting the notion that only blacks can or should represent black voters, they foster political commonality. As political scientist David T. Canon explains, "factions within the African-American community produce candidates with different ideological backgrounds and different visions of the representation of racial interests. One significant effect of this ideological diversity among black candidates is to give a centrist coalition of moderate white and black voters the power to elect the black candidate of their choice in many districts."[188] In essence, descriptive representation and substantive representation were not mutually exclusive.

Such coalition-building may well be the key to creating an even larger and more influential role for future Black Members of Congress. Undoubtedly, new challenges lie ahead, but even a brief survey of African-American history on Capitol Hill since 1870 reveals a pattern: Through distinct stages—symbolic, apprentice, and mature—black Americans have persisted, overcoming obstacles to achieve a position of unprecedented influence in Congress. In legislating for an uncertain future, current black Members and their successors will be able to draw strength from their predecessors' historic accomplishments and experiences.

Notes

1 On December 31, 2007, the figure stood at 86 of the 121 who had served in all of congressional history.

2 According to Robert Singh, "The central function of caucuses is to bring together legislators with shared interests, backgrounds, and policy goals." Robert Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus: Racial Politics in the U.S. Congress*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 1998): 58. As internal congressional organizations, caucuses like the CBC formed in great part to pursue a collective agenda with a "strength in numbers" strategy.

3 Quoted in Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 51.

4 For a discussion of this phenomenon among women Members, see Office of History and Preservation, U.S. House of Representatives, *Women in Congress, 1917–2006* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2006): 326–327, 545.

5 Ninety-one percent (78 individuals) held an undergraduate degree; three others took coursework at the college level. Additionally, 66 percent (57 individuals) earned a graduate degree—11 of these held multiple graduate degrees. Nearly 40 percent of all the individuals (34) from this era held law degrees. African-American Members also held 20 master's degrees, four MBA degrees, and three MSW degrees. Three individuals were Ph.Ds, and two were MDs. While in line with the educational backgrounds of the general congressional membership, African-American Members of Congress far outstripped the education rates for the general U.S. population. As recently as 1997, just 16.3 percent of all black males and 16.5 percent of all black females graduated from college (compared with 30.1 percent of white men and 26.6 percent of white women, respectively). See Matthew Sobek, "Table Bc798–805, College Graduation Rate, by Sex, Nativity, and Race, 1940–1997," and "Table Bc806 – 813, High School Noncompletion Rate, by Sex, Nativity, and Race: 1940–1997," in *Historical Statistics of the United States, Volume 2: Work and Welfare*, Susan B. Carter et al., eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 469–470.

6 Reflecting a trend among the general congressional population, relatively few African-American Members from this era were service veterans. Among black Members of Congress elected from 1971 through 2007, slightly more than 17 percent served in the U.S. military. Most of these served in the U.S. Army. Four were World War II veterans, and one was a Korean War veteran. With the end of the compulsory draft in 1971, fewer Americans served in the military; unlike earlier generations, for whom military service was a common formative experience, this generation had fewer members that were linked by the commonalities of life in uniform. After 1970, the average age of African-American Members upon their first election to Congress was 46.4 years. Men (61 individuals) won their first elections at an average age of 45 years; women (25 individuals) averaged 50 years of age at the time of first election. This consequential statistical difference, in theory, benefited men who had more time to accrue seniority necessary to attain leadership positions and high-ranking or prestigious committee assignments. The youngest Members elected during this era were a father–son duo: Harold E. Ford, Jr., who succeeded his father in a Memphis, Tennessee, district in the 1996 elections, was 26 years of age (Ford, Sr., was 29 at the time of his first election in 1974). The younger Ford has the distinction of being the second-youngest African American ever elected to Congress: John Roy Lynch of Mississippi first won election to Congress in 1872 at the age of 25. The oldest African American elected during this time period was George Crockett of Michigan, who was 71 when he succeeded Charles Diggs, Jr., in 1980.

7 For a comprehensive treatment of the civil rights movement—its origins, triumphs, principal leaders, and internal divisions—see the three-volume history by Taylor Branch: *Parting the Waters: America in the King Years, 1954–63* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988); *Pillar of Fire: America in the King Years, 1963–65* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998); and *At Canaan's Edge: America in the King Years, 1965–68* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006).

8 Charles V. Hamilton, *Adam Clayton Powell, Jr.: The Political Biography of an American Dilemma* (New York: Atheneum, 1991): 28.

9 John Lewis with Michael D'Orso, *Walking With the Wind: A Memoir of the Movement* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998): 371.

10 Ronald V. Dellums and H. Lee Halterman, *Lying Down With the Lions: A Public Life From the Streets of Oakland to the Halls of Power* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000): 44–45.

11 At least three other African-American Members held leadership positions in their respective state legislatures: Mervyn Dymally (chairman of the California senate's Democratic caucus), Elijah Cummings (speaker *pro tempore* of the Maryland house of delegates), and Gwen Moore (president *pro tempore* of the Wisconsin senate). President *Pro Tempore* is a Senator who serves as presiding officer of the chamber when the Vice President is absent. (The president *pro tempore* position is also used in state senates, in the absence of the Lieutenant Governor.) Latin for "the time being" or "temporarily," the president *pro tempore* not only presides over the U.S. Senate but is also empowered to swear in Senators and sign legislation. After World War II, the Senate began electing the senior member of the majority party to this position. This person may hold the office until retirement or until the party loses its majority status. Since 1947, the position is third in line for the presidency, behind the Vice President and the Speaker of the House. The House Member appointed to preside over chamber activities when the Speaker of the House is absent is called the Speaker *pro tempore*. In accordance with House Rules, the Speaker *pro tempore* typically serves for only one legislative day at a time.

12 Milton D. Morris, "African American Legislators," in the *Encyclopedia of American Legislative Systems*, Volume 1, Joel Silbey ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994): 375–376. For an even wider perspective, see Andrew Young's remarks in the *Congressional Record*, citing Voter Education Project figures for the number of blacks holding elective office in 11 Deep South states in 1965 (72) versus 1975 (1,587). See *Congressional Record*, House 94th Cong., 1st sess. (2 June 1975): 16241–16242.

13 The largest recent gains for African-American state legislators have been made in state senates. For more on black state legislators, their effect on their institutions and public policy, their representational patterns, and their peers' perceptions about them, see Kerry L. Haynie, *African American Legislators in the American States* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). The figures from 2003, the most recent year for which racial breakdowns are available, are reported in "Numbers of African-American Legislators, 2003," National Conference of State Legislators: http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legismgt/about/afrAmer.htm (accessed 19 November 2007).

14 Minority women comprise a larger percentage of their ethnic group in Congress than does the general population of Congresswomen relative to the entire Membership—16.6 percent (90 of 540). Groups of other minority women are much smaller, but of roughly equal proportions to black women: Asian-American women in the 110th Congress accounted for a third of current Asian Americans in Congress (2 of 6), and Hispanic-American women accounted for about 29 percent of all current Hispanic Americans in Congress (7 of 24). Caucasian women accounted for about 14 percent of all Caucasians in Congress (67 of 467). For statistics on women in state legislatures through the mid-1990s, see Morris, "African American Legislators": 376.

15 Carolyn P. DuBose, *The Untold Story of Charles Diggs: The Public Figure, the Private Man* (Arlington, Virginia: Barton Publishing House, Inc., 1998): 33.

16 Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 54–55; Norman C. Miller, "Negroes in the House Join Forces for Black Interests," 31 March 1970, *Wall Street Journal*: 1.

17 William L. Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991* (New York: Amistad Press Inc., 1992): 116–117; For more on Clay, Stokes, and Chisholm, see Robert C. Maynard, "New Negroes in Congress Focus on City Problems," 10 August 1969, *Washington Post*: 2.

18 Richard Fenno, *Going Home: Black Representatives and Their Constituents* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press): 62.

19 Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 55–56. According to Singh, Clay's strategy for crafting a nonpartisan organization included an unsuccessful attempt to coax the lone black Republican of the 92nd Congress, Senator Edward Brooke of Massachusetts, to join the CBC. Sources are ambiguous about whether the CBC formally extended an offer of membership to Brooke. See also Clay, *Just Permanent Interests, Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991*: 116–117.

20 Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991*: 121. For a brief history of the CBC and additional information on the organization, see http://www.avoiceonline.org. See also the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc.: http://www.cbcfinc.org/About/CBC/index.html. There were 13 founding members of the CBC: Shirley Chisholm, Bill Clay, Sr., George Collins, John Conyers, Ronald Dellums, Charles Diggs, Walter Fauntroy, Augustus Hawkins, Ralph Metcalfe, Parren Mitchell, Robert Nix, Charles Rangel, and Louis Stokes.

21 Clay, *Just Permanent Interests, Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991*: ix, 165.

22 Ibid., 173–174. Clay also observed that he, Chisholm, and Stokes "considered ourselves, along with other black representatives, to have a mandate to speak forcefully and loudly in behalf of equitable treatment of minorities by government." Ibid., 111.

23 At the time of the boycott, the group was still referred to as the DSC, but by the time it met with Nixon, the organization had been re-established as the more formal CBC. To avoid confusion, in this account the group is referred to as the CBC for the entire episode.

24 "Black Congressmen to Boycott Nixon," 22 January 1971, *Washington Post*: A2; Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991:* 139–143. "Benign neglect" of African Americans, postulated by senior Nixon advisor (and later New York Senator) Daniel Patrick Moynihan, became a subject of public debate when an internal White House memo he drafted on race legislation was leaked to the press in March 1970. Black Americans, Moynihan wrote, had made "extraordinary progress" in the previous decade, adding that a cooling-off period would serve the advancement of civil rights, which were "too much talked about" and "too much taken over to hysterics, paranoids and boodlers on all sides." Moynihan concluded, "the time may have come when the issue of race could benefit from a period of 'benign neglect.'" See Peter Kihss, "'Benign Neglect' on Race Is Proposed by Moynihan," 1 March 1970, *New York Times*: 1; "Is 'Benign Neglect' the Real Nixon Approach?" 8 March 1970, *New York Times*: E1. For a modern assessment of President Nixon's policy of "benign neglect" that stresses the administration's "schizophrenic" but nevertheless "surprisingly progressive record" on minority and civil rights see Melvin Small, *The Presidency of Richard Nixon* (Lawrence, University Press of Kansas, 1999): 161–177, 162 ("schizophrenic"), 183 ("surprisingly progressive").

25 *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (30 March 1971): 8710–8714; "Key Proposals of Black Caucus," 26 March 1971, *Washington Post*: A6; Paul Delaney, "Blacks in House Get Nixon Pledge," 26 March 1971, *New York Times*: 1. For a more detailed version of the meeting between President Nixon and the CBC, see Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991:* 145–148, and DuBose, *The Untold Story of Charles Diggs*: 96–103.

26 Marguerite Ross Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus," *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 32 (1975): 36.

27 Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 36–39. Barnett concluded that the group's greatest virtue "was the brilliance of political innovation inherent in the decision of black representatives to work together to represent the interests of the black community." During the 1970s, the CBC struggled to pass meaningful legislation as it worked on building a reputation as an effectual House organization. Representing only a fraction of the total House membership, it faced formidable challenges: small enrollment, initial lack of seniority among individual Members, and, apart from the black community, a lack of popular support.

28 Ibid., 36–38.

29 Ibid., 36. See also Carol M. Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests: The Representation of African Americans in Congress* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1993): 38.

30 Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 37–38; Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 76.

31 Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 77.

32 Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 39.

33 Paul Delaney, "Rep. Stokes Heads the Black Caucus," 9 February 1972, *New York Times*: 23.

34 Quoted in Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 39. Under Stokes's direction, however, the CBC continued to pursue unified efforts. In 1972, the CBC issued a "Black Declaration of Independence" that included a "Black Bill of Rights" intended to "create a society which is truly founded upon the principles of freedom, justice and full equality." The CBC's demands, meant to influence the Democratic Party platform and presidential nominee selection process, encompassed issues ranging from national health insurance to increased foreign aid to Africa. See also Austin Scott, "Black Caucus Warns Democrats," 2 June 1972, *Washington Post*: A6; Paul Delaney, "House Caucus Lists 'Black Bill of Rights,'" 2 June 1972, *New York Times*: 22.

35 Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 48; Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 38. The internal structure of the CBC remained quite consistent throughout this period and it developed a considerable administrative staff. Established in 1976, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation (CBCF), a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, complemented the CBC

by conducting research and technical assistance and promoting the political participation of African Americans. The CBCF grew more important when, in 1981, the House Administration Committee wrote new regulations stipulating that Legislative Service Organizations (LSOs), including the CBC, using House office space, supplies, and equipment could no longer receive funding from outside sources such as corporations or nonprofit foundations. However, LSOs could continue to use tax-exempt foundations for research and other caucus activities. The CBC responded to the rule change by transferring most of its responsibilities to the CBCF. In 1995, when the Republican majority abolished LSOs across the board, forcing all caucuses to operate without House resources, the CBC's administrative functions were entirely subsumed by the CBCF. See Singh, *The Congressional Caucus*: 63, 68; Dorothy Collin, "Time of Growth for Black Caucus," 19 September 1982, *Chicago Tribune*: A3; Lynn Norment, "Our Team on Capitol Hill," *Ebony* 39 (August 1984): 44; David C. Ruffin and Frank Dexter Brown, "Clout on Capitol Hill," *Black Enterprise* 15 (October 1984): 100. See also the CBCF Web site, at http://www.cbcfinc.org/.

36 "Congress Caucus for Blacks Only," 22 June 1975, *Chicago Tribune*: 30; Paul Houston, "Black Caucus Won't Let White Congressman Join," 19 June 1975, *Los Angeles Times*: B18. The issue of white membership in the CBC would surface again in 2007. See Josephine Hearn, "Black Caucus: Whites Not Allowed," 24 January 2007, *Roll Call*.

37 Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests*: 38. This development roughly paralleled the decision by the Women's Caucus to admit dues-paying male members on a nonvoting basis in 1982. See Office of History and Preservation, *Women in Congress, 1917–2006*: 548.

38 Morris P. Fiorina, "Legislative Incumbency and Insulation," in *The Encyclopedia of American Legislative Systems*, Volume 1, Silbey, ed.: 516–518.

39 Roughly one-third (32 of the 97 African Americans to enter the House since 1943) have served more than 14 years—compared with roughly 29 percent of all House Members, and nearly 18 percent (17 of 97) have served 20 or more years—compared with about 15 percent of the general membership. General House Member statistics are drawn from David C. Huckabee, "Length of Congressional Service: First Through 107th Congresses," 9 August 2002, Report RS21285, Congressional Research Service (hereinafter referred to as CRS), Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

40 See, for instance, Mildred Amer, "Average Years of Service for Members of the Senate and House of Representatives, First through 109th Congresses," 9 November 2005, Report RL32648, CRS.

41 See the chart on Members' terms of service from 1965 through 2007, at the end of this essay. See also Mildred Amer, "Membership of the 110th Congress: A Profile," 12 September 2007, Report RS22555, CRS. The Congress with the longest average length of service was the 102nd (1991–1993), which was 10.4 years.

42 On the general topic of centralization of power in the House that gave rise to the hierarchical committee system, see Peter Swenson, "The Influence of Recruitment on the Structure of Power in the U.S. House, 1870–1940," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* VII (February 1982): 7–36. For an analysis of committee seniority, see Michael Aboam and Joseph Cooper, "The Rise of Seniority in the House of Representatives," *Polity* 1 (Fall 1968): 52–84. For an analysis of factors that mitigate seniority as the determining factor in committee hierarchy as well as a discussion of when the seniority system solidified in the House, see Nelson Polsby, Miriam Gallaher, and Barry S. Rundquist, "The Growth of the Seniority System in the U.S. House of Representatives," *American Political Science Review* 63 (September 1969): 787–807.

43 Eric Pianin, "Black Caucus Members Face Dilemma of Hill Loyalties," 23 September 1987, *Washington Post*: A1.

44 Milton Coleman, "Black Caucus Comes of Age," 7 January 1985, *Washington Post*: A1.

45 "Cardinals" alludes to the College of Cardinals of the Catholic Church who set church policy. In this usage, the term conveys the authority of the Appropriations Committee subcommittee chairs—each of whom has control over allocations for a portion of the federal budget.

46 Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests*: 38.

47 Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 46.

48 Richard D. Lyons, "Ways and Means in Liberal Shift," 12 December 1974, *New York Times*: 38. The elite committee Members included Louis Stokes on Appropriations, Charles Rangel and Harold Ford, Sr., on Ways and Means, and Andrew Young on Rules. During this era, African Americans also registered major gains on second-tier committees where none had previously served, including Banking and Currency (Parren Mitchell, 1971), Budget (Mitchell, 1974),

Energy and Commerce (Cardiss Collins and Mickey Leland, 1981), and Public Works (George Collins and Charles Rangel, 1971). The most common committee assignment for African-American Members during this era was the Small Business Committee, created in 1974. Including the first, Parren Mitchell, a total of 31 black Members have served on the committee through 2007. Since 1971, a total of 21 black Members have served on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (and its previous iterations, Public Works and Public Works and Transportation), another 21 African Americans have served on the Oversight and Government Reform Committee (and its previous iterations, Government Reform, Government Reform and Oversight, and Government Operations), and 20 have served on the Education and Labor Committee (and its predecessor, Education and the Workforce).

49 Quoted in Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 79. According to Dellums's recollections in *Lying Down With the Lions*, the CBC helped him get a spot on Armed Services in 1973.

50 At the opening of the 99th Congress there were 20 African Americans in Congress. Alton Waldon, Jr., of New York became the 21st black Member to serve in the 99th Congress after he won a special election on June 10, 1986.

51 Nadine Cohadas, "Black House Members Striving for Influence," *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report* 43 (13 April 1985): 675; Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 92; Coleman, "Black Caucus Comes of Age."

52 Cohadas, "Black House Members Striving for Influence": 675.

53 See Appendix E, Black Americans Who Have Chaired Congressional Committees. In the modern era, no African Americans have held full or select committee chairmanships in the Senate. Only Blanche Bruce of Mississippi has led Senate panels: the Select Committee to Investigate the Freedmen's Savings and Trust Company in the 46th Congress and the Select Committee on the Mississippi River in the 44th Congress.

54 See Appendix F, Black-American Chairs of Subcommittees of Standing Committees in the U.S. House and Senate, 1885–2007. James O'Hara, Adam Clayton Powell, William Dawson, Robert Nix and Charles Diggs, held subcommittee chairmanships before 1970. Nix and Diggs also held subcommittee chairman posts after 1970.

55 See, for example, Carol Swain, "Changing Patterns of African-American Representation in Congress," in *The Atomistic Congress: An Interpretation of Congressional Change*, Allen D. Hertzke and Ronald M. Peters, Jr. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1992): 132.

56 Swain, "Changing Patterns of African-American Representation in Congress": 129.

57 Black Members also held minor leadership positions during this era. For example, Shirley Chisholm served as Secretary of the Democratic Caucus, Cardiss Collins was the first black woman to serve as an At-Large Democratic Whip, and Parren Mitchell also served as an At-Large Democratic Whip.

58 For an analysis of J. C. Watts's House career with an emphasis on his challenging task of building bridges between the Republican Party and black voters, see Jake Tapper, "Fade to White: The Only African American Republican in Congress Is Headed Home. Can the Party of Lincoln—and Trent Lott—Afford the Loss of J. C. Watts?" 5 January 2003, *Washington Post Magazine*: W06.

59 For analyses of Clyburn's leadership and his ascendancy within the context of the rising influence of southern blacks in Congress, see Richard E. Cohen, "A Different Kind of Whip," 20 January 2007, *National Journal*: 42–44; David Rogers, "Clyburn Leads Southern Blacks' Ascent to Top Posts in Congress," 3 January 2007, *Wall Street Journal*: A5; and Jennifer Yachnin, "No 'Sharp Elbows' for Whip Clyburn," 11 December 2006, *Roll Call*.

60 Swain, "Changing Patterns of African-American Representation in Congress": 132–133.

61 For a detailed legislative history, see "Congress Clears Voting Rights Act Extension," *Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 94th Congress, 1st Session, 1975*, Volume 1 (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1976): 521–532. For a listing of major civil rights bills, see Appendix J, Constitutional Amendments and Major Civil Rights Acts of Congress Referenced in the Text.

62 Representative Barbara Jordan was instrumental in sponsoring a bill to expand the definition of literacy tests to include election registration materials printed only in English in areas with large non-English-speaking populations—in the case of her Houston district, Hispanics. "I am persuaded that the only means available to language minority citizens, and specifically Mexican-Americans in Texas, to gain equal access to the franchise is through application of the remedies of the Voting Rights Act." See "Congress Clears Voting Rights Act Extension": 525.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid., 527. See also Young's floor remarks and statistics in the *Congressional Record*, House, 94th Cong., 1st sess. (2 June 1975): 16241–16242.

65 For a legislative history of the bill, see "Voting Rights Act Extended, Strengthened," *Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 97th Cong., 2nd sess., 1982* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1983): 373–377.

66 *Congressional Record*, House, 97th Cong., 1st sess. (5 October 1981): 23204.

67 Ibid., 23187–23188. For comments by Cardiss Collins and Shirley Chisholm, see pages 23199–23201, 23202–23203.

68 *Congressional Record*, House, 103rd Cong., 1st sess. (28 July 1993): H5431.

69 U.S. Department of Commerce figures (1991) cited in Haynie, *African American Legislators in the American States*: 20–21.

70 Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 40; Austin Scott, "Blacks Assail Nixon's Budget," 1 February 1973, *Washington Post*: A1; Paul Houston, "Black Caucus Assails Nixon Budget Cuts," 1 February 1973, *Los Angeles Times*: 11.

71 For U.S. unemployment rates in the post–World War II period, see "Table Ba583-596, Unemployment Rate, by Age, Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 1947–2000," in Carter et al., eds., *Historical Statistics of the United States, Volume 2: Work and Welfare*: 95.

72 Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991*: 95.

73 Robert C. Smith, *We Have No Leaders: African Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996): 187–210, quotation on page 206.

74 Barbara Reynolds, "Carter Endorses Andy Young, Jobs Bill," 1 October 1978, *Chicago Tribune*: 12; Paul Houston, "Black Congressmen, Carter Clash Over Employment Bill," 27 October 1978, *Los Angeles Times*: B1; Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 86–90.

75 Barnett, "The Congressional Black Caucus": 43; Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 84.

76 Shirley Washington, *Outstanding African Americans of Congress* (Washington, DC: U.S. Capitol Historical Society, 1998): 64; Thomas Goldwasser, "Liberal's Liberal Mitchell Is Fiscal Conservative," 15 September 1980, *Washington Post*: A1; Sandra Sugawara, "Retiring Mitchell Still Has Passion for Justice," 1 December 1985, *Washington Post*: 37.

77 Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 97.

78 Tom Kenworthy, "Congressional Black Caucus Facing New Circumstances After 20 Years," 17 September 1989, *Washington Post*: A22.

79 For a historical overview of nonvoting Delegates, including Resident Commissioners, see Earl S. Pomeroy, *The Territories of the United States*, 1861–1980 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1969); Betsy Palmer, "Territorial Delegates to the U.S. Congress: Current Issues and Historical Background," 6 July 2006, Report RL32340, CRS; R. Eric Petersen, "Resident Commissioner from Puerto Rico," 31 March 2005, Report RL 31856, CRS; Michael Fauntroy, "District of Columbia Delegates to Congress," 4 April 2001, Report RS 20875, CRS. See also "At the Starting Gate for the Delegate Race," 25 September 1970, *Washington Post*: A24. While the position of Delegate was previously reserved for territories that were likely to become states, the District of Columbia Act of 1970 launched a new trend, creating Delegates for areas without statehood on the legislative horizon: District of Columbia, 1970; U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam, 1972; and American Samoa, 1978. Currently, a Resident Commissioner represents Puerto Rico.

80 "After 8 Years, House Will Weigh District of Columbia Home Rule," 8 October 1973, *New York Times*: 22; "Home Rule Bill for Washington Signed," 25 December, 1973, *Los Angeles Times*: 4;

81 For more information on the AACN, see Charles E. Jones, "Testing a Legislative Strategy: The Congressional Black Caucus's Action-Alert Communications Network," *Legislative Studies Quarterly* 4 (November 1987).

82 Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 156. For more on the establishment of the AACN, see Thomas A. Johnson, "Black Conferees Establish Network to Influence White Congressman," 28 May 1979, *New York Times*: A7; William Raspberry, "A Black Voter Network," 19 October 1981, *Washington Post*: A1.

83 Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 93.

84 "Top House Democrats Back 'Workfare,'" 20 March 1987, Associated Press. The plan called for developing "a system requiring education, training, or work for many recipients. States would have to provide a minimum level of cash assistance, and child support collections would be strengthened." Ford figured the program "would cost the federal government roughly $600 to $850 million in fiscal 1988 and about $2.5 billion when phased in fully."

85 "Floyd H. Flake," *Contemporary Black Biography*, Volume 18 (Detroit, MI: Gale Research Inc., 1998) (hereinafter referred to as *CBB*); Jonathan P. Hicks, "Rep. Flake Breaks with Party to Back School Vouchers," 12 March 1997, *New York Times*: B3.

86 "Floyd H. Flake," *CBB*. Terry M. Neal, "Ex-Lawmaker Refuses to be Boxed In; The Rev. Flake Left Congress to Pursue Urban Renewal Beyond Party Lines," 10 January 1998, *Washington Post*: A1.

87 Neal, "Ex-Lawmaker Refuses to be Boxed In."

88 Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 101; Jill Zuckman, "Black Republican Says Party Lags on Ending Preferences," 6 August 1995, *Boston Globe*: 19; Tapper, "Fade to White."

89 Such proposals had been considered by Congress since the Reconstruction Era. See Garrine P. Laney, "Proposals for Reparations for African Americans: A Brief Overview," 22 January 2007, Report RS20740, CRS.

90 Douglas Reid Weimer, "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Commemorative Works and Other Honors Authorized by Congress," 17 December 2007, Report RL 33704, CRS.

91 Edward W. Brooke, *Bridging the Divide: My Life* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2007): 178–179.

92 Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 95.

93 Mary Russell, "King Holiday Frustrated," 6 December 1979, *Washington Post*: A6.

94 Larry Margasak, "Courting Conservatives to Back King Holiday," 14 August 1983, Associated Press.

95 For a detailed account of the legislative history of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday, see *Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1983* (Washington DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1983): 600–602. The federal holiday honoring King was first observed in 1986.

96 Other black recipients followed, including sports legends, military heroes, and social activists such as boxer Joe Louis (1982), Olympic track and field gold medalist Jesse Owens (1987), General Colin Powell (1991), educator Dr. Dorothy Height (2003), and the Tuskegee Airmen (2006). The award also celebrated the contributions of civil rights leaders and icons Roy Wilkins (1984), the Little Rock Nine (1998), Rosa Parks (1999), and the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and his wife, Coretta Scott King (2004). See "Congressional Gold Medal Recipients," available at http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/goldMedal.html; see also Stephen W. Stathis, "Congressional Gold Medals, 1776–2007," 30 January 2008, Report RL30076, CRS.

97 See "Individuals Who Have Lain in State or in Honor," available at http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/house_history/lieinstate.html.

98 The Center for Defense Information, a Washington, DC-based nonprofit, estimated that the total cost of the Cold War U.S. military budgets (excluding intelligence and foreign aid) exceeded $13 trillion (in 1996 dollars) from 1948 until the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. See http://www.cdi.org/issues/milspend.html (accessed 15 February 2008).

99 Alvin B. Tillery, Jr., "Foreign Policy Activism and Power in the House of Representatives: Black Members of Congress and South Africa," *Studies in American Political Development* 20 (Spring 2006): 95–96.

100 DuBose, *The Untold Story of Charles Diggs*: 76.

101 Paul Dold, "U.S. Firms in South Africa: New Pressure," 20 August 1971, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1.

102 *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (10 June 1971): 19110.

103 Spencer Rich, "South Africa Sugar Quota Draws Fire," 16 April 1969, *Washington Post*: A2. Diggs was not alone in the early battle to bring the issue of racial segregation in South Africa to the House Floor; Louis Stokes of Ohio introduced a measure to terminate the sugar quota during the 91st Congress (1969–1971), and William (Bill) Clay, Sr., of Missouri cosponsored a similar bill. When the House voted to extend the South Africa sugar quota in 1971, the CBC voiced its disapproval, characterizing the decision as "complicity with apartheid." See David E. Rosenbaum, "Sugar Vote Voted by House, 229–128," 11 June 1971, *New York Times*: 44.

104 Jesse W. Lewis, "Diggs Presses Anti-Apartheid Bill," 31 March 1972, *Washington Post*: A2; DuBose, *The Untold Story of Charles Diggs*: 129–133; Paul Dold, "U.S. Firms in South Africa: New Pressure"; *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess. (29 March 1972): 10931.

105 Tillery, "Foreign Policy Activism and Power in the House of Representatives: Black Members of Congress and South Africa": 93.

106 For more on the CBC's role in the anti-apartheid movement, see http://www.avoiceonline.org/aam/history.html (accessed 8 February 2008).

107 *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 2nd sess. (16 February 1972): 4247. In his memoirs, Dellums provides a detailed account of how he and Representative John Conyers met with Polaroid employees to discuss their petition and subsequently drafted a bill to terminate business interests in South Africa and other African countries with discriminatory policies. See Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down With the Lions*: 122–124. According to the *Congressional Record*, Dellums and Conyers first introduced a sanctions bill in December 1971. The bill was re-introduced in February on behalf of the CBC. See *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (15 December 1971): 47236.

108 Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down With the Lions*: 123; "Polaroid Cuts Off Goods to S. Africa," 22 November 1977, *Los Angeles Times*: A1.

109 "Polaroid Cuts Off Goods to S. Africa."

110 Robert K. Massie, *Loosing the Bonds: The United States and Africa in the Apartheid Years* (New York: Nan A. Talese/Doubleday, 1997): 405; Paula Stern, "Ethnic Groups: Shaping the Course of American Foreign Policy," 10 January 1976, *Washington Post*: A15.

111 Harold J. Logan, "A Black Political Group Set Up as Africa Lobby," 21 May 1978, *Washington Post*: A18; "New Lobby of Blacks Will Seek to Influence U.S. Policy in Africa," 22 April 1978, *Washington Post*: A9; Tillery, "Foreign Policy Activism and Power in the House of Representatives: Black Members of Congress and South Africa": 100.

112 David L. Hostetter, *Movement Matters: American Antiapartheid Activism and the Rise of Multicultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2006): 78–79. On a 1977 trip to South Africa, Young was quoted as saying, "I'm not advocating [a boycott] because to do so would be to interfere in your internal affairs. I'm a sophisticated diplomat and I wouldn't want to do that." Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*: 413. Young's short tenure as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations ended with his resignation in 1979.

113 Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*: 558–560.

114 Eleanor Holmes Norton, then a Georgetown law professor, and Fauntroy's eventual successor as DC Delegate, accompanied Fauntroy, Berry, and Robinson to the South African Embassy, but left before the group's arrest to notify the press of the protest. Dorothy Gilliam, "DC Sit-In Led the Way," 9 September 1985," *Washington Post*: A1; "Capital's House Delegate Held in Embassy Sit-In," 22 November 1984, *New York Times:* B10.

115 Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*: 558–560; Kenneth Bredemeier and Michael Marriott, "Fauntroy Arrested in Embassy," 22 November 1984, *Washington Post*: 1; Courtland Milloy, "Blacks Form 'Free S. Africa Movement,'" 24 November 1984, *Washington Post*: C1; "Capital's House Delegate Held in Embassy Sit-In."

116 Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down With the Lions:* 128.

117 Quoted in Tillery, "Foreign Policy Activism": 100.

118 Karlyn Barker and Michael Marriott, "Protest Spreads to Other U.S. Cities," 4 December 1984, *Washington Post*: A1; "New Tactics on South Africa," 10 May 1986, *New York Times*: 8.

119 According to the *Congressional Record* more than 100 bills and resolutions were introduced during this period. In some cases, Members introduced similar legislation on several occasions, thereby increasing this number. For example, Charles Diggs introduced a Joint Resolution entitled "A Joint Resolution to Protect United States Domestic and Foreign Policy interests by Making Fair Employment Practices in the South African Enterprises of United States Firms a Criteria for Eligibility for Government Contracts" seven times during the 93rd and 94th Congresses. In his article "Foreign Policy Activism and Power in the House of Representatives: Black Members of Congress and South Africa, 1968–1986," political scientist Alvin Tillery writes that African-American Representatives introduced 12 bills on South Africa in the 91st Congress and 26 bills in the 92nd Congress. According to the *Congressional Record*, three bills on South Africa were introduced in the House during the 91st Congress, followed by eight in the House during the

92nd Congress. In addition, two bills were introduced in the Senate during the two Congresses. Of the 11 bills on South Africa in the House, five were sponsored by black Members. Many of the measures consisted of resolutions condemning the regime or requests urging the U.S. government to change its policy toward South Africa. Whereas the majority of legislation sponsored by CBC members never made it to the floor for a vote, a few resolutions passed the House. In the 95th Congress (1977–1979), for example, a concurrent resolution introduced by Cardiss Collins of Illinois "expressing concern about the recent acts of repression by the Government of the Republic of South Africa" passed the House. George Crockett of Michigan successfully sponsored the "Mandela Freedom Resolution" in 1984, calling for the release of the imprisoned South African leader; an identical resolution passed the Senate. Despite a low rate of success, the steady flow of legislation on South Africa that was put forth by African-American Representatives kept the issue of apartheid in the congressional spotlight. With a new sense of vigor spurred by the embassy demonstrations and increased violence in South Africa, black Members of Congress intensified their legislative effort to fight apartheid. According to Representative Clay, the CBC sponsored 24 bills concerning U.S. policy toward South Africa between 1985 and 1986. See Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991*: 281; Omang, "Rep. Crockett and the Volley From the Right."

120 Juan Williams, "Antiapartheid Actions Await Turn of Events; Rep. Gray Says U.S. Moves Depend Upon South Africa," 28 September 1985, *Washington Post*: A7.

121 Jonathan Fuerbringer, "House Votes Sanctions Against South Africa," 6 June 1985, *New York Times*: A1.

122 Bob Secter, "S. Africa Sanctions Passed by the Senate," 12 July 1985, *Los Angeles Times*: A1.

123 George da Lama and Dorothy Collin, "Reagan Slaps S. Africa's Wrist," 10 September 1985, *Chicago Tribune*: 1.

124 James R. Dickenson, "Dellums: Exoneration Is His," 20 June 1986, *Washington Post*: A17; Edward Walsh, "House Would Require U.S. Disinvestment From South Africa," 19 June 1986, *Washington Post*: A1. Dellums provides a detailed account of the floor action concerning the anti-apartheid legislation in his memoirs, *Lying Down With the Lions*: 132–138.

125 Typical protocol dictated that a conference report would be drafted as a compromise between the House and Senate bills. However, leaders from both chambers decided to adopt the Senate bill to avoid the possibility of a pocket veto by President Reagan. See Massie, *Loosing the Bonds*: 617–618; Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down With the Lions*: 136–138.

126 The Senate voted 78 to 21 and the House voted 313 to 83 to override the presidential veto. "Senate Overrides Reagan's Veto Sanctions 78 to 21," 2 October 1986, *Los Angeles Times*: A1; Edward Walsh, "House Easily Overrides Veto of South African Sanctions," 30 September 1986, *Washington Post*: A1.

127 "Hill Overrides Veto of South Africa Sanctions," *1986 Congressional Quarterly Almanac* (Congressional Quarterly Inc.: Washington, DC, 1987): 359.

128 Desson Howe, "Cheers for Sanctions Vote," 4 October 1986, *Washington Post*: G1.

129 Allister Sparks, "6 Congressmen Begin Tour of S. Africa," 8 January 1986, *Washington Post*: A1.

130 E. A. Wayne, "Congress Considers Boosting Sanctions Against South Africa," 5 November 1987, *Christian Science Monitor*: 3; Dellums wrote about his continued attempts to pass stricter sanctions against South Africa in his memoirs. See Dellums, *Lying Down With the Lions*: 138–148.

131 Dellums, *Lying Down With the Lions*: 143. President Bush eventually lifted the majority of U.S. sanctions due to what he perceived as a "profound transformation" in the attempt to promote racial equality in South Africa. See Ann Devroy and Helen Dewar, "Citing S. Africa's 'Transformation,' Bush Ends Most Sanctions," 11 July 1991, *Washington Post*: A23.

132 Scholars have yet to systematically examine the effect of the anti-apartheid campaign on the CBC's institutional powers: Did it gain legislative savvy and increased influence on other issues? Did it make any new congressional allies? Or did it achieve an expanded national prominence?

133 *Congressional Record*, House, 92nd Cong., 1st sess. (30 March 1971): 8710.

134 "A Time of Testing for Black Caucus as Its Members Rise to Power in House," 27 April 1985, *National Journal*: 911.

135 Cohadas, "Black House Members Striving for Influence": 680.

136 See Fenno, *Going Home*: 106–109.

137 David Broder, "Ethics Committee Head Passes Colorblind Test," 17 April 1989, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*: 3B.

138 Richard Cohen, "New Breed for Black Caucus," 26 September 1987, *National Journal*: 2432.

139 For a discussion of the topic, see Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests*: 5–6, 207–225. For a countervailing viewpoint, see Kenny J. Whitby, *The Color of Representation: Congressional Behavior and Black Interests* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997): especially 135–144.

140 Ray Mosley, "Violence Disavowed by Rep. Dellums," 14 February 1971, *Washington Post*: 113.

141 Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down With the Lions*: 149–150.

142 Ibid., 175.

143 See Appendix F, Black-American Chairs of Subcommittees of Standing Committees in the U.S. House and Senate, 1885–2007.

144 Coleman, "Black Caucus Comes of Age."

145 Cohadas, "Black House Members Striving for Influence": 681.

146 Ruffin and Brown, "Clout on Capitol Hill": 102.

147 See Appendix I, Congressional Black Caucus Chairmen and Chairwomen, 1971–2007; Juliet Eilperin, "Black Caucus Taps Rep. Maxine Waters as New Chair; First Woman Since 1979," 21 November 1996, *Roll Call*: 18.

148 For more on changing southern representation in the late 20th-century Congresses, see Nelson Polsby, *How Congress Evolves: Social Bases of Institutional Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

149 Jeremy Derfner, 27 March–10 April 2000, *The American Prospect*: 16. In his autobiography, Dellums discusses the growing diversity of the CBC during the 1990s and also reflects upon an incident in which he mistakenly assumed the CBC would back one of his proposals based on past experience. Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down With the Lions*: 117–121.

150 For example, while the CBC as a group publicly denounced the controversial North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in 1993, nine members of the caucus voted in favor of the measure. Eight House Members from the CBC voted in favor of NAFTA in addition to the lone black Senator, Carol Moseley-Braun. See Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 183.

151 Dellums and Halterman, *Lying Down With the Lions*: 120.

152 For more on the CBC's relationship with President Clinton, see Singh, *The Congressional Black Caucus*: 178–192. Clinton's nearly 1,000-page memoirs contain no substantive policy discussion or debate involving the CBC. See Bill Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004).

153 Ronald A. Taylor, "Congressional Black Caucus Displays Growing Clout," 13 September 1993, *Washington Times*: A10; Adam Clymer, "Black Caucus Threatens Revolt on Clinton Budget," 10 June 1993, *New York Times*: A22; "The Black Caucus," 16 July 1993, *Christian Science Monitor*: 18. See also, for example, Brent Staples, "Wanted: A Million Black Republicans," 21 June 1993, *New York Times*: A18; Max Boot, "Black Caucus Feels Left Out of Clinton Plans," 30 June 1993, *Christian Science Monitor*: 1; Michael Wines, "Democrats Expect Tight Budget Vote," 26 July 1993, *New York Times*: A12.

154 John E. Yang, "Black Caucus Adjusts to New Political Scene," 23 September 1995, *Washington Post*: A15.

155 Smith, *We Have No Leaders: African Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era*: 211–225, quotation on page 222.

156 For instance, in the 103rd Congress (1993–1995), after the landmark 1992 elections brought a record number of 40 blacks to the House, African Americans constituted 15 percent of the House Democrats. In the following Congress, the 41 black Representatives accounted for 20 percent of the Democratic Caucus. These totals reflect the largest number of blacks serving at any one time during a Congress, not the total that served during the Congress. See Mildred Amer, "Black Members of the United States Congress, 1870–2007," 27 September 2007, Report RL30378, CRS.

157 For an early example of such analysis, see Alan Gerber, "African Americans' Congressional Careers and the Democratic House Delegation," *The Journal of Politics* 58 (August 1996): 831–845.

158 See for example, Office of History and Preservation, *Women in Congress, 1917–2006*: 3–5, 340–341, 546–547. Some outside critics of this transformation implied that the process amounted to a cooptation that marginalized the interests of the black community. Political scientist Robert C. Smith concluded in the mid-1990s that, "The institutional norms and folkways of the House encourage exaggerated courtesy, compromise, deference, and above all loyalty to the institution. And the black members of Congress are probably more loyal to the House and their roles in it than they are to blacks." See Smith, *We Have No Leaders: African Americans in the Post-Civil Rights Era*: 225.

159 Eric Pianin, "Black Caucus Members Face Dilemma of Hill Loyalties," 23 September 1987, *Washington Post*: A1.

160 Pianin, "Black Caucus Members Face Dilemma of Hill Loyalties"; Kenworthy, "Congressional Black Caucus Facing New Circumstances After 20 Years."

161 Richard Simon and Nick Anderson, "Respected Lawmaker Julian Dixon Dies," 9 December 2000, *Los Angeles Times*: B1.

162 See, for example, the chapter titled, "A Conspiracy to Silence Dissent," in Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress 1870–1991*: 312–338. For more on the subject, see George D. Musgrove, "The Harassment of Black Elected Officials: Race, Party Realignment, and State Power in the Post-Civil Rights United States," Ph.D Dissertation, New York University, 2005.

163 Richard Sutch, "Table Ec1356–1370, Federal Prosecutions of Public Corruption: 1970–1996," in Carter et al., eds., *Historical Statistics of the United States, Volume 5: Governance and International Relations:* 331.

164 Gwen Ifill, "Black Officials: Probes and Prejudice—Is There a Double Standard for Bringing Indictments? The Jury's Still Out," 28 February 1988, *Washington Post*: A9.

165 Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991*: 314–337. For a countervailing viewpoint, see Ifill, "Black Officials: Probes and Prejudice."

166 Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991*: 82–83, 332–334. Of the accusations made against Powell, writes Clay, they "could have been leveled against every chairman of every full committee in the House of Representatives. He did no more, and no less, than any other in terms of exercising traditional legal privileges that accompanied the powerful position of committee chairman. His private life, including intimate relations with numerous and glamorous women, was routine activity for many members of Congress, committee chairmen or not."

167 "Were Black Office-Holders More Routinely Investigated During the '80s?" 19 December 1993, *Atlanta Daily World*: 5.

168 Clay, *Just Permanent Interests: Black Americans in Congress, 1870–1991*: 312–316, 335–337.

169 For the Juan Williams quote, see Charles J. Abbott, "Panel Says Smear Tactics Used to Discredit Black Politicians," 10 October 1987, *New Pittsburgh Courier*: 1. For "fishbowl" and "test tube," see Ifill, "Black Officials: Probes and Prejudice."

170 Indeed, from 1981 forward, when Democrats controlled the House Chamber (e.g., eight Congresses) African Americans have led the Standards of Official Conduct Committee for all but one Congress. The black chairs were Louis Stokes (1981–1985; 1991–1993), Julian Dixon (1985–1991), and Stephanie Tubbs Jones (2007 to present).

171 "The 22 Worst Offenders," 17 April 1992, *Los Angeles Times*: A18; "List of Members of the House of Representatives Who Acknowledge Having Written Checks on Insufficient Funds at the House Bank," 13 April 1992, Associated Press.

172 "House Check-Kiter List Official: 2 Names Missing from Panel's Record of Worst Abusers," 2 April 1992, *Chicago Tribune*: 6.

173 Morris, "African American Legislators": 379, 381; David T. Canon, *Race, Redistricting, and Representation: The Unintended Consequences of Black Majority Districts* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999): 1.

174 See, for instance, Carol Swain, "Black Members: Twentieth Century," in the *Encyclopedia of the United States Congress*, Volume 1, Donald Bacon et al. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995): 173–176.

175 Kenneth J. Cooper, "For Enlarged Congressional Black Caucus, a New Kind of Impact," 19 September 1993, *Washington Post*: A4. "The conscience of the House" was the self-described role of the CBC shortly after its establishment in 1971.

176 Roger K. Oden, "The Election of Carol Moseley-Braun in the U.S. Senate Race in Illinois," in *Race, Politics, and Governance in the United States*, Huey L. Perry, ed. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996): 47–61, quotation on page 57.

177 Huey L. Perry, "Introduction: An Analysis of Major Themes in the Concept of Deracialization," in *Race, Politics, and Governance in the United States*, Perry, ed.: 1–11, especially 4–5.

178 John Mercurio, "The Senate Color Barrier: Just Nine African-Americans Nominated in 20th Century," 8 November 1999, *Roll Call*: 13. The article relied on statistics compiled in a report on elected black officials by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies. For more on this phenomenon and possible explanations, see Linda F. Williams, "White/Black Perceptions of Electability of Black Political Candidates," *The National Political Science Review* 2 (1990): 45–64; and Gerber, "African Americans' Congressional Careers and the Democratic House Delegation": 833.

179 Brooke, *Bridging the Divide: My Life*: 305.

180 For a brief overview of Shaw v. Reno, see Kermit Hall, ed., *The Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court of the United States*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 913.

181 Linda Greenhouse, "The Supreme Court: Congressional Districts—Justices, in 5–4 Vote, Reject Districts Drawn with Race the 'Predominant Factor'; New Voting Rules," 30 June 1995, *New York Times*: A1. For a brief overview of Miller v. Johnson, see Hall, *The Oxford Companion to the Supreme Court of the United States*: 637.

182 For concise annual summaries of redistricting cases, see *Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1995* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1996): 12-3–5, 6-39–40; *Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1996* (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1997): 5-48–50.

183 The clustering of black votes has electoral repercussions for the major parties, irrespective of their stated ideological preferences. For instance, particularly in the South during the 1980s and 1990s, Democrats lost seats in districts coterminous with black majority districts, when redistricting had shifted sizeable minority populations from their old districts into the new borders of black majority districts. "Thus," explains political scientist David T. Canon, "Republicans tend to oppose the districts on principle, but quietly support them for political reasons, while many white Democrats support the districts in principle but privately hope they will be abolished." See Canon, *Race, Redistricting, and Representation*: 5; Bernard Grofman, ed., *Race And Redistricting in the 1990s* (NY: Agathon Press, 1998).

184 Sean Wilentz, "The Last Integrationist: John Lewis's American Odyssey," 1 July 1996, *The New Republic*: 19–26; Canon, *Race, Redistricting, and Representation*: 5.

185 Some analysts believe the numbers may already have peaked. Political scientist Carol Swain has observed problems arising from the concentration of the black population in majority-black districts, particularly as the voting-age populations in these districts decline. That factor and the natural population level of African Americans create a ceiling that prevents greater gains. See, for instance, Swain, "Black Members: Twentieth Century": 175–176; see also Swain, *Black Faces, Black Interests:* 207–225. For the 2003 figures (the most recent available) on state legislator demographics, see the National Conference of State Legislators Web site at http://www.ncsl.org/programs/legismgt/about/afrAmer.htm (accessed 11 December 2007).

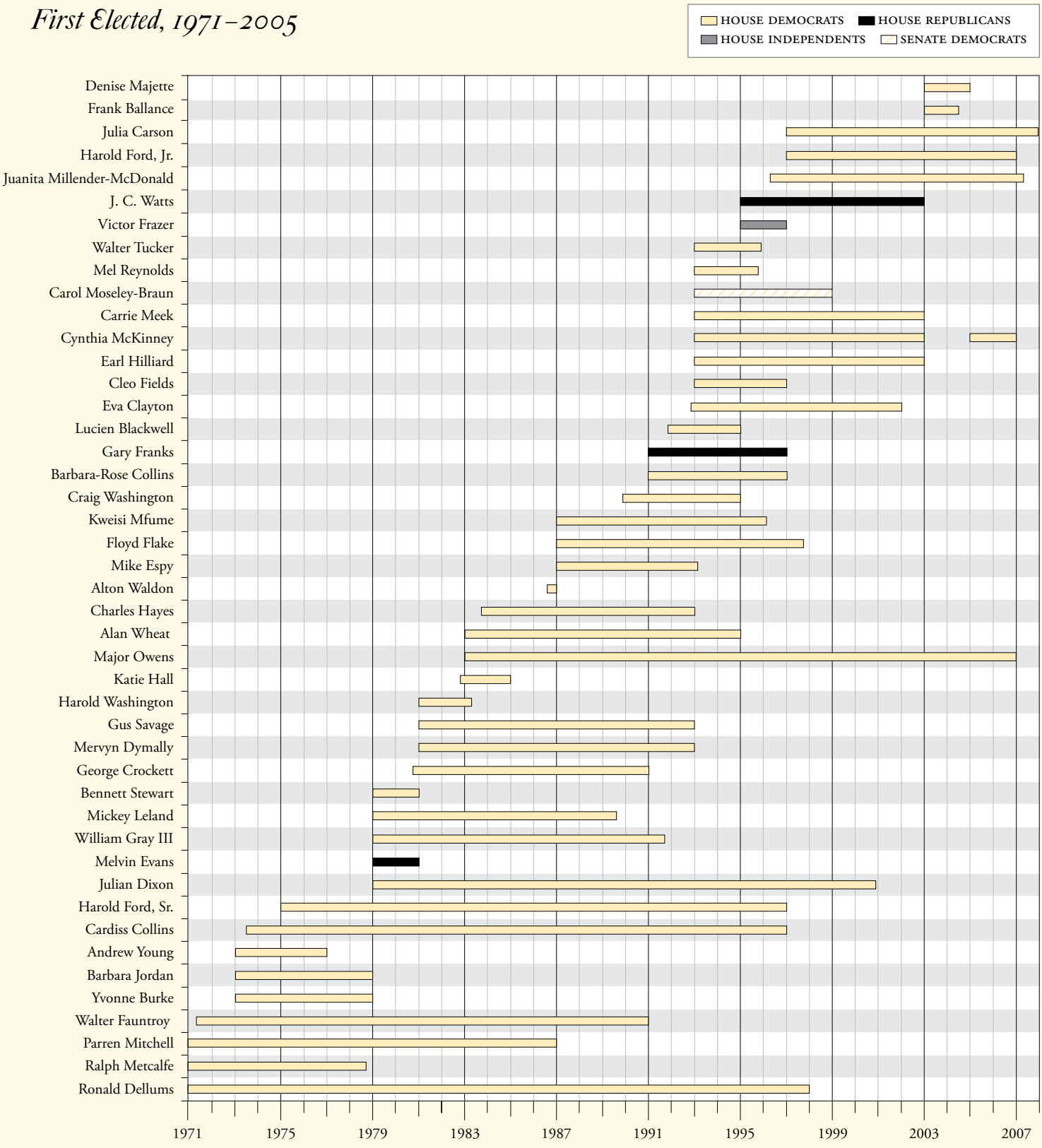
186 Morris, "African American Legislators": 383.

187 This figure includes Juanita Millender-McDonald, who led the House Administration Committee from January 2007 until her death in April 2007. The percentage of African Americans in Congress holding committee leadership positions far exceeded that of women in committee leadership. For instance, women chaired six full committees and 28 subcommittees in the House and Senate combined at the start of the 110th Congress. With 90 women combined in both chambers, this constituted 38 percent in committee leadership posts. Smaller minority groups in the 110th Congress compared favorably to black Members in this regard. Of the 27 Hispanic Americans in the House and Senate, 15 held full and subcommittee gavels (55.5 percent). An equal percentage of Asian-Pacific Islander Americans (five of the nine) combined held committee leadership positions in both chambers.

188 Canon, *Race, Redistricting, and Representation*: 3, 261–264; see also Perry, "Introduction: An Analysis of Major Themes in the Concept of Deracialization": 1–11.

★ VISUAL STATISTICS V ★

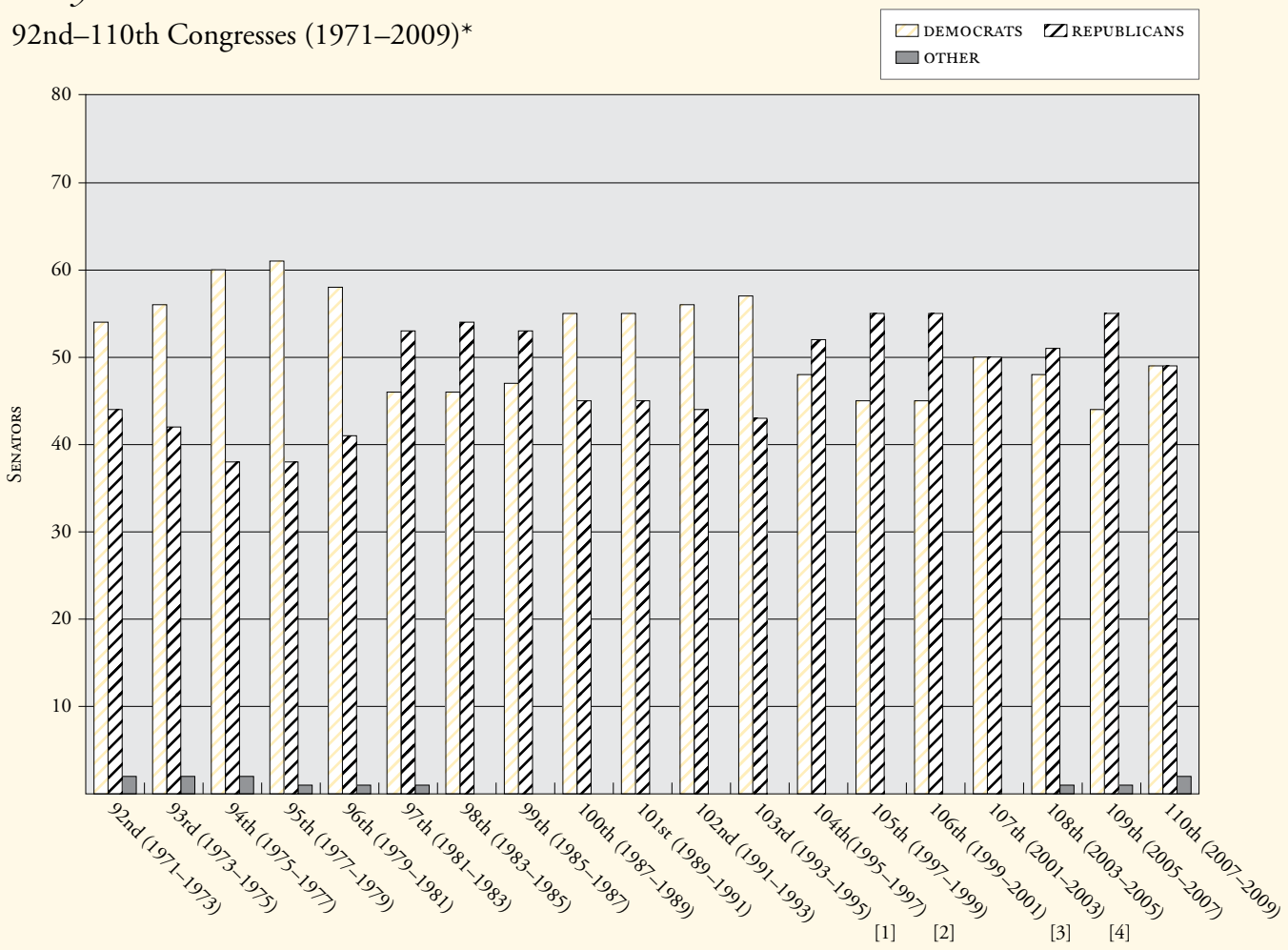
Congressional Service for Former Black Members First Elected, 1971–2005



Source: *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774–2005* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2005); also available at http://bioguide.congress.gov.

Party Divisions in the Senate

92nd–110th Congresses (1971–2009)*



*110th Congress through December 31, 2007.

[1] Party division changed to 56 Democrats and 44 Republicans after the June 5, 1993, election of Kay B. Hutchison (R-TX).

[2] Party ratio changed to 53 Republicans and 47 Democrats after Richard Shelby of Alabama switched from the Democratic to Republican Party on November 9, 1994. It changed again, to 54 Republicans and 46 Democrats, when Ben Nighthorse Campbell of Colorado switched from the Democratic to Republican Party on March 3, 1995. When Robert Packwood (R-OR) resigned on October 1, 1995, the Senate divided between 53 Republicans and 46 Democrats with one vacancy. Ron Wyden (D) returned the ratio to 53 Republicans and 47 Democrats when he was elected to fill the vacant Oregon seat.

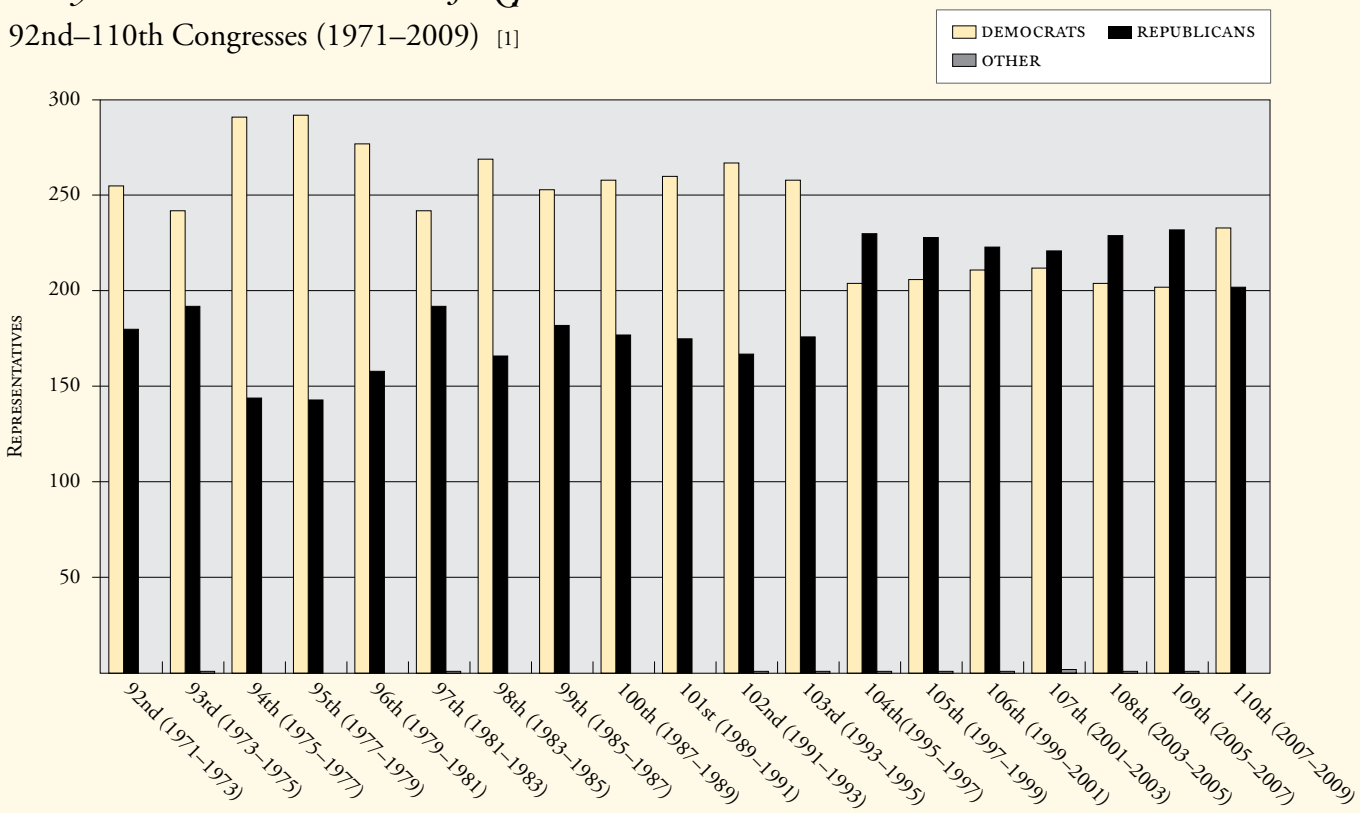
[3] As the 106th Congress began, the division was 55 Republican seats and 45 Democratic seats, but this changed to 54-45 on July 13, 1999, when Senator Bob Smith of New Hampshire switched from the Republican Party to Independent status. On November 1, 1999, Smith announced his return to the Republican Party, making the division once more 55 Republicans and 45 Democrats. Following the death of Senator Paul Coverdell (R-GA) on July 18, 2000, the balance shifted again, to 54 Republicans and 46 Democrats, when the governor appointed Zell Miller, a Democrat, to fill the vacancy.

[4] From January 3 to January 20, 2001, with the Senate divided evenly between the two parties, the Democrats held the majority due to the deciding vote of outgoing Democratic Vice President Al Gore. Senator Thomas A. Daschle served as majority leader at that time. Beginning on January 20, 2001, Republican Vice President Richard Cheney held the deciding vote, giving the majority to the Republicans. Senator Trent Lott resumed his position as Majority Leader on that date. On May 24, 2001, Senator James Jeffords of Vermont announced his switch from Republican to Independent status, effective June 6, 2001. Jeffords announced that he would caucus with the Democrats, giving the Democrats a one-seat advantage, changing control of the Senate from the Republicans back to the Democrats. Senator Thomas A. Daschle again became Majority Leader on June 6, 2001. Senator Paul D. Wellstone (D-MN) died on October 25, 2002, and Independent Dean Barkley was appointed to fill the vacancy. The November 5, 2002 election brought to office elected Senator James Talent (R-MO), replacing appointed Senator Jean Carnahan (D-MO), shifting balance once again to the Republicans, but no reorganization was completed at that time since the Senate was out of session.

Source: U.S. Senate Historical Office.

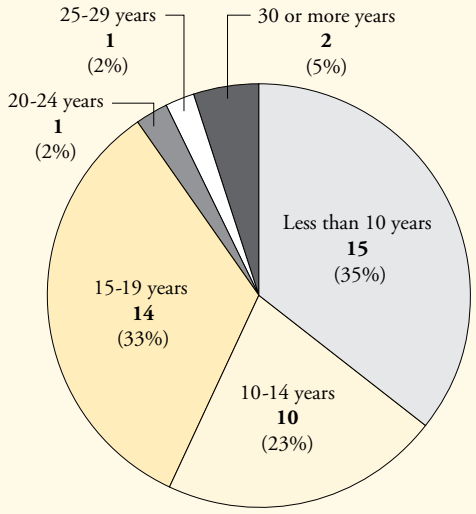
Party Divisions in the House of Representatives

92nd–110th Congresses (1971–2009) [1]



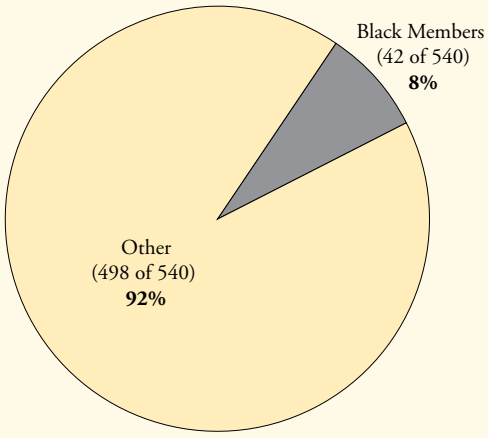
Length of Service of Current Black Members of Congress

(42 Individuals as of December 31, 2007) [2]



Black Americans as a Percentage of Congress, 110th Congress (2007–2009)

as of December 31, 2007 [3]



[1] Does not include Delegates or Resident Commissioners; 110th Congress through December 31, 2007.

[2] Including Delegates.

[3] Including Delegates and Resident Commissioners.

Source: Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives.