

Social Equity LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE



JUNE 5 - 7, 2013 - NC STATE UNIVERSITY, RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

Leadership

Reading the Fine Print: Analyzing Recent Legislative Impacts on Minority Communities in Virginia

Thursday 11:00 am; Panel 1

Susan T. Gooden
Daphne Bryan
Ashley Chapman
Dawn Lawson

Abstract: The Minority Political Leadership Institute is a collaborative initiative of the Virginia Legislative Black Caucus Foundation and the Grace E. Harris Leadership Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University. Designed for participants interested in leadership issues facing underserved communities, the program offers insights and concepts regarding personal leadership, policy and legislative processes to cultivate a deeper understanding of legacy, responsible stewardship, public service and integrity for future leaders. The focus of this panel is the racial impact analysis of legislation from the 2012 Virginia General Assembly. The purpose of this analysis is to examine how specific legislation promotes or reduces racial/ethnic disparities on minority communities within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The project team focus areas include HB 462 Abortion Informed Consent, HB 869/SB 274 Urban Development Area, and HB9 Voting Procedures.

Virginia House Bill 462: Abortion Informed Consent Legislation

The house bill 462 requires that, as a component of informed consent to an abortion, every pregnant female must undergo transabdominal ultrasound imaging and be given an opportunity to view the ultrasound image of her fetus prior to the abortion. The ultrasound is not required if the woman is the victim of rape or incest and the incident was reported to law enforcement. Our analysis demonstrates that the added expense created by this law creates a disparity in health care as it relates to access to all aspects of family planning for Black and Hispanic women who are disproportionately the working poor in Virginia and whose children also disproportionately live in poverty. This law is an example of the institutionalization and legitimization of inequity and lack of access to care for at-risk communities.

Virginia House Bill 869 and Senate Bill 274: Urban Development Area

Our paper analyzes and explores the political history of Virginia House Bill 869 and Senate Bill 274 which make the development of Urban Development Areas optional rather than mandatory in Virginia's localities. Smart Growth policies are known to positively impact the environment but they also positively impact low-income and minority communities by increasing access to housing, transportation and ultimately jobs. The story behind Urban Development Areas in the Commonwealth is one of politics and regulation but issues as critical as housing, transportation and job access should be focused much more on the citizens of the Commonwealth. The friction created by the UDA policy between the localities and the state has the potential to spark a statewide conversation about land use and more importantly - the need for people-centered solutions to a sprawling problem. Addressing sprawl addresses the issue of access to resources and the tools minority communities need for upward mobility. It can be surmised that by not requiring localities to create these areas of focused growth there will continue to be a disparate impact on minority communities in Virginia relative to transportation, housing and employment.

HB9 Voting Procedures

House Bill 9 was introduced in early 2012 by two Republican Delegates in the Virginia General Assembly. The bill states that a voter who is unable to present one of the forms of ID may sign a sworn statement that he/she is the named registered voter he/she claims to be and then be allowed to vote a provisional ballot. The current law allows such a voter to cast an official ballot rather than a provisional one after signing such statement. We will attempt to show, through careful research, the adverse impact that the passage of this bill has across racial lines. Whether or not this factor was known at the time of proposal, its passage is sure to make the basic right and civic duty of voting a bit more difficult for a wide swath of the Virginia populace who is disproportionately a part of the minority class. We intend to make the argument that current and future legislation in the Commonwealth should take into account the impact bills have on minority communities to make sure that they neither limit nor discourage participation in this great democracy.