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Raphael Saadiq : Soul Survivor

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SUNO's Past, Present and Future



Dr. Joseph Bouie, Ph. D.



Jeffrey Paul May, MURP

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SUNO and Black New Orleans

It's Past, Present and Future



The tradition of SUNO's Commencement Exercises shown above, may be lost forever with Gov. Jindal's merger proposal. Many fear the long-term impact can affect the future of the Black middle-class of New Orleans."

By Edwin Buggage

Southern University at New Orleans 1959-?

As the fervor regarding the merger of SUNO and UNO has reached a fever pitch, and what was once a local and state issue has become a national concern. People are weighing in from all over the country and becoming involved in something that is dividing the city along racial lines. Recently, the Rev. Jesse Jackson spoke at a rally regarding SUNO'S future. Lawsuits have been filed and people are speaking out on both sides.

Since opening its doors in 1959 during the tumultuous times of the social upheaval of the Civil Rights Movement it has been a safe haven for African-American students seeking an education in a public university in New Orleans. Many of those who comprise the middle class (in) and assumed positions of leadership have walked through the doors of SUNO, as it has served as their bridge to securing their future. Today with the proposal of Governor Bobby Jindal the legacy of this sacred institution is in jeopardy.

SUNO and its Future in Black and White

Jeffrey May is a graduate of both SUNO and UNO; he feels that the mission and purpose of SUNO is one that needs to be preserved. "SUNO is a nurturing environment with a dedicated staff and faculty that understands the needs of their students, understanding that they are individuals and not simply just another number as is the case at UNO," remarks May one of the many positive aspects of attending SUNO.

People are speaking out as this has become an issue that has dominated news coverage in newspapers, television and talk radio. Also these conversations are taking place in the one arena where people from all walk of life come together to talk about issues in the Black community, the barbershop. On this day as I sat in Mr. Chill's First Class Cut's a heated conversation takes place about the fate of SUNO. While a young man named Greg is sitting in the chair getting a haircut says, "Why should we have Black schools anyway? While an older gentleman called Rev. confronts him and says, "In those days it was necessary because this was the only way we could get opportunities

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for education and today it is still relevant that we have these institutions especially now as we see after Hurricane Katrina what seems like a White takeover of the city.”

The words of Rev. resonates with some in the community who see that things are changing in a city where majority White areas are thriving and many African-American neighborhoods are being



Jeffrey Paul May, MURP

neglected and ignored. May who is a fair housing advocate and activist sees the SUNO merger proposition as part of a larger problem in the city that long-term impact can affect the future of the Black middle-class of New Orleans, “SUNO is the one place that historically has trained many teachers, social workers and people in many other fields that have added to this city and if SUNO is merged or closed it would have a major long-term impact on the Black middle-class of New Orleans.”

In much of the discussions about the future of SUNO and its students what have been left out of the discussion are its faculty and staff and the historic mission of the school, what will happen to the faculty, staff and administration? What will happen to a university that is one that employs many Black professionals and train future ones? Where will these people be placed in this new educational configuration if the two schools are to merge and who or what will fill this void?

SUNO and Black New Orleans It's Past, Present and Future

As the city's fate is lying in the balance one must ask the serious questions has the days waned on New Orleans as a city with a Black presence. Dr. Joseph Bouie is a Professor in the School of Social Work, President of the Faculty Senate and former Chancellor at SUNO; and provides a unique perspective on the merger proposal. “Much of what the governor is basing his logic on is faulty, for example, he spoke of fiscal issues and accountability, and a study was done that showed that there would be no significant savings through merging SUNO and UNO.”

On the fiscal side he says SUNO actually is a good investment for the city and state moving forward, “For every dollar the state spends on SUNO there is a seven-to-one return,” according to Bouie. He also points out that SUNO has more flexible schedules to accommodate students who desire a four year degree, “We are a university where forty

percent of our students are non-traditional that means they are 25 years or older and our course offerings give many people who would not be able to attend school the chance to pursue a four year degree.”

Continuing he says of the African-American population in New Orleans who has earned Bachelor's Degree's 52% of those was from SUNO. And if SUNO were merged it would have a devastating impact on the Black middle-class of New Orleans. “While there are other HBCU's in the city many of their students are from outside the state that leave upon graduation, and SUNO graduates tend to

stay in the city and use their degrees to contribute to the betterment of the city.”

As SUNO after the experience of Katrina something that devastated its campus, today still is holding many of its classes in trailers; Bouie says this stall tactic is a way to attempt to eliminate SUNO who has according to Bouie, 92 Million Dollars that FEMA has allocated to SUNO for repairs that is being held up in Baton Rouge. “There are monies that can help us rebuild, but my question is what is the hold up, SUNO is a viable institution that serves a need for our community and deserves to remain open and rebuilt better than before.”

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Seventeenth Annual NDF House Party Raises Dollars To Educate Perspective Residents On Homeownership



NDF CEO, Fred J. Johnson, Jolene Ryan, (wife of Ashton Ryan) First NBC Bank, President & CEO Ashton J. Ryan, Jr.



NDF Board Chairman, Mike Scott, NDF CEO, Fred J. Johnson, Jr. & NDF Board Member Bobby Major, III



House Party Event Chairs, Entergy N.O., Inc. President & CEO, Charles Rice, Jr., AT&T Louisiana, President, Sonia Perez, President & CEO First NBC Bank, Ashton J. Ryan, Jr. & NDF CEO Fred J. Johnson, Jr.



NDF Board Member, Mark Boucree, Jr., Gulf Coast Housing Partnership & NDF Founders Award Winner, Kathy Laborde, & NDF Board Member, Craig Silva



Left to right (front row) NDF Staff Rosalind Washington, Tiffany McQuirter, Michele Robinson, Fred Johnson, Kim Washington, Michelle Nicholas. Left to right (back row) Patricia Fortenberry, Pebbles Martin & Michael Heaney

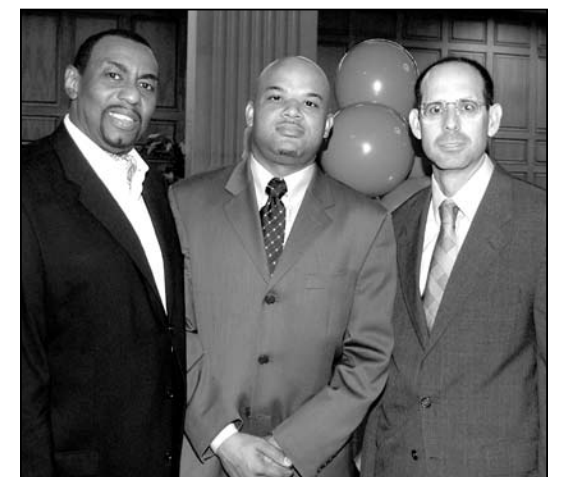
The 1927 Historic lobby of First NBC Bank was transformed from a place to do banking to a location for a housing party with a purpose. First NBC Bank President and CEO Ashton J. Ryan Jr., who also serves as a NDF Board Member donated the 210 Baronne Street Greek Revival Structure for the event.

The 17th annual Neighborhood Development Foundation "House Party" was the place to be Saturday, March 26, 2011. A cross sector of New Orleans came together to have a great time while raising money at the same time.

Local businessman and philanthropist, Ed Marshall who owns his own public relations agency reinforces a comment that's read daily on the NDF website. "This organization is definitely a force that is working for all of us." Marshall, who is also the treasurer of NDF, went on to say that NDF is an economic engine like no other in the city. It converts life-long renters, modest resources, and ready houses into entire neighborhoods of new and happy homeowners. The ripple effect (s) of these new homeowners are seen in the form of renovation and construction of new homes, improved neighborhoods, and stabilized families.

NDF Chairman Mizell Scott, who is also an executive with Region's Bank, added that NDF is "Jazzing up New Orleans" through its home ownership programs and having a positive effect on the community in countless ways. Home ownership is one of the most rewarding and challenging experiences most of us ever have. NDF helps people achieve this experience. You can hear and feel the good sounds home ownership makes throughout the city, as NDF continues to help people "Own A Piece of New Orleans!"

Residents interested in becoming first time homeowners can contact NDF at its new office located in Central City across from the 6th District Police Department at 504-488-0155, the NDF website or stop by the NDF office.



NDF Board Member, Ed Marshall, NOLA Copy & Print, LLC, Small Business Award Winner, Percy Merchand, NDF Board Member, Leon Rittenberg, III

City Closes 3 Playgrounds Due To Lead Contamination

At Least 8 More Need To Be Treated



Workers at the Annunciation Park on Race Street close off access to the playground. Tests indicated that Annunciation Park, the Danneel Playspot on St. Charles Avenue and Taylor Park on South Roman were the parks with the highest lead levels.

City of New Orleans officials said they are shutting down three playgrounds because of lead contamination, and at least eight more will also need to be treated for lead in the paint and soil.

According to tests, the three parks with the highest lead levels are the Danneel Playspot on St. Charles Avenue, Taylor Park on South Roman and Annunciation Park on Race Street. (PDF: Lead Testing Grids)

The tests show 11 out of 13 city playgrounds have lead, but the three with the highest will be fenced off for the next six weeks while remediation takes place.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency soil standard is 400 milligrams of lead per kilo-

gram. There were 67 to 890 milligrams at Danneel, 440 to 650 milligrams at Annunciation and 260 to 1,100 milligrams at Taylor, tests showed.

"Crews are going to cordon off the play spot areas where there is playground equipment and there is bare soil around," said Dr. Karen Desalvo, the City's Health Commissioner.

The city will spend \$30,000 at Danneel, \$16,000 at Taylor and \$7,500 at Annunciation.

Eight others will also be treated for lead. Those are Easton, Van McMurray, Hunter's Field, Burke, Lemann II, Stallings Center, Comiskey and Rreme Center.

City leaders suggested that children between the ages of 6

months and 6 years old get tested as a precaution. They warn that lead is in New Orleans soil because it is a historic city.

"But lead poisoning is preventable if you wash hands, wash clothes and are conscious about the fact that we could be exposed," Desalvo said.

Mickey Markey Park reopened earlier this month after remediation efforts. Crews removed contaminated soil and placed geotextile fabric over the old soil where lead levels were detected. Six inches of new soil and sod were then installed.

The city said signs and fencing will go up later this week. Representatives will also be speaking to neighborhood associations to help get the word out.

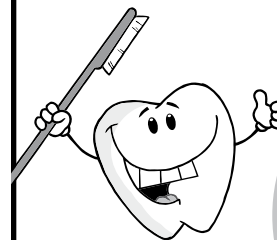
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Shoot Ya Best Shot!

Raphael Saadiq: Music's Soul Survivor



Raphael Saadiq with Data News Weekly Editor Edwin Buggage

By Edwin Buggage

As I reminisce about the days of classic soul of the 1960's and 70's. The soulful shots of Al Green or Marvin Gaye's marriage of sensuality and social consciousness to Curtis Mayfield's beautiful falsetto that became the soundtrack of a movement or Stevie Wonder proving that music can be made that is commercially viable, critically acclaimed and relevant. Then, I think about 1980's that brought about a new wave where Michael Jackson evolved from child star to become a global phenomenon changing the way people consumed music and His Royal Badness Prince challenging society's conventions with his musical gifts.

Since then many male singers have come and gone after being touted as the next big thing, experiencing their fifteen minutes of fame then fading into obscurity. A flame that in many instances flickered out as quickly as it caught afire. While the music landscape is littered with these artists, a few have been able to stay relevant in the music industry. Raphael Saadiq has since his days as front man of Tony! Toni! Tone! he's been on the frontlines as a top selling artist, songwriter and Grammy Award winning Producer "I have been able to stay relevant because I wear a lot of different hats," says Saadiq reflecting on his career.

After a recent stop in New Orleans where a capacity crowd went on a musical journey with Saadiq who gave a show that took the audience through fifty years of soul music. Saadiq's riveting performance took them on a walk down memory lane with his Stax, Motown influenced sound. His show was less a concert and more a soul revue. "While some people think what I am doing is new, it's really not," says Saadiq. "Continuing he says, "I have always drawn from the music that influenced me ever since I started being a musician," says Saadiq of his retro-soul sound.

Raphael Saadiq is slated to release his new album entitled, 'Stone Rollin' on April 18th it is a continuation of his homage to the musical icons of soul music, but he puts his own fresh spin on it that is vintage but yet contemporary. As he

moved into this direction musically his fan base has grown to include people of all ages and races across the globe, "I feel good making music that can bring people together and as they say it is a universal language, and anywhere you go in the world people are listening to soul music and I feel good my music is being received well by so many different types of people," says Saadiq.

Since his career has taken off he has always had a loyal following in New Orleans. On this evening several members of his band are New Orleans Musicians as are some who worked on his album. "The spirit of the people here are amazing, just knowing people from the city and how they have been able to survive has been an inspiration and lesson for me to get to know people and see their will to go on despite difficulties," he says of New Orleanians.

In a music industry that is changing Saadiq has found a way to stay in the game playing at the highest level. He says of new trends and technologies that have changed the music business is a good thing for independent artist, "Today it is wide open for artist to explore and experiment with the music they want to do and put it out there however they like, while some think it's a bad time for the recording industry I think it is a great time for artists who are using these new tools putting their music out there and being innovative in reaching record buyers."

Saadiq continues to be a force in the industry as he proved on this night. A musical veteran who gave a show that was sophisticated, sexy and soulful. Giving what is rare in the music industry today, an amazing performance that surpasses what is on the record. A throwback to the times of James Brown and Otis Redding when one can expect a great performance when someone hits the stage. Today this is not so much the case where packaging in many instances supersedes talent. Saadiq is the real deal in the studio and on the stage. He is a true soul man in the tradition of those that came before him and in an industry where true soul is in short supply, Raphael Saadiq is a survivor.



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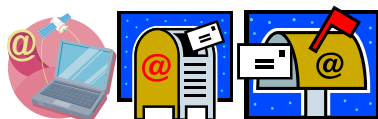
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BRW performs at Le Roux and Data was there!

BRW performed at Le Roux Supper Club and Banquet Hall on Friday, March 25th 2011. They will be performing again on Mother's Day, May 8th, mark your calendar. This phenomenal group will keep you entertained with their versatile voices and their energizing dance steps.

Photos by June Hazeur



Sean Randall Celebrates Her 45th Birthday



Sean Randall celebrates 45 years of life, love and happiness on Friday, March 25th at the Prime Example with family and friends. Photo by Terry Jones



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Viva La (Shopping) Différence!

By Cheryl McNeil Pearson

Who wears the (shopping) pants in your house? Ok, I know that was a really old school kind of question, but it got your attention, right? Unless you've lived under a rock, we all know that the definition of families and households is ever-evolving (Note the success of ABC's uber-popular, multiple award-winning "Modern Family," which features the gamut of non-traditional).

My employer, The Nielsen Company, which measures consumer trends and behaviors in almost every area of consumption around the globe, recently honed in on some major differences in the shopping "habits" of men and women. Fact is, in the United States, men are actually doing the food and household shopping more than ever before. (Now, this is really good news for someone like me who has done the grocery shopping as the head of my household for more than 20 years now. I keep hoping I'll meet a nice, eligible man in the produce section of my local grocery store. Hope springs eternal.) According to Nielsen Research, women still do the majority of shopping; but men are pulling up the rear. However, shopping behavior for men and women is a bit different. Women continue

to dominate shopping trips in all retail channels (grocery, super centers, warehouse clubs, dollar and drug) except convenience stores; but men have increased trip shares between 2004 and 2010 in all retail outlets but drug stores.

Nielsen Research also shows that women tend to be the biggest spenders per trip, which indicates that they handle the weekly planned shopping trips for their families. At grocery stores, women's basket totals average \$44.43 per trip; a man spends an average of \$34.81 per trip. However, although women rule shopping at dollar stores and warehouse clubs (72% versus 28%), we only spend \$3 - \$5 more per trip than men.

And, there are more interesting shopping stats. Did you know that Sunday is the most important shopping day of the week for both sexes, although Saturday is almost as important at warehouse club stores? That piece of information makes me wonder if I'm the only single person on the planet who thinks it's a good idea to do the grocery shopping on a Saturday night. (I think I am going to have to switch up my routine and maybe get a life.) Well, at least I'm in line with my demographics (women under 55), who shop mostly on the week-

ends. Women (and men) aged 55 and over spread their trips out more evenly over the course of the week.

While Nielsen Research does not predict that men will be the predominant shopper at the grocery store anytime soon, it is important for marketers to note the increase in male shopping activity. We can blame the increase in shopping on the economy. According to a February 2011 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Report, men face a higher unemployment rate than women (8.8% compared to 7.9%). That means more men are staying at home than in the past, and in many cases are becoming more engaged in managing the day-to-day household duties. Because of our new economic reality, manufacturers and marketers are going to have to re-evaluate traditional ads, circulars and other promotional materials. One major consumer-packaged-goods manufacturer has already developed a site targeting male homemakers. Others will surely follow suit because, as always, it's all about how and where your valuable consumer dollars are spent.

One area where the sexes are pretty much running neck and neck is in online shopping. More Nielsen Research shows

that almost three-fourths of women (72%) and more than two-thirds of men (68%) shopped online in the past 30 days. Consumers of both sexes between age 35 and 54 had the highest level of online shopping activity (74%), which makes sense because younger consumers have traditionally been the ones most on the cutting edge of technology. However, those numbers for online and mobile activity among seniors will increase as Baby Boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964), who are comfortable with technology, age. The oldest Boomers this year started turning 65 and a number of retailers are already using their websites to target senior citizens with special online promotions, clubs that offer discounts and an array of other attractive features. As for me, I have a fabulous marketing idea. How about turning the "Meat Market or Department" into the "Meet Market?" Especially on Saturday nights, say between 9 p.m. and 10 p.m.? I know of at least one single Black female who is usually there.

Cheryl Pearson-McNeil is the Senior Vice President of Public Affairs and Government Relations for The Nielsen Company. For more information and studies go to www.nielsenwire.com

Reform New Orleans Police



Judge Greg Mathis
NNPA Columnist

Mathis' Mind

One of the primary functions of a city is to keep its citizens safe and secure. If it fails on that front, and residents are unable to carry out their daily activities because they are afraid for their lives and, in some cases, leery of the police themselves, it is very hard for that city to function. Such is the case in New Orleans.

The United States Justice Department spent 10 months investigating the city's police department, at the mayor's request, and discovered a deeply dysfunctional and corrupt system, one that regularly abuses its power and the city's residents.

New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu contacted federal officials just after he took office, making good on a campaign promise to clean up the Crescent City's long dirty police department. The first step? Figuring out just how widespread the problem actually was.

The investigation uncovered some shocking truths about the New Orleans Police Department, truths that reek of racial profiling and discrimination. For every one White person that is arrested in the city, 16 Blacks are arrested, and calls for police assistance by non-English speakers were often unanswered.

But, the troubling news doesn't stop there. Reports of the use of excessive force by officers are widespread and the department has been accused of failing to investi-

gate serious crimes.

So what's next for the N.O.P.D? How does this troubled department 'make it right'? Obviously, city officials can't be trusted to do this alone; they've dropped the ball for far too long. Federal oversight is necessary to help clean up the department and manage it until it proves it can

manage itself properly.

New Orleans has made great progress since Hurricane Katrina roared in, causing billions in damages and taking thousands of lives. But the city, with all of its history and culture, cannot be truly great – or say it has rebounded – until its police department gets on the right side of the law.



Rep. Maxine Waters, Legislator and Activist on HIV/AIDS in the Black Community

By Nick Chiles
Special to the NNPA

One of the most prominent and effective African-American Members of Congress, Rep. Maxine Waters (D-CA), has long been a fighter against the spread of HIV/AIDS in the African-American community and a strong advocate for the rights and care of individuals with HIV/AIDS. Given the tremendous challenges facing our nation at a time of great possibility for people with HIV/AIDS, we asked Waters, former Chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, to share her views.

What concerns do you have about how the challenges to health reform might affect people with HIV/AIDS?

Health disparities like HIV/AIDS, heart disease, cancer, diabetes, etc., for people of color are getting worse, and more and more people are going without health insurance. That's why the Affordable Care Act, also known as the Health-Care Reform Law, specifically addresses these disparities and other pre-existing conditions and makes it illegal to be denied health insurance because of them. We cannot allow the Health-Care Reform Law to be repealed, and part of the reason I voted against repeal was because the Affordable Care Act will help lessen health disparities, including those related to HIV/AIDS.

Moving forward, I'm encouraged that the President announced a National HIV/AIDS Strategy last year, with the three primary goals of reducing the number of new infections, increasing access to care for people living with HIV, and reducing HIV-related health disparities. A national strategy is something that's long overdue and something I've long called for, and I urge everyone not only to get behind it but to financially support it 150 percent. Again, ideals are one thing, but securing adequate funding to make those ideals come true is something else.

What deciding moment occurred in your life that made you become committed to this issue?

Well, for years I had been troubled by the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in our community and among women, homosexual men, and other communities of color. Even though African-Americans



U.S. Representative Maxine Waters (D) CA

are about 12 percent of the population, we're almost half of all HIV/AIDS cases! Taken together, two-thirds of all HIV/AIDS cases involve minorities. That kind of disparity indicates a crisis, and as Chairwoman of the Congress-

sional Black Caucus in the late 1990s, I got Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala to publicly say so after asking her about the disease's impact on the African-American community.

From that admission, I began

work to create the Minority AIDS Initiative. It wasn't easy, but this was a top priority for me. I held and attended many meetings, hearings, and programs with activists, academics, patients, and government officials to paint a broad but compelling narrative: The Black community was being torn apart by HIV/AIDS, and many other communities of color were not fairing much better.

The Minority AIDS Initiative provides grants to community-based organizations and other health-care providers for HIV/AIDS awareness, treatment and prevention programs serving African-American, Hispanic, Asian American and Native American communities. It also enables health-care providers serving minority communities to expand their capacity to deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate care and services.

I was proud to announce a \$156 million funding formula for the initiative in 1998, and since 2003 I have repeatedly secured about \$400 million for the initiative. Of course, we're facing a time of extreme budget austerity, but in fiscal year 2011, I was joined by 56 of my colleagues in requesting \$610

million.

What HIV-related advocacy are you involved in on Capitol Hill?

I advocate for the Minority AIDS Initiative in Congress each year, and I usually like to get tested in public on Capitol Hill or in Los Angeles so others can join in and see how effortless it is. I also have some legislation from previous Congresses that hasn't made it into law yet, and which I plan to reintroduce: the Routine HIV Screening Coverage Act, which would require health-insurance plans to cover routine HIV tests under the same terms and conditions as other routine health screenings; and the Stop AIDS in Prison Act, which the House of Representatives passed in March 2009, which requires the Bureau of Prisons to test all federal-prison inmates for HIV upon entering prison and again prior to release from prison, (and) provide HIV/AIDS-prevention education for all inmates and give comprehensive treatment to inmates who test positive.

Nick Chiles is a prize-winning journalist and author who lives in Georgia. Read more about him at chilmill.com.

NNPA > AIDS
greaterthan.org

New Orleans gets ready for Jazz Fest 2011

Press Conference On Festival Held this week



John Legend

The countdown to the 2011 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival has started.

Festival officials, and Mayor Mitch Landrieu, held a kickoff press conference Wednesday to discuss this year's plans for the festival, which draws hundreds

of thousands of people to the city each spring.

This event will be held over two weekends - April 29-May 1 and May 5-8 - at the Fair Grounds Race Course.

Headliners this year include John Legend and The Roots,

Wyclef Jean, Kid Rock, Willie Nelson, Lauryn Hill, Wilco, The Avett Brothers, Cyndi Lauper, Fantasia, Lupe (Loo'-pay) Fiasco and Jimmy Buffett. And as is tradition, the Neville Brothers are scheduled to close out the festival on Sunday, May 8.

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Inmates' Added Burden: "Pay to Stay" Fees

By Kenneth J. Cooper
thedefendersonline.com

NNPA Newswire - Inmates in prisons and jails, even minor offenders, are finding they not only have to do the time, but they have to pay—for booking, rent, routine medical care, and even electronic monitoring once they are released. Most states have long authorized penal officials to charge those and other fees, but the current budget crunch on state and local governments is making more adopt the controversial practice.

Few legal obstacles stand in the way of requiring inmates to "pay to stay," though a federal court has found fees imposed on suspects jailed while awaiting trial in Ohio violated their due process rights and the highest court in Massachusetts ruled last year that state laws do not permit a county sheriff to charge for rent, health care, and GED exams.

Supporters say jail fees relieve a financial burden on taxpayers and accustom offenders to behaving in a responsible way. But, prisoners' rights advocates say the fees wind up being paid by relatives, make prisoners who have money targets for hostile extortion, and can cost more to collect than they yield in revenue.

Whatever financial relief may be provided to governments, racial and ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected because they are overrepresented in prisons and jails.

A study by the National Institute of Corrections, part of the Justice Department, found that Michigan in 1982 passed the first law requiring state prisoners to make co-payments for medical care. By 1997, at least 41 states allowed jails to charge fees for a variety of services rendered to inmates.

No one knows for sure how many of the more than 3,200 jails run by counties and cities charge their inmates, who have either committed relatively minor offenses or who are confined while awaiting trial. But, another institute study in 2005 suggests fees are popular at the nation's largest jails, though the researchers acknowledged their survey sample may not be representative.

Jails raised the most money from daily rent, which was commonly \$20 but ranged from a dollar to \$60, the 2005 study found. (One jail in Ohio charges almost \$70, according to a 2010 report



by the American Civil Liberties Union). The second biggest source of revenue was from inmates who do have regular jobs outside jail while on work release.

The American Jails Association has listed a proliferation of fees for other services, including telephone calls, drug tests, substance abuse treatments, attorney and library visits, secure transportation to court appearances, and laundry.

Perhaps because of their revenue-generating potential, jail room charges appear to be growing in popularity, particularly in the Midwest. A Google search found new or increased rents have been considered or adopted so far this year in counties in Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio. Summit County, Ohio, where Akron is located, has debated a \$100 booking fee and an unspecified room charge.

The 1997 survey of states, which appears to be the most recent done, showed only seven had held out against the trend: Arkansas, Massachusetts, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah, and Vermont. Researchers found no information on state laws in Alaska and Louisiana. Washington, D.C. did not impose jail fees, nor did federal prisons.

In Massachusetts, the legislature last year established a special commission to study setting fees for jail inmates after Republican lawmakers unsuccessfully pushed bills to adopt the practice in the financially-pressed state.

The issue came to public attention there in 2004 when a county judge stopped a Republican sheriff in southeastern Massachusetts from collecting \$5 a day for what

he called "custodial care" as a matter of "inmate responsibility." The judge in Bristol County, where the depressed fishing port of New Bedford is located and a third of jail inmates are Black or Hispanic, also halted two years of collection of \$5 per medical and dental visit, for eyeglasses or a haircut; \$3 for prescription drugs; and \$12.50 for taking the GED exam.

A year ago, the state's Supreme Judicial Court upheld that decision, ruling that state law does not allow county sheriffs to charge fees for rent or health care, and limits the price of an inmate haircut to \$1.50. Under a settlement, a total of \$830,000, including interest, is to be refunded to 4,500 former inmates—if they can be found.

A Republican State Representative, Elizabeth Poirier, has for several years filed legislation to authorize the state's sheriffs to adopt a fee schedule similar to the one unlawfully imposed by Sheriff Thomas M. Hodgson in Bristol County. She says her latest version would exempt indigent inmates—if they remained out of incarceration for two years after their release.

"Five dollars a day is a small amount," Poirier says. "In these hard economic times, why should these individuals be a greater burden than they should be?"

She maintains many offenders "enter prison with great sums of money and put it in their account," so paying would not become the responsibility of their families.

But, James Pingeon, a Boston lawyer with Prisoners Legal Services who filed the successful lawsuit, says the payments did usually fall on families because unlike inmates in state prisons, those in Bristol County jails "don't have jobs, so they don't get paid."

Those inmates with access to funds, Pingeon says, faced strong-arming by other inmates to pay

the fees for them. He also disputed the argument that the charges promote personal responsibility among offenders. "It doesn't, if you're sitting in jail asking your mother to pay for your stuff," Pingeon says.

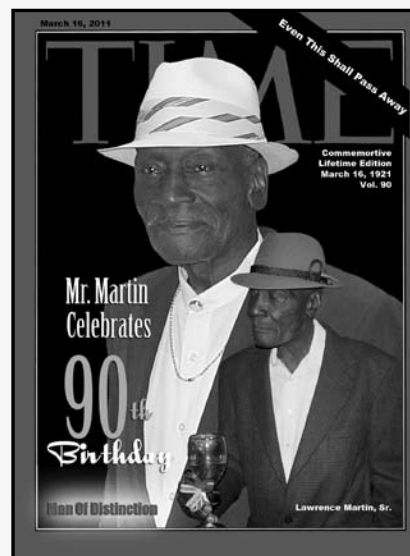
A Special Commission to Study the Feasibility of Establishing Inmate Fees, which the Massachusetts Legislature created last year, is expected to file its report within weeks. Whatever its recommendations, it's uncertain that Republicans, a small minority in the Democratic-dominated Legislature, can cobble together the votes to pass Poirier's bill or a similar one.

Governor Deval Patrick, a Democrat who is the state's first African-American Chief Executive, opposes such legislation.

"The Patrick Administration does not favor legislation authorizing payment of fees by inmates because their negative and unintended consequences do not lead to a comprehensive plan focused on successful re-entry and reducing recidivism," says Terrel Harris, spokesman for the State Executive Office of Public Safety and Security.

Kenneth J. Cooper, a Pulitzer-Prize Winning Journalist, is a freelancer based in Boston.

Lawrence Martin, Sr. Turns 90



Lawrence Martin Sr. along with family and friends celebrated his 90th Birthday recently. Happy Birthday Mr. Martin and many more!



One year later.
Our commitment continues.

Soon a year will have passed since the Deepwater Horizon accident in the Gulf. From the beginning, we have taken responsibility for the cleanup. Our commitment to the Gulf remains unchanged, as does our responsibility to keep you informed.

Committed to the Gulf

No oil has flowed into the Gulf since July 15th. As our efforts continue, nearly 100% of the waters are open and the beaches are clean and open. To ensure its safety, Gulf seafood has been more rigorously tested by independent researchers and experts than any other seafood in the world. To date, BP has spent more than \$13 billion in clean-up costs.

Restore the Environment

An additional \$282 million has been spent on environmental issues, including wildlife rescue and restoration of wildlife refuges across the region. We have also committed \$500 million to the Gulf of Mexico Research Institute to fund scientific studies on the potential impact of the spill.

Help to Rebuild the Economy

\$5 billion in claims have already been paid. We've committed \$20 billion to an independent fund to pay for environmental restoration and all legitimate claims, including lost incomes. More than \$200 million in grants have been made to the Gulf Coast States to promote tourism and seafood.

Learn and Share the Lessons

This was a tragedy that never should have happened. Our responsibility is to learn from it and share with competitors, partners, governments and regulators to help ensure that it never happens again.

We know we haven't always been perfect but we are working to live up to our commitments, both now and in the future.

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