

Updated Daily

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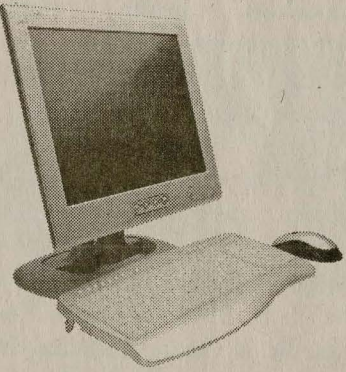
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Ed Prince

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Fatherhood

When I was about three years old, my father moved out and I became a familiar statistic – a young African American child growing up without a father figure. Today more children are growing up without their biological father in the home than at any point in our history. Responsible father involvement becomes even more critical for children in the child welfare system, especially for those who have been placed in non-relative care. Fortunately, DSHS noticed this trend and has been working to empower Washington fathers. The DSHS Fatherhood Initiative works to reconnect fathers with their children. In 2008, DSHS received funding to create a pilot program focused on fathers. This funding allowed them to work in partnership with the University of Washington and the American Humane Society to create a video focused on their work with fathers and develop a curriculum where veteran fathers worked with newer fathers and provided them tools to navigate the child welfare system. This program is called Fathers Matter. Within the Fathers Matter program, veteran fathers who have been through the process teach the newer fathers skills including:

- Communicating with your attorney, caseworker, and other players in your case
- Managing your stress
- Working with the Child Protective Services caseworker
- How to get your child returned
- Being kind but assertive
- Your rights as a father
- Tips on visiting with your child

I had an opportunity to sit down with one of the veteran fathers and they shared their story with me and walked me through the twelve week curriculum that they provide for the newer fathers. Fathers can start at any time, they don't have to wait for a twelve week cycle to end. I came away impressed by his passion for this issue and thrilled that we have people working so hard to reconnect fathers with their children. As a father myself I can't imagine what it would feel like to not be with my children. I'm very pleased we have this resource available as this has long been an important issue in the African American community. Currently this program is located in thirteen counties including King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston counties. If you know a father who might be interested in this program, please have them contact the Commission on African American Affairs at (360)-725-5663 and we will be happy to connect them to people in their area that can assist them.

Democrats May Block Obama's Judicial Nominees

By Freddie Allen
NNPA Washington Correspondent

WASHINGTON (NNPA) – Democrats and civil rights advocates continue to express concerns over two of President Barack Obama's federal judicial nominees for Georgia's northern district who have suspect civil rights backgrounds. In a package deal with Republican United States senators Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson from Georgia, President Obama nominated Julie Carnes and Jill A. Pryor to the United States Eleventh Circuit Court, Leslie Abrams to the United States court of the Middle District of Georgia, and Michael Boggs, Mark Cohen, Leigh May, and Eleanor Ross to the court of the United States Northern District of Georgia. If confirmed, Abrams and Ross would become the first Black women to serve lifetime appointments as federal judges in Georgia. But Democrats and some progressive groups have objected to the nominations of Boggs and Cohen. Last week, the United States Senate judiciary committee held a hearing for the nominees where Democratic senators grilled Michael Boggs, who is currently a judge on Georgia's appeals court, over his voting record while he served in the Georgia state legislature. When questioned about his votes against removing the Confederate battle emblem from the Georgia state flag, Boggs said that although he found the Confederate symbol personally offensive, he said that his constituents wanted the opportunity to vote on any changes to the state flag. Boggs also voted for legislation requiring doctors to list how often they provided abortion services. When senators questioned him about the public safety concerns associated with publishing such a list following decades of violence against doctors who performed abortions, Boggs said that at the time of the vote, he was unaware of that history. The National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, a pro-choice advocacy group, said that they also found

Obama court nominee Michael Boggs testifies before Senate Judiciary Committee. NNPA Photo/Freddie Allen.

When White students sued the University of Georgia over the school's freshman admissions policy that used race as factor, Cohen scored a court victory in 2001 for affirmative action proponents who supported the university's program, according to Brooks. Nearly a decade later, then Georgia state Attorney General Thurbert Baker, asked Cohen to defend Georgia's photo identification law for in-person voting that many voter's rights advocates say discriminates against Blacks and the poor. Brooks said it was a move that likely provided Baker, who is Black, political cover. Brooks called Boggs and Cohen friends and said that he had no reason to oppose their nominations. "This isn't the perfect deal, but I trust the president," said Brooks. "If [the president] had a different hand of cards, the package would look different, but he's doing the best that can do under these circumstances." Mary Frances Berry, former chair of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, said that President Obama held his nose and nominated Boggs and Cohen and assumed that the civil rights groups and Democrats in the Senate would go along with his decision. "The problem with that is that the advocacy groups believe that the president should fight harder to get the nominees that he wants. The president has a lot of power to make horse trades with people on things other than appointments," said Berry. "There are always things that Senators want. Obama made the deal but some think the price is too high, said Berry. In an interview with BuzzFeed, an online news portal, Majority-leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) said that he can't support the Michael Boggs nomination. "Unless I have a better explanation, I can't vote for him," said Reid "This is a lifetime appointment. He's said some things and made some decisions I think are not very good." Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.), an initial critic of the nominations,

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