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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

Financial Disclosure
Congressman Mike Espy

Periods - 1987 } Sue
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MIKE ESPY

I. Introduction and Summary

Mike Espy, the first black elected to Congress from Mississippi since Reconstruction, has been a zealous advocate of the interests of his rural district and a friend of farmers during his six years in Congress. He is a moderate Democrat who seeks consensus to achieve his objectives. He calls himself the spokesman for rural America, and he actively pursues the goal of revitalizing the agricultural-based economy of his impoverished district.

First elected in 1986 by a slim margin, Espy is now overwhelmingly popular and has been reelected since then by huge margins. Against the back-drop of the state's entrenched racial divisions, he has forged a bi-racial coalition around his populist message that "we're all in this together." Although generally left of center in his voting, he holds conservative social positions to accommodate the interests of his district, such as his prominent support of the National Rifle Association.

Espy has actively pursued a domestic agriculture agenda, and he would bring substantial assets to this appointment -- namely, the experience and relationships he gained on the House Agriculture and Budget Committees and his reputation as a moderate and pragmatic politician. His views on the international trade issues -- which will be of tremendous importance to American farmers in the future -- are unknown.

II. Basic Biographical Information

Mike Espy was born in Yazoo City, Mississippi, on November 30, 1953. He is divorced and has two children -- Jamilia and Michael.

Espy earned his B.A. degree in political science at Howard University in Washington, D.C., in 1975. Subsequently, he received his J.D. from the University of Santa Clara, California, in 1978. He is a member of the Mississippi Bar Association and the Magnolia Bar Association, of which he is executive secretary.

Espy sits on the boards of Mississippi First, Inc.; Common Cause of Jackson, Mississippi; and the Jackson Urban League. He also served as vice chairman of the Jackson United Way's advisory committee. He is president of the Jackson Howard University Alumni Association. In 1984, Espy received the Jack H. Young, Sr., award from the Jackson NAACP chapter and the Yazoo Hometowns Club Award.

Espy has been active in Mississippi politics since serving as Second Congressional district coordinator for Ed Pittman's campaign for state Attorney General in 1983. He sat on the Democratic National Committee's rules committee in 1984 and on the platform committee's task force on agriculture and rural development in 1988. Also in 1988, he introduced then- State Treasurer Ann Richards as keynote speaker to the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a member of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC).

III. Professional History

The first African-American to represent Mississippi in Congress since Reconstruction, Mike Espy was elected from the Second Congressional District in 1986. He sits on the House Agriculture and Budget Committees, as well as the House Select Committee on Hunger. During the 102nd Congress, he was chairman of the Budget Committee's Task Force on Community Development and Natural Resources. He is an at-large House Democratic whip and has a leadership position with the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Espy represents the poorest district in the nation's poorest state. This part of the Mississippi Delta is overwhelmingly rural, and unemployment reaches sixty percent in some areas when farm work dries up during the winter. A surprising number of people in the district continue to use outhouses and fetch water. Forty-three percent of residents live below the poverty line; thirty percent earn less than \$5,000 per year.

The problems Espy's district faces go beyond stereotypical rural concerns. Crack cocaine and crime have emerged as major problems; the district is burdened with a large number of teenage pregnancies and, in some counties, the infant mortality rates are higher than Chile's. This area is sometimes called "America's Third World."

Prior to running for Congress, Espy worked primarily in state government. After graduating from law school, Espy was managing attorney for Central Mississippi Legal Services in Yazoo, Mississippi. From 1980-84, he worked as an Assistant Secretary of State. He then worked as an Assistant State Attorney General and Director of Mississippi Consumer Protection from 1984-85.

In his first Congressional election, Espy won by a slight margin. This was an historically significant election and a major political triumph. Although his election is now cited as a sign that the South was coming of age, in fact he won only a small percentage of the white vote (10%) and was swept into office by a huge black turnout. Espy ran a sophisticated and highly organized campaign relying on targeted voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts, and he built a significant war chest. He attacked his opponent for failing to do enough to help farmers in the district and,

perhaps because of the historic significance of the race, was able to secure a promise that, if elected, he would have a seat on the House Agriculture Committee.

Having won in a mid-term election, the real test for Espy came in 1988. In his first bid for re-election, his Republican opponent labelled him an anti-American leftist abortion proponent with union ties. Notwithstanding the resounding defeat of the top of the Democratic ticket that year, Espy was able not only to win re-election but to attract 65% of the total vote and 43% of the white vote. In 1990, he carried 84% of the vote, earning 70% of the white vote. In 1992, he won by another large margin.

IV. Comment on Professional History

As a member of Congress, Espy has focused his energies on the needs of his poor, rural district -- economic revitalization, protection of farmers, and provision of the most basic modern services (e.g., running water in areas where the citizens are too poor to dig their own wells). He calls himself a spokesman for rural America. Because of his broad focus on economic issues, Espy has built a strong bi-racial coalition that now re-elects him by substantial majorities.

Espy speaks to concerns that are broader than race. As much as Mississippi is a state where racism runs strong, it is also a state where poverty respects no racial divisions. Large numbers of Mississippians are poor, although blacks as a group may be poorer than whites. Espy employs populist rhetoric and solutions: he says "we're in this together" and appeals to a common interest in developing Mississippi's economy. In this way, Espy enjoys an unusually broad base of support -- many of the conservative white farmers who voted for George Bush and Trent Lott in 1988 also voted for Espy.

Espy's agricultural agenda builds on this approach. In Congress, he protects wealthy and struggling agricultural interests alike. He is a friend of farmers, a watchdog for cotton, soybean, and catfish farming interests. The latter is vintage Espy -- to promote the interests of both farm owners (several of these are black-owned) and laborers, he convinced the U.S. military to increase by 65% its demand for farm-raised catfish. Half the ponds in the district were dug after Espy persuaded the military to make farm-raised catfish a frequent dinner entree. His district now contains 98,000 acres of catfish ponds and produces 85-90% of the world's pond-raised catfish. Moreover, he succeeded in delivering block grants for two new catfish processing plants in his district. The catfish industry employs 6,000 Delta residents.

Espy's ability to work with both the farmers and laborers permitted the project's success -- it also put him in the middle of controversy. Shortly before the 1990 election, workers at Delta Pride Catfish -- most of them black women who gut and clean fish in processing plants -- went on strike to protest sub-poverty level

wages. The Congressional Black Caucus held hearings on the workers' complaints. Because Espy had cultivated ties to both owners and workers, he did not attend the hearing and attempted to remain neutral in the dispute, stating that "my position as a member of Congress is to keep jobs in the district."

Representative William L. Clay called Espy a "gigolo" and said he had sought to prevent the hearing from occurring. Clay later apologized to Espy, and a few days after the hearing, Espy publicly supported the catfish workers, saying: "There will not be another Mike Espy-sponsored catfish dinner and another Mike Espy-sponsored catfish day until this [strike] is over."

Espy has spent his legislative energies to help both minorities and the poor. For example, he was successful in getting \$10 million authorized, though not appropriated, for relief of minority farmers through his Minority Farmers Rights Act, as well as a \$33 million authorization for housing assistance in the lower Delta. He attached an amendment to the Food, Agriculture, Conservation & Trade Act providing for technical assistance and education for minority farm families. In addition, he is credited with watching out for cotton and soybean farmers, as well as food stamp recipients during debate on the bill.

Espy is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus and has served as co-chairman of the Congressional Rural Development Task Force, a bipartisan group of congressmen named to promote rural development interests in Congress. Espy is also one of the organizers of the Mississippi Delta Congressional Caucus (discussed in detail in the next section).

V. Views and Philosophy

Espy is a moderate Democrat, whose positions range from liberal on one issue, conservative on the next. His primary objective, rather than the advancement of any particular ideology, is the economic revitalization of rural America.

A. Rural Development

Espy believes that the federal government has not responded adequately to rural poverty and the struggles of American farmers.

Initiatives Espy advocates include expanding the concept of "enterprise zones" beyond the inner cities to permit rural communities to diversify agriculture-based economies. He has called on Congress to create a set-aside program for financially-strapped owners of small businesses, proposing that a certain percentage of all federal procurement be targeted for areas designated by the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission. He stated:

"While poverty is most often thought of as an urban problem, in fact it is growing at a faster rate in rural America than in the nation's inner cities. . . . The issue before us today is not whether to throw more federal money at a problem; rather, it is how to use our money more effectively and how to combine the private and public sector communities into a solid partnership."

As the only Congressional Black Caucus member to represent a rural district, Espy has brought to the caucus a new perspective -- while the problems of poverty and neglect are common among many members' districts, Espy has focused on the specific issues of rural poverty and revitalization of agriculture-based economies.

One of Espy's greatest legislative accomplishments was winning passage of a bill to create the Lower Mississippi Delta Economic Commission, of which the President-elect was a member as Governor of Arkansas. Espy, along with House Appropriations Committee chairman Jamie L. Whitten of Mississippi, sponsored the legislation in the House. Espy called the bill a "blueprint and a road map for economic development."

The Commission released a ten-year plan to revive parts of the seven states that form the Lower Mississippi Delta. The plan favors large investments in education by the states themselves in addition to federal assistance for a national literacy effort, subsidized day care for the poor, and increased funding of Head Start.

B. Social and Domestic Issues

On social issues, Espy is a solid supporter of civil, voting, and abortion rights, and he votes with the House Democratic leadership more often than any other member of his state's delegation. But Espy does take positions that are non-traditional for members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and he is not without critics.

✓ Most notably, he is a member of the National Rifle Association (NRA) member and recipient of NRA contributions. He generated considerable controversy by appearing in an NRA advertisement saying, "I am the NRA." Espy says he does not agree with the NRA on all issues, and he says he would support a carefully-defined ban on assault weapons.

Espy also supports the death penalty and school prayer. About his sometimes conservative positions and the implications of them for Democrats nationally, Espy said:

"You've first got to be invited past the door. And we don't get invited past the door because of these visceral issues -- gun control, flag,

patriotism. They don't want to hear your ideas on the economy and foreign affairs and on defense because they don't like you."

Espy also advocates welfare reform. Speaking in favor of the Family Welfare Reform Act of 1987, Espy said:

"[T]he current welfare system is cumbersome and lacked incentives that would usher welfare participants away from Federal support and onto self-support. . . .

As much as we must include the element of compassion, the design and structure of our welfare reform must include accountability and attractive incentives that urge participants to become self-supporting.

. . .

Surely, the Family Welfare Reform Act is not a panacea, but I believe it is a very positive step and holds great promise for all Americans, including those who support it, those who need it, and those who are on the margin and hope never to need it. It becomes a give-and-take safety net that will obviously require initiative on the part of all parties, most importantly, welfare recipients."

In this respect, then, Espy's views resemble those of the President-elect; though on many other social issues, he stands somewhat to the right of him.

VI. Analysis

Espy began his career in Congress as one of the most active freshman members. He moved quickly to establish a niche for himself on agriculture and rural development issues and worked diligently to produce on behalf of his district. In addition, he nurtured his skills at building consensus and, thereby, making himself effective. He is viewed as a savvy politician.

A moderate Democrat and DLC member, Espy straddles the traditional liberal/conservative division. Nonetheless, he is sensitive to the needs of the poor and of minorities within his district. His NRA involvement is a potential source of controversy, but the subject matter is far removed from the Agriculture jurisdiction.

A spokesman on rural issues, Espy enjoys indisputable knowledge of domestic agriculture issues. He has focused on issues of concern to cotton, soybean, and catfish farmers and workers -- a focus based on his district's interests. His grasp of global agricultural issues, which will be increasingly important to American farmers in a world of expanded international trade, is unknown.

Given his committee experience and his success in creating bi-partisan coalitions, Espy's appointment as Secretary of Agriculture would likely receive broad support. Espy is identified both with efforts to reduce poverty in the lower Delta and efforts to strengthen farmers, in part because he insists that those goals are not mutually exclusive. A Secretary of Agriculture perceived both as a friend of farmers and an advocate for the poor would be an effective leader on these issues for the Administration. It should be noted that his administrative skills are untested.

Espy made substantial contributions to the Clinton campaign before the Democratic National Convention. He was an early and active supporter and worked to turn out black voters for the campaign.

Cynthia C. Hogan
James W. Cooper

2 Mike Espy (D)

Of Yazoo City — Elected 1986

Born: Nov. 30, 1953, Yazoo City, Miss.

Education: Howard U., B.A. 1975; Santa Clara U., J.D. 1978.

Occupation: Lawyer; businessman.

Family: Divorced; two children.

Religion: Baptist.

Political Career: Miss. assistant secretary of state, 1980-84; assistant attorney general, 1984-85.

Capitol Office: 216 Cannon Bldg. 20515; 225-5876.



In Washington: Espy is often cited as a prototype of the new generation of influential black politicians. His politics are mainstream Democratic, his personal image measured, and his success dependent on a coalition of black and white voters.

Unlike many of his older black colleagues, Espy did not begin his political career at the bully pulpit of the church or early civil rights movement. He is the well-educated product of one of the Delta's more prominent black families, and got his start as a professional. His early political experience was essentially administrative — as an assistant secretary of state and then as the director of the attorney general's consumer protection division.

"Our successes have come in the boardrooms and courtrooms," he says of his generation of black leaders. "My development has always been in a multiracial environment."

Any political differences between Espy and older members of the Congressional Black Caucus might be attributed to their contrasting backgrounds. But there are other, perhaps more salient, factors: Espy is the only black to represent a rural district, and one of a handful to represent nearly as many white voters as black.

Espy has made himself remarkably secure in his marginal district by focusing primarily on economic development issues that transcend party label and are vital to his poor constituents, whatever their color. He calls himself "a spokesman for rural America," and in the 102nd Congress, he has a new platform as chairman of a Budget Committee Task Force on Community Development and Natural Resources.

In his first term, Espy was a player in enacting legislation to create the Lower Mississippi Delta Commission, which was given two years to develop ideas to combat poverty in Mississippi and other states in the region. "America is a chain of states, and in order to make it strong, you've got to focus on the weak links," he said. "Mississippi is a weak link."

When the commission's report was released in late 1990, Espy described it as a "call

to action," but also found some recommendations too costly. "I'd like to have seen more for the money," he said of the report.

But to help enact some of the economic development programs, Espy helped form (and now chairs) the Lower Mississippi Delta Congressional Caucus, a bipartisan group representing the seven-state region. One of the caucus' first coups came with the 1990 Housing and Community Development Act, which included language sponsored by Espy and Missouri Republican Bill Emerson to increase funding for underserved counties.

The Agriculture Committee provides Espy with another forum to aid his diverse constituency. During debate on the 1990 farm bill, he quietly watched out for the 2nd District's large-scale cotton and soybean farmers as well as for those on food stamps. He offered a successful amendment to provide additional technical assistance and education for minority farm families, down from 14 percent of all farmers in 1920 to less than 1 percent today.

Promoting the catfish has been an Espy trademark. Most of the nation's catfish farming is done in Espy's district, which includes about 85,000 acres of man-made catfish farms employing 6,000 people. He helped persuade the Army to increase its catfish purchases, and delivered block grants for two new processing plants for the 2nd. His successful drive for a "National Catfish Day" also made headlines.

But his efforts to promote the whiskered delicacy placed him in a difficult situation when the workers at Delta Pride Catfish Inc. — most of them black women — went on strike shortly before the 1990 election. He avoided a Congressional Black Caucus October hearing on worker complaints about sub-poverty-level wages, saying he wanted to remain neutral to help facilitate a settlement. "My position as a member of Congress is to keep jobs in the district," he said.

Over the years, Espy had carefully cultivated support from the industry as well as its workers, and some saw politics in his reluctance to take sides. Rep. William L. Clay called him a "gigolo" at the Black Caucus hearing and

Mississippi 2

Ever since swamp-draining technology and cheap black labor transformed the Delta into an agricultural gold mine in the years after the Civil War, the region has had a far larger population of poor rural blacks than monied white cotton growers. But throughout the decades, the white establishment managed to keep a firm grip on political power; Espy's election marked a passage into a dramatically new political order.

The largest city in the 2nd is Greenville, an old river port and cotton market and the traditional "capital" of the Mississippi Delta. This is one of the few areas in the region that has gained population in recent years. Greenville, the seat of Washington County, is the home of the *Delta Democrat*, the politically moderate newspaper published for a generation by Hodding Carter Jr.'s family. Greenville still has a reputation as one of the more racially tolerant communities in the state.

In the past generation, thousands of Delta blacks have been pushed out of work by farm mechanization and have moved on to Chicago, St. Louis and closer Sun Belt cities such as Little Rock and Memphis. Preliminary census figures showed a mass exodus from the 2nd in the 1980s — about

North Central — Mississippi Delta

30,000 — mainly from the Delta's rural areas.

Many of those remaining live under Third World conditions. 53 percent of majority-black Tunica County live under the poverty line, making it the poorest county in the nation; in Humphreys County, about 29 of every 1,000 babies die before their first birthday.

The result is that the 2nd District has displaced the 1st as the Mississippi constituency kindest to statewide Democratic candidates. Eleven of the 18 Mississippi counties carried by Michael S. Dukakis in 1988 were entirely within the 2nd District.

Vicksburg, seat of Warren County, is the district's second-largest city. Its Catfish Row is considered to be the southern terminus of the Delta region. The major Republican enclave in the 2nd, Warren County gave Franklin a 5,442-vote edge in 1984, but two years later, Espy cut that advantage in half, a major factor in Franklin's downfall. By 1990, Espy was carrying Warren County handily.

Population: 503,935. White 207,501 (41%), Black 293,809 (58%), Other 2,599 (1%). Spanish origin 6,109 (1%). 18 and over 323,647 (64%). 65 and over 62,636 (12%). Median age: 26.

accused Espy of trying to cancel the hearing. Those comments eventually drew a written apology from Clay. Days later, Espy came out in support of the workers. "There will not be another Mike Espy-sponsored catfish dinner and another Mike Espy-sponsor catfish day until this thing is over," he said. The strike was settled in early December.

Despite his focus on local matters, Espy gets more national limelight than a typical junior House member: He was showcased at the 1988 Democratic National Convention, where he was asked to introduce the keynote speaker. And in early 1989 he appeared in a national magazine advertisement for the National Rifle Association. The ad shocked many Democrats, but Espy, an NRA member since 1974, viewed the ad as "a statement of my independence."

While Espy votes with a majority of Democrats more often than anyone else in Mississippi's delegation, he is not shy about going his own way when it suits his rural district. In addition to opposing gun control, Espy parts ways with most Democrats by supporting the death penalty in certain cases, and he backs prayer in schools.

Nonetheless, House Democratic leaders

did everything they could to boost Espy's reelection chances early in his career. They gave him a seat on Agriculture, and made him the only Democrat in his class to win a spot on the Budget Committee, an attention-getting assignment both at home and in Washington. At the start of the 101st Congress, he was named an at-large whip. But he has not been given carte blanche. He lobbied unsuccessfully for a seat on Appropriations in the 102nd Congress.

At Home: Espy faced considerable skepticism when he challenged GOP Rep. Webb Franklin in 1986. Espy's prominent Delta family owns a chain of funeral homes, but he did not begin with a significant political base. Although roughly half the district's voters are black, there had not been evidence they would turn out in numbers sufficient to produce a congressional victory.

In 1982 and 1984, Franklin won as the House vote split essentially along racial lines; each time, black Democratic nominee Robert G. Clark, a state representative and old-line civil rights leader, fell a few thousand votes short.

But Espy effectively combined old-fashioned inspirational oratory and modern organizational techniques. He mounted a skillful

Mike Espy, D-Miss.

turnout drive that exceeded anything the black community had put together in the past.

At the same time, Espy had some success wooing the white Democratic establishment. A well-educated young professional with a low-key, businesslike manner, Espy presented a less threatening front to ingrained white prejudices. He got the backing of several white county sheriffs and of Mississippi's secretary of state and attorney general. He won official neutrality from other white Democratic officials who had put out the word for Franklin in the past. Espy also made a direct play for the support of farmers, many of whom were suffering through hard times and were angered by some of Franklin's laissez-faire rhetoric.

On Election Day, Espy won only about 10 percent of the white vote, but that was enough in a year when white turnout was low and the Delta's black community was mobilized.

It seemed Espy could have a big fight on

his hands in 1988, when the presidential election would bring out a larger white Republican vote. But Espy toiled throughout his first term to win over some of the monied establishment that had supported Franklin.

GOP nominee Jack Coleman, an attorney who had worked for a business trade association in Washington, sought to polarize the electorate. Although he touted his own ability to boost economic development, his literature told voters that Espy is "representing the interests of the Radical Left: for unions, for abortions, against jobs, against defense, against America and against Americans." When vandals attacked Espy's home during the campaign and scrawled "nigger" on the door, Coleman suggested Espy might have staged the whole thing to generate sympathy. In the end, Espy took roughly 40 percent of the ballots cast by whites, and won about two-thirds of the overall vote. In 1990, Espy easily dispatched his GOP foe.

Committees

Agriculture (21st of 27 Democrats)
Conservation, Credit & Rural Development; Cotton, Rice & Sugar; Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations & Nutrition

Budget (6th of 23 Democrats)
Community Development & Natural Resources (chairman); Budget Process, Reconciliation & Enforcement

Select Hunger (9th of 22 Democrats)
Domestic (chairman)

Elections

1990 General			
Mike Espy (D)	59,393	(84%)	
Dorothy Benford (R)	11,224	(16%)	
1988 General			
Mike Espy (D)	112,401	(65%)	
Jack Coleman (R)	59,827	(34%)	
Previous Winning Percentage:	1988	(52%)	

District Vote For President

	1988	1984	1980	1976
D	87,968 (50%)	90,653 (49%)	94,761 (57%)	77,986 (54%)
R	83,997 (48%)	93,213 (50%)	68,715 (41%)	60,798 (42%)

Campaign Finance

	Receipts	Receipts from PACs	Expenditures
1990			
Espy (D)	\$448,212	\$219,225 (49%)	\$365,825
1988			
Espy (D)	\$880,227	\$480,490 (55%)	\$886,540
Coleman (R)	\$226,486	\$25,377 (11%)	\$225,873

Key Votes

1991	Authorize use of force against Iraq	N
1990		
	Support constitutional amendment on flag desecration	N
	Pass family and medical leave bill over Bush veto	Y
	Reduce SDI funding	Y
	Allow abortions in overseas military facilities	Y
	Approve budget summit plan for spending and taxing	N
	Approve civil rights bill	Y
1989		
	Halt production of B-2 stealth bomber at 13 planes	Y
	Oppose capital gains tax cut	Y
	Approve federal abortion funding in rape or incest cases	Y
	Approve pay raise and revision of ethics rules	N
	Pass Democratic minimum wage plan over Bush veto	Y

Voting Studies

Year	Presidential Support		Party Unity		Conservative Coalition	
	S	O	S	O	S	O
1990	20	75	82	9	50	48
1988	35	59	80	10	34	59
1986	20	69	78	5	42	50
1987	20	73	89	4	40	58

Interest Group Ratings

Year	ADA	ACU	AFL-CIO	CCUS
1990	67	17	83	31
1988	80	16	92	40
1986	85	12	93	25
1987	84	0	88	7

INTRODUCTION

We recognize that the information sought is extensive, and the time for response is relatively short. Nonetheless, we believe that complete answers to all questions are essential. Please err on the side of over-inclusiveness, and provide any additional details required to clarify your answers. If you do not presently have certain requested documents, we ask that you obtain and submit them.

We stand ready to assist you in every way possible, and urge you (or those assisting you) to contact the individual identified to you in order to expedite your response. Time is critical and we ask that you begin supplying the requested documents (especially tax returns and other financial documents) and other information as soon as they become available, rather than waiting until all materials are assembled.

REQUESTED INFORMATION AND MATERIALS

PERSONAL DATA

1. Please list: full name; any prior names used; home address and telephone number; office address and telephone number; address where registered to vote; date and place of birth; citizenship; and social security number.
2. Please list all addresses (including counties) at which you have resided since age 21, and dates of residence at each address.
3. Please supply details of any military service (including reserve affiliation), including: branch served; where stationed (and dates for each); commanding officers (and dates for each); rank or rate; any disciplinary proceeding or court martial; and form of discharge.
4. Please identify current marital status, including date and place of marriage.

SPOUSE'S BACKGROUND

5. Please list: spouse's name (and maiden name or any other prior name used); date and place of birth; citizenship; social security number; occupation; current employer; and business address.

6. For any prior spouse, please list: the date and place of marriage; present address; occupation; employer; the date of divorce and court granting the divorce. Furnish copies of any divorce decrees.

CHILDREN/PARENT/SIBLING BACKGROUND

7. For each child, please list: name; other parent's names (if from a prior marriage); date and place of birth; present address; occupation, employer and position held (for past 10 years); and social security number.
8. For each parent, please list: name (including the maiden name of your mother); date and place of birth; present address; occupation, employer and position held (for past 10 years); and social security number.
9. For each sister or brother, please list: name of any parent different from your own; date and place of birth; present address; occupation, employer and position held (for past 10 years); and social security number.

EDUCATION, PROFESSIONAL, BUSINESS

10. Please list name and location of each high school, college, and graduate school attended; dates of attendance; degrees awarded; and reason for leaving if no degree awarded. Furnish transcripts for all schooling after high school.
11. Please list chronologically each employer since age 21 and include the following: dates, names and addresses of all corporations, companies, firms, government agencies, or other entities or persons by whom you have been employed; the position(s) you held and your duties and responsibilities in each; the name and current address of each immediate supervisor; and the reason for leaving. Provide the same information for your spouse (for past 10 years).
12. Please list chronologically any other activity from which you have derived earned income (e.g., self-employment, individually or in partnership, consulting activities, writing, speaking, royalties, and honoraria) since age 21, including for each activity: the dates; name under which activity was conducted (if other than your own) and address; a description of the specific work performed; the names of any partners or business colleagues; and the reasons for ending the activity. Provide the same information for your spouse (for past 10 years).
13. Please furnish a copy of each book, article, or other publication you have authored, individually or with others.

14. Identify each instance in which you have testified before Congress in a non-governmental capacity; specify the subject matter of each testimony, and furnish copies of testimony.
15. Please furnish a copy of each resume or any other biographical description issued by you or by any other entity at your direction or with your consent within the past five years.
16. Please list the name and author of every biographical work (including articles) about you of which you are aware, and furnish a copy of each such work in your possession.
17. If you currently serve or in the last 10 years have served as an administrator, executor, trustee, receiver, or in any other similar fiduciary capacity, please describe for each: your exact position; the nature of your duties; the persons or entities for whom you act(ed) as a fiduciary; the dates during which you served in such a fiduciary capacity; and any supervising courts.
18. Please list all corporations, partnerships, trusts, or other business entities with which you ever have been affiliated as an officer, director, trustee, partner, or holder of a significant equity or financial interest (i.e., any ownership interest of more than 5%), or whose decisions you had the ability to influence. State the name and address of each such organization, the nature of its business, and dates and nature of your affiliation. Please provide the same information for your spouse (for past 10 years). Those organizational affiliations that you plan to continue during your Government service should be noted with an asterisk.
19. Please provide the names of all corporations, firms, partnerships, trusts or other business enterprises, and all non-profit organizations and other institutions with which you are now, or during the past five years have been, affiliated as an advisor, attorney or consultant. It is only necessary to provide the names of major clients and any client matter in which you and your firm are involved that might present a potential conflict of interest with your proposed assignment. Please identify the clients by name unless it would breach a confidential relationship or duty respecting a privileged matter. In addition, please provide the names of any other organizations with which you were so affiliated prior to the past five years that might present a potential conflict or appearance of conflict of interest with your prospective appointment.

20. Please provide the details of any contractual or informal arrangement you may have with any person or any business enterprise in regard to future employment or termination payments or financial benefits that will be provided you if you enter government employment. Please also identify any employee fringe benefits you are now receiving and would desire to retain during your Government service.
21. If you are a member of any licensed profession or occupation (such as lawyer, doctor, accountant, insurance or real estate broker, etc.), please specify: each date and location in which you have applied for a license; the date any license was granted; the present status of each license; and whether any such license has ever been withdrawn, suspended, or revoked, and the reason therefor.
22. Does your spouse or any family member (children, parents, brothers, or sisters) or business in which you, your spouse or any family members has a significant interest have any relationship with the federal government through contracts, consulting services, grants, loans, or guarantees? Please provide details.
23. Have you, your spouse (for past 10 years), or any child under 21 ever endorsed or appeared in advertising for any product, service, or business or other entity? Please provide details.
24. If you have performed any work for and/or received any payments from any foreign government, business, or individual in the past 10 years, please describe the circumstances, and identify the source and amount. Please provide the same information for your spouse.

FINANCIAL

25. Please prepare and furnish a complete and detailed current net worth statement which specifies all assets with a fair market value in excess of \$5,000 and all liabilities in excess of \$5,000 for you and for your spouse. Details should be sufficient to identify each particular asset and liability, including (by way of example) stocks, bonds, pension or retirement plans, profit-sharing interest, any interest in real property, formal and informal loans, trust interests (contingent or remainder), options, guarantees, and the like.

26. Please furnish a copy of each net worth statement which you have prepared and submitted for any purpose (e.g., bank loans) during the past six years.
27. For each present liability (excluding charge or credit card accounts with less than \$5,000 outstanding), please specify the creditor, interest rate, due date, and any other key terms, and identify the purpose for which the liability was incurred. Provide the same information for your spouse.
28. For each liability in excess of \$10,000 which existed at any time during the past 6 years, please specify the creditor, interest rate, due date and any other key terms, and identify the purpose for which the liability was incurred. Provide the same information for your spouse.
29. Please furnish a copy of each trust of which you, your spouse or any child under 21 is a grantor or beneficiary. Also please furnish a copy of any amendment, and any document indicating a change in trustee of any such trust.
30. Please provide the name, business address and telephone number of each current accountant, lawyer, investment advisor, and personal banking officer of any bank in which you hold an account. Provide the same information for your spouse. Please contact each of these individuals and ask them to cooperate with our inquiry.
31. If you are now, or at any time have been, a member of the United States House of Representatives, please identify any overdrafts from the House Bank and provide all relevant documents.
32. Are there any categories of personal financial records (e.g., individual, partnership or sole proprietorship tax returns, mortgage documents, loan agreements) that you (or your spouse) will not release publicly if necessary? If so, please identify these records and state the reasons for withholding them.

REAL ESTATE

33. Please describe all real estate held in your name or in your spouse's name during the last six years, including any real estate held in combination with others or on your or your spouse's behalf in trust, by a nominee, or through any other title-holding entity.

34. Have you or your spouse at any time held property (as a named owner of record individually or in combination with others) the title to which contained any restrictive covenant based on race, sex, ethnic background, or religious or sexual preference? If so, please provide all relevant information and records.

TAX INFORMATION

35. Please furnish a copy of each federal and state (and, if applicable, city) tax return, including any amended return, for 1986 and all subsequent years. If filed separately, furnish the same documents for your spouse and for each child under 21.
36. Have you filed all federal, state and local tax returns?
37. Have you ever filed a late tax return without a valid extension? If so, describe the circumstances and the resolution of the matter.
38. Have you ever paid any tax penalties? If so, describe the circumstances and the resolution of the matter.
39. Has a tax lien or other collection procedure ever been instituted against you by federal, state or local authorities? If so, describe the circumstances and the resolution of the matter.
40. Have you been or do you have any expectation that you will be the subject of any tax or financial audit or inquiry, especially including those in which the Intelligence Division of the IRS has participated? If so, describe the circumstances and the resolution of the matter.
41. Have you ever participated in an investment program or partnership which has been audited or investigated by federal, state, or local authorities? If so, describe the circumstances and the resolution of the matter.
42. Please answer each of the questions in this section for your spouse (for the past 10 years) and for any business with which you have been affiliated as an officer, director, partner, trustee or significant owner (i.e., were you ever more than 5% of the business).

PUBLIC AND ORGANIZATIONAL INVOLVEMENT

43. Please list current and all past political party affiliations or registrations, including locations and dates. Identify any party in whose primary you have ever voted, if different. Please provide the same information for your spouse (for past 10 years).
44. Please list each appointive public office (federal, state, or local) held or elective public office (federal, state, or local) held or sought, including dates, and the names of opponents in each election (including primaries) and the results. Provide the same information for your spouse.
45. Please list each membership you have had with any civic, social, charitable, educational, professional, fraternal, benevolent or religious organization, private club, or other membership organization (including any tax-exempt organization) during the past 10 years. Supply the dates and nature of the membership, including your responsibilities and activities, and specify the function and address of each organization. Please provide the same information for your spouse.
46. Have you or your spouse at any time belonged to any membership organization, including but not limited to those described in the preceding paragraph, that as a matter of policy or practice denied or restricted affiliation (as a matter of either policy or practice) based on race, sex, ethnic background, religious or sexual preference?

LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEEDINGS AND FILINGS

47. Please list any lawsuits you have brought as a plaintiff (or assigned for the purpose of bringing), which were brought against you as a defendant or third party, or in which you have testified at trial or deposition. Include in this response any contested divorce proceedings or other domestic relations matters. Please provide the same information for your spouse (for past 10 years).
48. Please list any administrative agency proceeding in which you have been involved as a party or material witness, and describe the details of your involvement. Provide the same information for your spouse (for past 10 years).

49. Please list any bankruptcy proceeding in which you have been involved as a debtor, creditor, claimant, or defendant, and describe the details of that involvement. Provide the same information for your spouse (for past 10 years).
50. If you have ever been investigated by any federal, state, military or local law enforcement agency, or arrested for, charged with, or convicted of violating any federal (including military), state or local law, regulation or ordinance, please identify each such instance and supply details, including: date; place; law enforcement agency; and court. Provide the same information for your spouse for each child under 21, and for any business with which you have been affiliated (e.g., as a director, officer, partner, trustee, or holder of any significant ownership interest), and furnish all pertinent records. You may exclude information as to traffic offenses for which the fine was less than \$50.
51. Please list any complaint ever made against you to or by any administrative agency (including election and campaign finance agencies), professional association or organization (such as bar overseers or a bar grievance committee), or federal, state or local ethics agency, committee, or official. Provide the same information for your spouse.
52. Please furnish a copy of each federal or state financial or ethical disclosure form filed within the past 10 years.

ELECTION LAW FILINGS AND PROCEEDINGS

53. As to all election campaigns, federal, state, and local, in which you have been a candidate for office, please identify all campaign committees associated with your candidacy during those campaigns.
54. Were you or any such committees the subject of any complaint or action filed against you before or by the Federal Election Committee or any state or local body with jurisdiction over elections? Also, were you or any such committees involved as a plaintiff or defendant in any judicial proceeding related to an election? If so, please describe. Include a description of any penalties assessed against you or such committees and any remedial action that you or such committees were required to take.

55. Did you or any committee associated with your candidacy accept contributions from Political Action Committees in any election campaign? If so, please identify the campaigns, the PAC's and the amount of money received from each PAC.
56. As to any election campaign where you were a candidate, do you or any committee associated with your candidacy have any outstanding debts? If so, please describe.

LOBBYING

57. Please list any registration as an agent for a foreign principal, or any exemption from such registration. Provide the same information for your spouse (for past 10 years).
58. If you ever have registered as a lobbyist or other legislative agent to influence federal or state legislation or administrative acts, please supply all details. Provide the same information for your spouse (for past 10 years).
59. If you have ever received payment for acting as a lobbyist or legislative agent, please supply details. Provide the same information for your spouse (for past 10 years).

HEALTH^{1/}

60. Please describe the present state of your physical and mental health (including any current disease or condition; previous major surgery; and current medication).
61. Please provide the name, address and telephone number of your personal physician and all other physicians you have consulted in the past 10 years. Please contact your personal physician and request full cooperation in this inquiry, including the provision of medical records, if this becomes necessary.
62. Please describe each instance when you have been hospitalized or under any kind of institutional care, since you became 21, including: the name of the hospital or institution; location; date; name and address of attending physician; and nature of the hospitalization or care.

^{1/} The leader of the group reviewing your personal history will be available to discuss questions 60-62 with you.

MISCELLANEOUS^{2/}

63. Have you ever had any association with any person, group or business venture that could be used, even unfairly, to impugn or attack your character and qualifications for a government position?
64. Do you know anyone or any organization that might take any steps, overtly or covertly, fairly or unfairly, to attack your appointment, including any news organization? If so, please identify and explain the basis for the potential attack. Have you ever been attacked by any person or any such organization in connection with any other appointment or attempt to gain elective or appointive office? if so, please identify and describe the attack.
65. Please provide any other information, including information about other members of your family, that could suggest a conflict of interest or be a possible source of embarrassment to you, your family or the President, if publicly known.

THANK YOU

^{2/} The leader of the group reviewing your personal history will be available to discuss questions 63-65 with you.

Mike Espy

MIKE ESPY

I. Introduction and Summary

Mike Espy, the first black elected to Congress from Mississippi since Reconstruction, has been a zealous advocate of the interests of his rural district and a friend of farmers during his six years in Congress. He is a moderate Democrat who seeks consensus to achieve his objectives. He calls himself the spokesman for rural America, and he actively pursues the goal of revitalizing the agricultural-based economy of his impoverished district.

First elected in 1986 by a slim margin, Espy is now overwhelmingly popular and has been reelected since then by huge margins. Against the back-drop of the state's entrenched racial divisions, he has forged a bi-racial coalition around his populist message that "we're all in this together." Although generally left of center in his voting, he holds conservative social positions to accommodate the interests of his district, such as his prominent support of the National Rifle Association.

Espy has actively pursued a domestic agriculture agenda, and he would bring substantial assets to this appointment -- namely, the experience and relationships he gained on the House Agriculture and Budget Committees and his reputation as a moderate and pragmatic politician. His views on the international trade issues -- which will be of tremendous importance to American farmers in the future -- are unknown.

II. Basic Biographical Information

Mike Espy was born in Yazoo City, Mississippi, on November 30, 1953. He is divorced and has two children -- Jamilia and Michael.

Espy earned his B.A. degree in political science at Howard University in Washington, D.C., in 1975. Subsequently, he received his J.D. from the University of Santa Clara, California, in 1978. He is a member of the Mississippi Bar Association and the Magnolia Bar Association, of which he is executive secretary.

Espy sits on the boards of Mississippi First, Inc.; Common Cause of Jackson, Mississippi; and the Jackson Urban League. He also served as vice chairman of the Jackson United Way's advisory committee. He is president of the Jackson Howard University Alumni Association. In 1984, Espy received the Jack H. Young, Sr., award from the Jackson NAACP chapter and the Yazoo Hometowns Club Award.

Espy has been active in Mississippi politics since serving as Second Congressional district coordinator for Ed Pittman's campaign for state Attorney General in 1983. He sat on the Democratic National Committee's rules committee in 1984 and on the platform committee's task force on agriculture and rural development in 1988. Also in 1988, he introduced then- State Treasurer Ann Richards as keynote speaker to the Democratic National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia. He is a member of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC).

III. Professional History

The first African-American to represent Mississippi in Congress since Reconstruction, Mike Espy was elected from the Second Congressional District in 1986. He sits on the House Agriculture and Budget Committees, as well as the House Select Committee on Hunger. During the 102nd Congress, he was chairman of the Budget Committee's Task Force on Community Development and Natural Resources. He is an at-large House Democratic whip and has a leadership position with the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Espy represents the poorest district in the nation's poorest state. This part of the Mississippi Delta is overwhelmingly rural, and unemployment reaches sixty percent in some areas when farm work dries up during the winter. A surprising number of people in the district continue to use outhouses and fetch water. Forty-three percent of residents live below the poverty line; thirty percent earn less than \$5,000 per year.

The problems Espy's district faces go beyond stereotypical rural concerns. Crack cocaine and crime have emerged as major problems; the district is burdened with a large number of teenage pregnancies and, in some counties, the infant mortality rates are higher than Chile's. This area is sometimes called "America's Third World."

Prior to running for Congress, Espy worked primarily in state government. After graduating from law school, Espy was managing attorney for Central Mississippi Legal Services in Yazoo, Mississippi. From 1980-84, he worked as an Assistant Secretary of State. He then worked as an Assistant State Attorney General and Director of Mississippi Consumer Protection from 1984-85.

In his first Congressional election, Espy won by a slight margin. This was an historically significant election and a major political triumph. Although his election is now cited as a sign that the South was coming of age, in fact he won only a small percentage of the white vote (10%) and was swept into office by a huge black turnout. Espy ran a sophisticated and highly organized campaign relying on targeted voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts, and he built a significant war chest. He attacked his opponent for failing to do enough to help farmers in the district and,

perhaps because of the historic significance of the race, was able to secure a promise that, if elected, he would have a seat on the House Agriculture Committee.

Having won in a mid-term election, the real test for Espy came in 1988. In his first bid for re-election, his Republican opponent labelled him an anti-American leftist abortion proponent with union ties. Notwithstanding the resounding defeat of the top of the Democratic ticket that year, Espy was able not only to win re-election but to attract 65% of the total vote and 43% of the white vote. In 1990, he carried 84% of the vote, earning 70% of the white vote. In 1992, he won by another large margin.

IV. Comment on Professional History

As a member of Congress, Espy has focused his energies on the needs of his poor, rural district -- economic revitalization, protection of farmers, and provision of the most basic modern services (e.g., running water in areas where the citizens are too poor to dig their own wells). He calls himself a spokesman for rural America. Because of his broad focus on economic issues, Espy has built a strong bi-racial coalition that now re-elects him by substantial majorities.

Espy speaks to concerns that are broader than race. As much as Mississippi is a state where racism runs strong, it is also a state where poverty respects no racial divisions. Large numbers of Mississippians are poor, although blacks as a group may be poorer than whites. Espy employs populist rhetoric and solutions: he says "we're in this together" and appeals to a common interest in developing Mississippi's economy. In this way, Espy enjoys an unusually broad base of support -- many of the conservative white farmers who voted for George Bush and Trent Lott in 1988 also voted for Espy.

Espy's agricultural agenda builds on this approach. In Congress, he protects wealthy and struggling agricultural interests alike. He is a friend of farmers, a watchdog for cotton, soybean, and catfish farming interests. The latter is vintage Espy -- to promote the interests of both farm owners (several of these are black-owned) and laborers, he convinced the U.S. military to increase by 65% its demand for farm-raised catfish. Half the ponds in the district were dug after Espy persuaded the military to make farm-raised catfish a frequent dinner entree. His district now contains 98,000 acres of catfish ponds and produces 85-90% of the world's pond-raised catfish. Moreover, he succeeded in delivering block grants for two new catfish processing plants in his district. The catfish industry employs 6,000 Delta residents.

Espy's ability to work with both the farmers and laborers permitted the project's success -- it also put him in the middle of controversy. Shortly before the 1990 election, workers at Delta Pride Catfish -- most of them black women who gut and clean fish in processing plants -- went on strike to protest sub-poverty level

wages. The Congressional Black Caucus held hearings on the workers' complaints. Because Espy had cultivated ties to both owners and workers, he did not attend the hearing and attempted to remain neutral in the dispute, stating that "my position as a member of Congress is to keep jobs in the district."

Representative William L. Clay called Espy a "gigolo" and said he had sought to prevent the hearing from occurring. Clay later apologized to Espy, and a few days after the hearing, Espy publicly supported the catfish workers, saying: "There will not be another Mike Espy-sponsored catfish dinner and another Mike Espy-sponsored catfish day until this [strike] is over."

Espy has spent his legislative energies to help both minorities and the poor. For example, he was successful in getting \$10 million authorized, though not appropriated, for relief of minority farmers through his Minority Farmers Rights Act, as well as a \$33 million authorization for housing assistance in the lower Delta. He attached an amendment to the Food, Agriculture, Conservation & Trade Act providing for technical assistance and education for minority farm families. In addition, he is credited with watching out for cotton and soybean farmers, as well as food stamp recipients during debate on the bill.

Espy is a member of the Congressional Black Caucus and has served as co-chairman of the Congressional Rural Development Task Force, a bipartisan group of congressmen named to promote rural development interests in Congress. Espy is also one of the organizers of the Mississippi Delta Congressional Caucus (discussed in detail in the next section).

V. Views and Philosophy

Espy is a moderate Democrat, whose positions range from liberal on one issue, conservative on the next. His primary objective, rather than the advancement of any particular ideology, is the economic revitalization of rural America.

A. Rural Development

Espy believes that the federal government has not responded adequately to rural poverty and the struggles of American farmers.

Initiatives Espy advocates include expanding the concept of "enterprise zones" beyond the inner cities to permit rural communities to diversify agriculture-based economies. He has called on Congress to create a set-aside program for financially-strapped owners of small businesses, proposing that a certain percentage of all federal procurement be targeted for areas designated by the Lower Mississippi Delta Development Commission. He stated:

"While poverty is most often thought of as an urban problem, in fact it is growing at a faster rate in rural America than in the nation's inner cities. . . . The issue before us today is not whether to throw more federal money at a problem; rather, it is how to use our money more effectively and how to combine the private and public sector communities into a solid partnership."

As the only Congressional Black Caucus member to represent a rural district, Espy has brought to the caucus a new perspective -- while the problems of poverty and neglect are common among many members' districts, Espy has focused on the specific issues of rural poverty and revitalization of agriculture-based economies.

One of Espy's greatest legislative accomplishments was winning passage of a bill to create the Lower Mississippi Delta Economic Commission, of which the President-elect was a member as Governor of Arkansas. Espy, along with House Appropriations Committee chairman Jamie L. Whitten of Mississippi, sponsored the legislation in the House. Espy called the bill a "blueprint and a road map for economic development."

The Commission released a ten-year plan to revive parts of the seven states that form the Lower Mississippi Delta. The plan favors large investments in education by the states themselves in addition to federal assistance for a national literacy effort, subsidized day care for the poor, and increased funding of Head Start.

B. Social and Domestic Issues

On social issues, Espy is a solid supporter of civil, voting, and abortion rights, and he votes with the House Democratic leadership more often than any other member of his state's delegation. But Espy does take positions that are non-traditional for members of the Congressional Black Caucus, and he is not without critics.

Most notably, he is a member of the National Rifle Association (NRA) member and recipient of NRA contributions. He generated considerable controversy by appearing in an NRA advertisement saying, "I am the NRA." Espy says he does not agree with the NRA on all issues, and he says he would support a carefully-defined ban on assault weapons.

Espy also supports the death penalty and school prayer. About his sometimes conservative positions and the implications of them for Democrats nationally, Espy said:

"You've first got to be invited past the door. And we don't get invited past the door because of these visceral issues -- gun control, flag,

patriotism. They don't want to hear your ideas on the economy and foreign affairs and on defense because they don't like you."

Espy also advocates welfare reform. Speaking in favor of the Family Welfare Reform Act of 1987, Espy said:

"[T]he current welfare system is cumbersome and lacked incentives that would usher welfare participants away from Federal support and onto self-support. . . .

As much as we must include the element of compassion, the design and structure of our welfare reform must include accountability and attractive incentives that urge participants to become self-supporting.

. . .

Surely, the Family Welfare Reform Act is not a panacea, but I believe it is a very positive step and holds great promise for all Americans, including those who support it, those who need it, and those who are on the margin and hope never to need it. It becomes a give-and-take safety net that will obviously require initiative on the part of all parties, most importantly, welfare recipients."

In this respect, then, Espy's views resemble those of the President-elect; though on many other social issues, he stands somewhat to the right of him.

VI. Analysis

Espy began his career in Congress as one of the most active freshman members. He moved quickly to establish a niche for himself on agriculture and rural development issues and worked diligently to produce on behalf of his district. In addition, he nurtured his skills at building consensus and, thereby, making himself effective. He is viewed as a savvy politician.

A moderate Democrat and DLC member, Espy straddles the traditional liberal/conservative division. Nonetheless, he is sensitive to the needs of the poor and of minorities within his district. His NRA involvement is a potential source of controversy, but the subject matter is far removed from the Agriculture jurisdiction.

A spokesman on rural issues, Espy enjoys indisputable knowledge of domestic agriculture issues. He has focused on issues of concern to cotton, soybean, and catfish farmers and workers -- a focus based on his district's interests. His grasp of global agricultural issues, which will be increasingly important to American farmers in a world of expanded international trade, is unknown.



Given his committee experience and his success in creating bi-partisan coalitions, Espy's appointment as Secretary of Agriculture would likely receive broad support. Espy is identified both with efforts to reduce poverty in the lower Delta and efforts to strengthen farmers, in part because he insists that those goals are not mutually exclusive. A Secretary of Agriculture perceived both as a friend of farmers and an advocate for the poor would be an effective leader on these issues for the Administration. It should be noted that his administrative skills are untested.

Espy made substantial contributions to the Clinton campaign before the Democratic National Convention. He was an early and active supporter and worked to turn out black voters for the campaign.

Cynthia C. Hogan
James W. Cooper

2 Mike Espy (D)

Of Yazoo City — Elected 1986

Born: Nov. 30, 1953, Yazoo City, Miss.

Education: Howard U., B.A. 1975; Santa Clara U., J.D. 1978.

Occupation: Lawyer; businessman.

Family: Divorced; two children.

Religion: Baptist.

Political Career: Miss. assistant secretary of state, 1980-84; assistant attorney general, 1984-85.

Capitol Office: 216 Cannon Bldg. 20515; 225-5876.



In Washington: Espy is often cited as a prototype of the new generation of influential black politicians. His politics are mainstream Democratic, his personal image measured, and his success dependent on a coalition of black and white voters.

Unlike many of his older black colleagues, Espy did not begin his political career at the bully pulpit of the church or early civil rights movement. He is the well-educated product of one of the Delta's more prominent black families, and got his start as a professional. His early political experience was essentially administrative — as an assistant secretary of state and then as the director of the attorney general's consumer protection division.

"Our successes have come in the boardrooms and courtrooms," he says of his generation of black leaders. "My development has always been in a multiracial environment."

Any political differences between Espy and older members of the Congressional Black Caucus might be attributed to their contrasting backgrounds. But there are other, perhaps more salient, factors: Espy is the only black to represent a rural district, and one of a handful to represent nearly as many white voters as black.

Espy has made himself remarkably secure in his marginal district by focusing primarily on economic development issues that transcend party label and are vital to his poor constituents, whatever their color. He calls himself "a spokesman for rural America," and in the 102nd Congress, he has a new platform as chairman of a Budget Committee Task Force on Community Development and Natural Resources.

In his first term, Espy was a player in enacting legislation to create the Lower Mississippi Delta Commission, which was given two years to develop ideas to combat poverty in Mississippi and other states in the region. "America is a chain of states, and in order to make it strong, you've got to focus on the weak links," he said. "Mississippi is a weak link."

When the commission's report was released in late 1990, Espy described it as a "call

to action," but also found some recommendations too costly. "I'd like to have seen more for the money," he said of the report.

But to help enact some of the economic development programs, Espy helped form (and now chairs) the Lower Mississippi Delta Congressional Caucus, a bipartisan group representing the seven-state region. One of the caucus' first coups came with the 1990 Housing and Community Development Act, which included language sponsored by Espy and Missouri Republican Bill Emerson to increase funding for underserved counties.

The Agriculture Committee provides Espy with another forum to aid his diverse constituency. During debate on the 1990 farm bill, he quietly watched out for the 2nd District's large-scale cotton and soybean farmers as well as for those on food stamps. He offered a successful amendment to provide additional technical assistance and education for minority farm families, down from 14 percent of all farmers in 1920 to less than 1 percent today.

Promoting the catfish has been an Espy trademark. Most of the nation's catfish farming is done in Espy's district, which includes about 85,000 acres of man-made catfish farms employing 6,000 people. He helped persuade the Army to increase its catfish purchases, and delivered block grants for two new processing plants for the 2nd. His successful drive for a "National Catfish Day" also made headlines.

But his efforts to promote the whiskered delicacy placed him in a difficult situation when the workers at Delta Pride Catfish Inc. — most of them black women — went on strike shortly before the 1990 election. He avoided a Congressional Black Caucus October hearing on worker complaints about sub-poverty-level wages, saying he wanted to remain neutral to help facilitate a settlement. "My position as a member of Congress is to keep jobs in the district," he said.

Over the years, Espy had carefully cultivated support from the industry as well as its workers, and some saw politics in his reluctance to take sides. Rep. William L. Clay called him a "gigolo" at the Black Caucus hearing and

Mississippi 2

Ever since swamp-draining technology and cheap black labor transformed the Delta into an agricultural gold mine in the years after the Civil War, the region has had a far larger population of poor rural blacks than monied white cotton growers. But throughout the decades, the white establishment managed to keep a firm grip on political power; Espy's election marked a passage into a dramatically new political order.

The largest city in the 2nd is Greenville, an old river port and cotton market and the traditional "capital" of the Mississippi Delta. This is one of the few areas in the region that has gained population in recent years. Greenville, the seat of Washington County, is the home of the *Delta Democrat*, the politically moderate newspaper published for a generation by Hodding Carter Jr.'s family. Greenville still has a reputation as one of the more racially tolerant communities in the state.

In the past generation, thousands of Delta blacks have been pushed out of work by farm mechanization and have moved on to Chicago, St. Louis and closer Sun Belt cities such as Little Rock and Memphis. Preliminary census figures showed a mass exodus from the 2nd in the 1980s — about

North Central — Mississippi Delta

30,000 — mainly from the Delta's rural areas.

Many of those remaining live under Third World conditions. 53 percent of majority-black Tunica County live under the poverty line, making it the poorest county in the nation; in Humphreys County, about 29 of every 1,000 babies die before their first birthday.

The result is that the 2nd District has displaced the 1st as the Mississippi constituency kindest to statewide Democratic candidates. Eleven of the 18 Mississippi counties carried by Michael S. Dukakis in 1988 were entirely within the 2nd District.

Vicksburg, seat of Warren County, is the district's second-largest city. Its Catfish Row is considered to be the southern terminus of the Delta region. The major Republican enclave in the 2nd, Warren County gave Franklin a 5,442-vote edge in 1984, but two years later, Espy cut that advantage in half, a major factor in Franklin's downfall. By 1990, Espy was carrying Warren County handily.

Population: 503,935. White 207,501 (41%), Black 293,809 (58%), Other 2,599 (1%). Spanish origin 8,109 (1%). 18 and over 323,647 (64%). 65 and over 62,638 (12%). Median age: 28.

accused Espy of trying to cancel the hearing. Those comments eventually drew a written apology from Clay. Days later, Espy came out in support of the workers. "There will not be another Mike Espy-sponsored catfish dinner and another Mike Espy-sponsor catfish day until this thing is over," he said. The strike was settled in early December.

Despite his focus on local matters, Espy gets more national limelight than a typical junior House member: He was showcased at the 1988 Democratic National Convention, where he was asked to introduce the keynote speaker. And in early 1989 he appeared in a national magazine advertisement for the National Rifle Association. The ad shocked many Democrats, but Espy, an NRA member since 1974, viewed the ad as "a statement of my independence."

While Espy votes with a majority of Democrats more often than anyone else in Mississippi's delegation, he is not shy about going his own way when it suits his rural district. In addition to opposing gun control, Espy parts ways with most Democrats by supporting the death penalty in certain cases, and he backs prayer in schools.

Nonetheless, House Democratic leaders

did everything they could to boost Espy's re-election chances early in his career. They gave him a seat on Agriculture, and made him the only Democrat in his class to win a spot on the Budget Committee, an attention-getting assignment both at home and in Washington. At the start of the 101st Congress, he was named an at-large whip. But he has not been given *carte blanche*. He lobbied unsuccessfully for a seat on Appropriations in the 102nd Congress.

At Home: Espy faced considerable skepticism when he challenged GOP Rep. Webb Franklin in 1986. Espy's prominent Delta family owns a chain of funeral homes, but he did not begin with a significant political base. Although roughly half the district's voters are black, there had not been evidence they would turn out in numbers sufficient to produce a congressional victory.

In 1982 and 1984, Franklin won as the House vote split essentially along racial lines; each time, black Democratic nominee Robert G. Clark, a state representative and old-line civil rights leader, fell a few thousand votes short.

But Espy effectively combined old-fashioned inspirational oratory and modern organizational techniques. He mounted a skillful

Mike Espy, D-Miss.

turnout drive that exceeded anything the black community had put together in the past.

At the same time, Espy had some success wooing the white Democratic establishment. A well-educated young professional with a low-key, businesslike manner, Espy presented a less threatening front to ingrained white prejudices. He got the backing of several white county sheriffs and of Mississippi's secretary of state and attorney general. He won official neutrality from other white Democratic officials who had put out the word for Franklin in the past. Espy also made a direct play for the support of farmers, many of whom were suffering through hard times and were angered by some of Franklin's laissez-faire rhetoric.

On Election Day, Espy won only about 10 percent of the white vote, but that was enough in a year when white turnout was low and the Delta's black community was mobilized.

It seemed Espy could have a big fight on

his hands in 1988, when the presidential election would bring out a larger white Republican vote. But Espy toiled throughout his first term to win over some of the monied establishment that had supported Franklin.

GOP nominee Jack Coleman, an attorney who had worked for a business trade association in Washington, sought to polarize the electorate. Although he touted his own ability to boost economic development, his literature told voters that Espy is "representing the interests of the Radical Left: for unions, for abortions, against jobs, against defense, against America and against Americans." When vandals attacked Espy's home during the campaign and scrawled "nigger" on the door, Coleman suggested Espy might have staged the whole thing to generate sympathy. In the end, Espy took roughly 40 percent of the ballots cast by whites, and won about two-thirds of the overall vote. In 1990, Espy easily dispatched his GOP foe.

Committees

Agriculture (21st of 27 Democrats)
Conservation, Credit & Rural Development; Cotton, Rice & Sugar; Domestic Marketing, Consumer Relations & Nutrition

Budget (8th of 23 Democrats)
Community Development & Natural Resources (chairman); Budget Process, Reconciliation & Enforcement

Select Hunger (9th of 22 Democrats)
Domestic (chairman)

Elections

1990 General			
Mike Espy (D)	59,383	(84%)	
Dorothy Benford (R)	11,224	(16%)	
1988 General			
Mike Espy (D)	112,401	(65%)	
Jack Coleman (R)	59,827	(34%)	
Previous Winning Percentage:	1988	(52%)	

District Vote For President

	1988	1984	1980	1976
D	87,968 (50%)	90,653 (49%)	94,781 (57%)	77,986 (54%)
R	83,987 (48%)	93,213 (50%)	68,715 (41%)	60,796 (42%)

Campaign Finance

	Receipts	Receipts from PACs	Expenditures
1990			
Espy (D)	\$448,212	\$219,225 (49%)	\$365,825
1988			
Espy (D)	\$880,227	\$480,490 (55%)	\$886,540
Coleman (R)	\$226,486	\$25,377 (11%)	\$225,873

Key Votes

1991	Authorize use of force against Iraq	N
1989	Support constitutional amendment on flag desecration	N
	Pass family and medical leave bill over Bush veto	Y
	Reduce SDA funding	Y
	Allow abortions in overseas military facilities	Y
	Approve budget summit plan for spending and taxing	N
	Approve civil rights bill	Y
1988	Halt production of B-2 stealth bomber at 13 planes	Y
	Oppose capital gains tax cut	Y
	Approve federal abortion funding in rape or incest cases	Y
	Approve pay raise and revision of ethics rules	N
	Pass Democratic minimum wage plan over Bush veto	Y

Voting Studies

Year	Presidential Support		Party Unity		Conservative Coalition	
	S	O	S	O	S	O
1988	20	75	82	9	50	48
1989	35	59	80	10	34	59
1988	20	69	78	5	42	50
1987	20	73	89	4	40	58

Interest Group Ratings

Year	ADA	ACU	AFL-CIO	CCUS
1988	67	17	83	31
1989	80	16	92	40
1988	85	12	93	25
1987	84	0	88	7

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The Washington Times

September 25, 1992, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part A; NATION; Pg. A5

LENGTH: 586 words

HEADLINE: Blacks blame Republicans for riots but are less liberal than press says

BYLINE: Ralph Z. Hallow; THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BODY:

While former gang members told a Congressional Black Caucus panel yesterday that joblessness produced the Los Angeles riots, black moderates presented evidence that most blacks are more conservative than the liberals who represent them.

Democratic Reps. Maxine Waters of California and John Conyers Jr. of Michigan, both members of the overwhelmingly liberal and Democratic caucus, convened the "Urban Crisis" panel as part of the group's 22nd annual legislative week.

Family values was not an issue for the forum. Federal neglect was.

The panel discussed the problems of black inner-city youths, many of them jobless, who become involved in gangs and often vent their frustrations in the streets.

But, Mrs. Waters argued, the Reagan and Bush administrations withheld money for effective job training. Her anti-Republican anger was matched by D.C. Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly, who was listed as a panel "resource person" and sat with Mrs. Waters to hear testimony.

"We [blacks] have given America her culture, her music and her margin of profit . . . but are still waiting for the 40 acres and a mule we were promised," said Mrs. Kelly, her face contorted in anger. She, too, explained urban rioting and crime as frustration with poverty "so many years after the [1965] Voting Rights Act."

"We are going to evict from the White House a man who . . ." she started to say, but the virtually all-black audience drowned out the rest of her words as it stood and cheered.

Mrs. Waters introduced three young men as "three friends, brothers, who are leaders in my community," wore yellow shirts and white baseball caps emblazoned with "Notre Dame." Each emphasized he was a former gang member and had instituted a truce in his respective gang.

One young man, however, said he had instituted the local gang truce long before the Rodney King verdict.

The Washington Times, September 25, 1992

"We ask for jobs and when they bring us jobs, it's [only] 10, but there are 500 gang members," complained Reggie Johnson, a former leader of the P.J. Watts gang, who also said, "I was incarcerated for three years."

His companions, who gave their names as "High T" and "Chopper" respectively, nodded in agreement. "I was incarcerated for 10 years," High T said. Chopper gave no corresponding figure.

One of the three boasted to a news photographer before testifying that, among them, they probably had killed 30 or more people.

At another panel convened by Democratic Rep. Mike Espy, a moderate Caucus member from Mississippi, Milton Morris, a black think-tank research executive, said his polling shows that only 9 percent of blacks felt the Rodney King verdict justified the L.A. riots. His polling also showed more blacks support the death penalty than oppose it and more blacks favor restrictions on abortions.

By a whopping 88 percent majority, blacks who had heard of school choice or education vouchers favored the concept. A majority of all blacks surveyed, 57 percent, said single mothers on welfare who have additional children should not receive additional welfare benefits and an even higher percentage said single mothers would have fewer children as a result.

The press reflects the bias of black liberals, according to Mr. Espy. "You would never know that more than a third of African-Americans are conservative and another third moderate, and less than a third liberal from reading the mainstream press," he said.

GRAPHIC: Photo, Reggie Johnson (left) and "High T," who say they are former gang members, say federal neglect caused the L.A. riots.; By Cathaleen Curtiss/The Washington Times



74TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FIII format.

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The Washington Post

May 10, 1992, Sunday, Final Edition

SECTION: FIRST SECTION; PAGE A1

LENGTH: 1716 words

HEADLINE: FBI Probes Self-Styled Police Force;
Va. Millionaire's Group Got U.S., Loudoun Aid, Little Oversight

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: Robert O'Harrow Jr., Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

Since 1985, a Middleburg millionaire named J.C. Herbert Bryant Jr. has built an armored task force amid the rolling farmland of Loudoun County. Vowing to help fight terrorism and urban crime, he collected a small fleet of armored vehicles to lend to law enforcement agencies and proclaimed himself commander of the quasi-police force called ARGUS.

Short for the Armored Response Group United States, ARGUS quickly became Bryant's great passion. He poured more than \$ 230,000 of family money into the effort. He sometimes dresses in a military-style uniform and cap, carries a 9mm handgun in his waistband and describes himself in promotional materials as a highly decorated authority on drug smuggling, terrorism and organized crime.

Now, the FBI is asking questions about ARGUS and its zealous commander, who has won praise on the floor of Congress for his work and had support from a long list of federal, state and local officials, especially Loudoun County Sheriff John R. Isom, a co-founder of ARGUS.

The questions center on ARGUS's relationship with Isom's office, which is the focus of a broad federal grand jury probe. A subpoena asked for records about the office's finances, jail operation and relationship with ARGUS, according to Bryant and sources.

The scrutiny of ARGUS has so upset Bryant, 52, that he says he is considering disbanding it. "I don't throw my weight around. I don't throw my titles around . . . Never once have we done anything sneakily, knowingly," Bryant said. Isom declined to comment.

When they began ARGUS, Bryant and Isom envisioned lending the vehicles to police across the country. "There is a real need for an organized effort to combat violent crimes associated with narcotics, sniper, hostage, prison revolts and other life threatening criminal activities," an ARGUS brochure says.

Hundreds of officers have been given ARGUS training, Bryant said. But in six years, the equipment -- some of which now sits rusting at a military facility -- has been used about six times. An armored personnel carrier was sent in 1990 to batter down the door of a Loudoun County man threatening to blow up his house. ARGUS placed itself on standby at a coal mine strike and at a ceremony in Philadelphia noting the 200th anniversary of the Constitution. In 1989, Bryant

The Washington Post, May 10, 1992

transported an ARGUS armored forklift owned by Loudoun County to South Carolina to help after Hurricane Hugo.

The group has received a range of government services and assistance, but received virtually no oversight. Loudoun County Acting Administrator Kirby M. Bowers discovered only recently that ARGUS has used several county-owned and insured vehicles, stored an armored car on county property and received free 24-hour radio dispatch service through Isom's office. "I think it's inappropriate," he said.

ARGUS also received federal surplus equipment, free vehicle storage space, training on a National Guard C-130 cargo plane and hundreds of hours of free time from a \$ 37,828-a-year federal employee who is ARGUS's training director.

Sen. John W. Warner (R-Va.), a Middleburg neighbor who has received a political contribution from Bryant, said letters he wrote to then-Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and others to help Bryant secure military equipment were no different from services he would offer any other constituent. "I don't know much about ARGUS," Warner said last week.

Four members of ARGUS's board, including state Sen. Charles L. Waddell (D-Loudoun), say they have disassociated themselves from ARGUS or not attended meetings in years. "In retrospect, it may have been a mistake lending my name to it," Waddell said.

For Bryant, who said he has not worked for pay in a decade, ARGUS was his way to stay in law enforcement and use his wealth for what he saw as public service. He is a son of parents whose wealth impresses even Middleburg folks used to rubbing elbows with the Mellons and others in the Virginia horse country.

Records show the Bryant family had about \$ 34 million in a private charity foundation in 1990. His father, a 1932 graduate of the University of Virginia, was a principal benefactor of the \$ 3 million Bryant Hall athletic complex at the university.

Bryant's father was an industrialist and owner of the O'Sullivan Corp., a plastics product manufacturer based in Winchester, Va. One of Bryant's grandfathers was a senator and a founder of Ford Motor Co., Bryant said.

Bryant said he wasn't suited to run the family business, now headed by his brother. But he made an unorthodox name for himself in police work. Among other jobs, he worked briefly as an administrator for Interpol, the international police agency. In the mid-1970s, he worked as a deputy and undercover drug investigator for the Palm Beach County, Fla., sheriff's department, where Bryant drove his own Rolls Royce while toiling to trap South Florida drug dealers.

With the formation of ARGUS, Bryant showed the enthusiasm of a new deputy. He said he gets up at 4 a.m. to do paperwork for ARGUS and other volunteer police work.

Bryant also seems proud of the fact that his unpaid status as a deputy U.S. marshal -- a title he and Isom acquired by virtue of their ARGUS positions -- allows him to carry a concealed weapon and gives him arrest authority. In a recent interview, Bryant wore a gun in a belt with a buckle fashioned from handcuffs.

The Washington Post, May 10, 1992

"I'm a law enforcement officer, like it or not. I can arrest you. I can arrest this guy on the street," Bryant said. "But I don't."

Bryant drives around Loudoun in a blue truck with Mississippi sheriff's plates, blue police lights and a police radio because he is a sworn but unpaid deputy in Warren County, Miss., where his family owns an 80,000-acre preserve called Tara. The sheriff of Warren County also is an ARGUS vice president.

Bryant uses all sorts of titles, including colonel and assistant attorney general, but lately he goes by major general in telephone calls and on his business cards. It's an honorary title Bryant said he received from a former Mississippi governor.

Bryant's re'sume' reflects a mix of actual experience and honorary fluff that he seems to have used to his advantage. In the office of Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.), where Bryant is regarded as a philanthropic law enforcement supporter, they call him "The General."

"He's very much interested in law enforcement, and I am too," said Thurmond, who knows Bryant from the U.S. Marshals Foundation, for which Bryant is president and Thurmond is a director. "I've found him to be a very fine man."

Bryant said, "In Washington you need a title or you don't get anywhere."

ARGUS began in late 1985 after Bryant and Isom crossed paths at the scene of a jewelry store robbery in Middleburg, Bryant said.

Isom had just witnessed the MOVE crisis in Philadelphia, in which 11 people including five children died after police bombed a barricaded row house occupied by a radical group and set fire to a city block. Bryant and Isom believed such problems could be averted if police were better equipped.

Bryant incorporated a nonprofit fund-raising group initially known as the Law Enforcement Assistance Foundation. The name was changed to ARGUS Foundation to avoid confusion with other foundations.

The foundation has had little success raising money from the public, according to tax records. The main contributors have been Bryant; Bryant's mother; the Ohrstrom Foundation, which is partly controlled by Bryant's stepmother, M. O. Bryant; and Lochnau Inc., which manages the Bryant family fortune. From 1986 to 1989, family interests kicked in more than \$ 230,000. An additional \$ 58,000 was raised in 1990, records show.

Although ARGUS had money, it wanted armored equipment. For help, Bryant turned to Warner.

In an April 1986 letter to the Federal Property Agency in Richmond, Warner said, "I strongly support the efforts" of Bryant. Warner then sent an aide to Richmond to help open doors and choose equipment, according to the letter. ARGUS "will greatly help in protecting the rights and safety of Americans across the county," Warner wrote.

In 1987, Warner also appealed to Weinberger and asked for "advice on how we may best pursue this initiative and with whom we should discuss the matter."

The Washington Post, May 10, 1992

Warner said he is not sure of the effect of his letters, but he praised Bryant for taking the initiative to help law enforcement. "He was a good, hard charger," Warner said.

Others also have chipped in to help. The Federal Protective Service, the agency that protects federal buildings, allowed a captain to donate hundreds of hours to create a manual and train police to use ARGUS equipment.

"Basically, you're just talking my salary," said Capt. Elliott Grollman, who serves as director of training for ARGUS.

At Bryant's request, the Army Corps of Engineers granted ARGUS free space at Cameron Station in Alexandria to store equipment. Army officials recently asked ARGUS to leave the post because it will be closed in 1995. One official said privately the military wanted no further connection with ARGUS.

Isom helped integrate ARGUS into the sheriff's office by setting up a communications procedure for the group, according to a February 1987 memo, and by assigning a department phone line to ARGUS.

U.S. Reps. Bob McEwen (R-Ohio) and Mike Espy (D-Miss.) joined Warner in praising ARGUS, Bryant, Isom and others in speeches entered in the Congressional Record in 1987 and 1988.

Bryant would not discuss details about where the ARGUS armored cars have been used, but ARGUS helped in South Carolina after Hurricane Hugo when the forklift was used to move food and supplies from cargo planes.

ARGUS never paid officers or public officials, Bryant said. But some people who have helped ARGUS or Bryant have been hunting guests at the Bryant family preserve in Mississippi. They include Isom, twice; Loudoun Capt. John V. Sealock, who serves as ARGUS deputy commander, as many as five times; and other Loudoun officers.

Bryant said he has never financially benefited from ARGUS or other law enforcement initiatives. He is not in it for the money, but to help "mankind," Bryant said.

"There's no prize in this for Herb Bryant . . . There's no golden ring," he said. "We are an educational organization. We educate."

GRAPHIC: SYMBOL

TYPE: NATIONAL NEWS, VIRGINIA NEWS

SUBJECT: LOUDOUN COUNTY; POLICE; GRAND JURY INVESTIGATIONS; CITIZEN CRIME CONTROL ACTIONS; POLICE

ORGANIZATION: ARGUS; ARMORED RESPONSE GROUP UNITED STATES; ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

NAMED-PERSONS: J.C. HERBERT BRYANT JR.; KIRBY M. BOWERS; JOHN W. WARNER; CHARLES L. WADDELL; BOB MCEWEN; JOHN R. ISOM

98TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

Mississippi Business Journal
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January 13, 1992

SECTION: Vol 14; No 1; Sec 1; pg 1

LENGTH: 931 words

HEADLINE: Ameriglove Plant Looking to Rise Above Political Fracas

BYLINE: Bob Yarbrough

DATELINE: Jackson; MS; US

BODY:

A proposed latex glove factory for the Jackson Mall has kicked up a storm of controversy, with some of the local media leading the attack. While most of the words and air time have been spent protesting the political maneuvering surrounding the project, little time has been spent studying the business aspects and economic implications of the Ameriglove proposal. We'll take a look at that here.

For the uninitiated, here's a quick review of the chronology of Ameriglove. It's a minority-owned firm, the principal is Tom Espy, brother of 2nd District Congressman Mike Espy. His money comes from his family's funeral home business. The plant originally was slated to open in Vicksburg, but was wooed away by Hinds County and a site in Bolton was selected.

The move was good for Ameriglove, because Hinds County was offering a better deal, mainly lower interest rates resulting from a general obligation bond issue rather than an industrial revenue bond issue. Supervisors approved the deal to raise \$ 3.3 million, but when it became evident that the decision would be contested through an election, Espy looked for another location. Madison County stepped into the picture then, offering \$ 900,000 from a bond issue. Under that proposal Espy would have had to lease the startup equipment instead of purchasing the \$ 2 million machine, but he was ready to go ahead.

Enter the City of Jackson. The city offered the vacant Jackson Mall and upped the ante to \$ 4.9 million, bypassing the threat of an election by issuing the bonds through the Jackson Redevelopment Authority(JRA). The county would guarantee payment on the bonds.

A final decision from JRA is expected this week.

Local media, particularly WAPT 16 and the Northside Sun, have been relentless in their opposition to the project, with the Sun's publisher Wyatt Emmerich using McCarthy-esque language in referring to the bond issue as "communism."

But political entanglements aside, is this a sound business project and what does it mean for Jackson residents?

The major factor affecting success, and the impetus behind forming this company, is the perceived marketplace for latex gloves--and the fact that

there are no minority glove firms in the United States.

"That right there, that we'll be the only minority glove manufacturer in the United States, should be enough to make us successful," Espy said. "There are government policies that guarantee minorities a portion of contracts."

Ameriglove's minority status is cited by one of the industry's leading market researchers and consultants as a "definite plus."

"Ameriglove's key strategy should be to go after the public sector market first. As the lone minority producer, they will have a considerable advantage," said Bill Howe, technical sales engineer and marketing manager for ACC Automation Co. in Akron, Ohio.

It's important to know that ACC will be selling Ameriglove its machinery, but Howe is a researcher in the industry and says that part of his job is assessing the marketplace and the viability of proposals.

"The latex glove market is dominated by the big players like Johnson & Johnson and Baxter. They sell to the high quality end of the market, such as surgeons' gloves," Howe said. "Then there is a second tier--the imports--which are price-controlled and sell to lower quality, such as exam gloves."

There is an "equally sized governmental market" there too, Howe said, and that is where Ameriglove should concentrate a bulk of its business.

"You hate to say it's a niche out there that they're going to fill, but there is a shortage in the market right now and they can exploit it," Howe said.

The openings in the marketplace are also confirmed by trade magazines. Health Industry Today, in its November 1991 issue, predicts a shortage of "300 million gloves a month, or about 30 percent of all units sold."

That shortage is fueled by a combination of events, chiefly the rise in concern over sexually transmitted diseases and the accompanying Food and Drug Administration regulations.

More medical personnel are being required to wear latex gloves, the kind traditionally supplied by the import market. New FDA regulations, however, have set standards for the gloves that many of the imports do not meet. The result is that buyers in the medical field are looking to American companies to pick up the slack.

Howe cites a small Illinois company as a successful example of how this market shift has impacted American suppliers. The company was formed last year and in six months sold out of its capacity. Debt problems kept it from expanding further.

"If Ameriglove can make gloves that carry the connotation of quality, then there's no telling where they can go," Howe said.

And therein lies the big "if" in this proposal. If Ameriglove's products are not high quality, then the project is sunk. To take action against that event, Espy looked for experience in his plant manager and chemist. He found both in the same person.

Mississippi Business Journal 1992 UMI/Data Courier

Ralph Buster of Canton, Ohio will hold the position of general manager and vice president of operations for Ameriglove. He will bring south more than 30 years of experience, much of it directly related to latex glove manufacturing. From 1980 until 1987, he was the manager of latex compounding, technical and support services for Baxter International.

He will be well compensated for his experience, pulling down an annual salary of \$ 175,000 at Ameriglove.

"We wanted the best and we set out to get it," Espy said. "I think it's significant that a man with this experience believes in this project."

GRAPHIC: Cartoon

SUBJECT: Plastics industry; Industrial plants; Startups; Economic impact; Community relations; South Central

GEOGRAPHIC: South Central Region; Jackson; MS; US

COMPANY: Ameriglove; SIC: 3069

LOAD-DATE-MDC: February 10, 1992

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The Atlanta Journal and Constitution

December 19, 1991

SECTION: NATIONAL NEWS; SECTION A; PAGE 02

LENGTH: 740 words

HEADLINE: New Hope lives in Dirty Corner, Miss.; Housing grant lets 5 families vacate shacks

BYLINE: By Christina Cheakalos STAFF WRITER

KEYWORD: housing; government; finances; development; aid

BODY:

Dirty Corner, Miss. - Two rural women with little education, hard-working husbands and 14 children between them shared a dais with Washington dignitaries Wednesday, listening intently as their congressman talked of controlling one's own destiny.

Then they were asked to speak.

"It really doesn't make sense for people in the United States to live like this," said Magnolia Wilson, 38, looking beyond the audience outside her home, which has no indoor plumbing, a rotting front porch and bold rats that don't wait until dark to terrorize. "It just makes no sense."

Her neighbor, Suzie Woodson, 43, was too shy to say much, but she nodded in agreement. As the speeches continued, the winter wind blew, pulling and snapping the plastic sheets covering the windows of her home.

Through their perseverance and a \$ 100,000 grant from United Parcel Service, five new houses will be built by next Christmas, and Dirty Corner will become New Hope.

"This inspires my life, this new home, this new hope," Ms. Woodson said. "I have lived so pitiful and miserable a life. I was ashamed that no matter how hard my husband worked, we couldn't better ourselves. Until two years ago, we had no running water in here. I had to tote water from a mile away. Living like this makes my soul hurt."; Metaphors from football

Among those who came to celebrate with them in this desperately poor pocket of the Mississippi Delta was Jack Kemp, the U.S. secretary of housing and urban development, who evoked biblical images and seemingly endless football metaphors to connect with the crowd.

"I came here with my friend Mike, one of the quarterbacks of the Democrats, to celebrate the name change of this community from Dirty Corner to New Hope, Miss.," Mr. Kemp said. "These families will have new homes soon. And I want to come back here the day they walk into their new living rooms - all the better if it's when the New Orleans Saints are playing the Philadelphia Eagles."

1991 The Atlanta Journal and Constitution, December 19, 1991

Mr. Kemp's friend is U.S. Rep. Mike Espy, who represents the Mississippi Delta, one of America's poorest regions. Mr. Espy is the first black congressman from Mississippi since Reconstruction.; More than change of name

His alliance with Mr. Kemp and the UPS grant will result in new homes for the five families, who have never experienced the basic convenience of indoor plumbing. The families will live in HUD-provided mobile homes in the interim. The UPS grant will pay for the building materials, and the Mississippi Delta Development Corp. will oversee construction.

"This represents more than a change of name for the community," Mr. Espy said during the midmorning celebration, which included balloons, speeches and rousing music from the West Tallahatchie High School Band. "It's a change in the lives of the hard-working families here. They know that he who controls your home controls your destiny."

In 1973, the families bought their shacks for \$ 20 from the plantation owner they worked for and paid \$ 200 to have them moved to Dirty Corner. But no matter how hard their husbands worked at picking cotton, there was never enough money to make improvements.

Last year, Ms. Woodson and Ms. Wilson opened their doors to a CBS newsman, who came to the area to do a story on the impoverished Delta.

Sister Maureen Delaney, an outreach director at the Tutwiler Clinic, a nearby medical center run by nuns, suggested that they ask Mr. Espy for help. They had been rejected for federal housing loans and grants because they were too poor and their houses weren't worth repairing.

Mr. Espy responded by coming to Dirty Corner, a neighborhood of 13 homes at the end of a gravel road so remote that residents a half-mile away have never heard of it.

On Wednesday, it attracted more than 200 people.

Ms. Woodson looked at Mr. Kemp's shiny, black-tassled loafers as she led him past her rickety porch into her house. She hoped this was the last such tour she would have to lead.

Despite her meticulous housekeeping and the homemade quilt on her bed, Mr. Kemp could not have failed to notice the wall-to-wall beds in the children's rooms, the rotting floorboards and the rat-chewed holes in the walls.

Before leaving the newly christened New Hope, Mr. Kemp pronounced the two women "modern-day Nehemiahs" - who, like the biblical pragmatist, looked at the ruins of ancient Jerusalem and said, "Come, let us rebuild."

GRAPHIC: photo: Jack Kemp, U.S. housing secretary, gets a heartfelt thanks from Magnolia Wilson on Wednesday in Dirty Corner, Miss. / JOHN FOCHT / Special

120TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

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The Washington Times

September 13, 1991, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: Part A; Pg. A1

LENGTH: 832 words

HEADLINE: Caucus reiterates Thomas opposition

BYLINE: Ronald A. Taylor; THE WASHINGTON TIMES

BODY:

The Supreme Court nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas was barely a day old when the Congressional Black Caucus stirred the first rumbles of organized opposition to President Bush's choice to succeed retiring Justice Thurgood Marshall.

Yesterday, on the second day of the caucus' annual five-day gathering in Washington, its fund-raising entity, the Congressional Black Caucus Foundation Inc., restated that opposition in a report titled "In Opposition to Clarence Thomas: Where We Must Stand and Why."

While other black leaders nervously eyed opinion polls that showed solid support for Judge Thomas among blacks, the caucus in July staked out a bold, and briefly solitary, position against the black conservative.

Its early reaction to the Thomas nomination - on the eve of the caucus' 21st anniversary - reflected a tone of self-assured independence that was sounded in a news conference to explain the caucus decision.

Caucus Chairman Edolphus Towns, New York Democrat, characterized the group's conclusion on Judge Thomas as a "collective position reflecting an unimpeachable portfolio of experience."

"Among us are chairs of five full committees including Government Operations, Ethics, Post Office and Civil Service, the Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, and the Committee on the District of Columbia," he said.

Mr. Towns also said their ranks include "13 subcommittee chairs as well as some of the most senior members of the House Judiciary Committee, Ways and Means, Education and Labor, and the House Rules Committee. Among us is a former member of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and seasoned veterans of state legislative bodies and the bar.

"We are qualified to draw the conclusions and to make this case," Mr. Towns said.

That glittering list of congressional posts has had little impact on black public opinion on the Thomas nomination, according to caucus aides. "The caucus has a loud bark but very little bite on such questions," said one black caucus staffer privately.

The Washington Times, September 13, 1991

Still, the 25 Democrats and one Republican are viewed by Capitol Hill lawmakers as key votes to be wooed.

What's more, the annual caucus legislative week, climaxing Saturday with a black-tie dinner honoring Justice Marshall, is considered a mandatory stop on the itineraries of corporations that want their share of black middle-class buyers and companies eager to attract black executive employees.

Although African ancestry is still the key requirement for full membership in the black caucus, 45 white members of Congress - including Democrats Gary L. Ackerman of New York, Steny H. Hoyer of Maryland, Joseph P. Kennedy II of Massachusetts and Tom Lantos of California - hold associate caucus memberships.

Mr. Ackerman even addressed a caucus meeting in June to explore a fact-finding trip to Israel on the status of Ethiopian Jews, the congressman's spokesman said.

The caucus was formed in 1970 by a handful of black members of Congress in what former journalist Thomas Johnson, who wrote extensively about black affairs for the New York Times in the 1960s and '70s, called "a great crusade" when the tone of the black congressional presence was a mix of the flamboyance of Harlem's Rep. Adam Clayton Powell, New York Democrat, and the quiet diligence of now-retired Rep. Augustus Hawkins, California Democrat.

Now, the old guard of members such as John Conyers Jr., Michigan Democrat, Charles B. Rangel, New York Democrat, and Julian C. Dixon, California Democrat, have been joined by newcomers to Congress such as caucus chairman Towns and Democratic Reps. Cardiss Collins of Illinois, Alan Wheat of Missouri, Kweisi Mfume of Maryland, and John Lewis of Georgia, a civil rights veteran and recently elected House majority whip.

The newcomers reflect a broader spectrum of the political landscape than their predecessors. While Rep. William L. Clay, Missouri Democrat, is considered a vestige of the New Deal labor-liberal coalition, Gary Franks, a black conservative from Connecticut, is the first black Republican in the House since 1928 and Rep. Mike Espy, Mississippi Democrat, did an endorsement advertisement for the National Rifle Association.

Some of the newcomers are not intimidated by the trappings of Capitol Hill either. When Rep. Maxine Waters, California Democrat, insisted that House Veteran Affairs Committee Chairman G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery, Mississippi Democrat, addressed her "too familiarly," according to a House staffer, she blasted with blunt language - in a public session of the committee.

The current black caucus still has detractors. Southern Christian Leadership Conference President Joseph Lowery criticized the group for reacting to the Thomas nomination without consulting the rest of black leadership.

"The CBC set themselves up as the voice of black America. They were rounding third base before the umpire said play ball," he said.

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September 11, 1991, Wednesday, Final Edition

SECTION: EDITORIAL; PAGE A23

LENGTH: 863 words

HEADLINE: End of a Monolith . . .

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: David S. Broder

BODY:

While the world's attention was on the dramatic events in Moscow late last month, Rep. Mike Espy, a black Democrat from the Mississippi Delta, made a speech to a Washington meeting of field employees of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Espy's speech -- along with his unpublicized alliance with HUD Secretary Jack Kemp, a conservative Republican -- says something important about the changing dynamics of racial politics in this country, as the Senate weighs the nomination of Judge Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court.

Liberal critics of the Thomas nomination may denounce it as a cynical ploy by the Bush administration to drive a deeper wedge into the Democratic coalition. But they would have a harder time dismissing the forces that brought Espy -- Mississippi's first black congressman since Reconstruction and the representative of the nation's third-poorest district -- to HUD to praise "empowerment," the self-help philosophy pushed by Kemp and other conservatives.

Espy told the HUD staff members on Aug. 23 that the failure of the Soviet hard-liners' coup that week "tells us a lot about the power of new ideas, especially the idea of empowerment, of taking control of our lives. Empowerment is a Jack Kemp idea, but it is not his alone. It represents a change in philosophy . . . which was long overdue."

Behind the Espy speech lies an intriguing story that demonstrates why Kemp remains -- even in one of the least prestigious Cabinet posts -- one of the Republicans' most creative politicians. And it also tells us how different the next generation of black leaders -- such as 43-year-old Clarence Thomas and 37-year-old Mike Espy -- may be from those we have known until now.

Like many Washington stories, this one began with two politicians seeking help for their own causes. Espy is co-chairman with Rep. Bill Emerson (R-Mo.) of the Lower Mississippi Delta Caucus, which is seeking federal help for a 219-county region that is one of the nation's worst pockets of poverty.

A year ago, they went to see Kemp and asked his assistance in getting an administration response to a report on the region's needs. Kemp agreed to "become their sounding-board inside the administration," and in return, he asked Espy to "take another look" at the Bush-Kemp Project HOPE (Home Ownership for People Everywhere), a program to rehabilitate public housing units and assist

The Washington Post, September 11, 1991

tenants in purchasing them. Espy, who had previously voted against funding HOPE pilot projects, gave it that second look and decided it might work.

Over the next few months, Kemp arranged entree for Espy to other Bush administration officials, and Espy got Kemp a hearing first at the Delta Caucus and then -- to the intense aggravation of older members -- at the Congressional Black Caucus.

The test of their alliance came in June when the HUD appropriation bill hit the House floor. The Appropriations Committee had "zeroed out" any funding for the HOPE program. Espy and Rep. Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.) offered an amendment to shift \$ 151 million -- one-half of 1 percent of the HUD budget -- from traditional programs to let Kemp begin his home-ownership experiment.

"It is not for every project or every tenant," Espy said on the House floor, "but there are some tenants in some projects who would welcome the chance to own their own home . . . and that is what HOPE offers."

Espy was the only Democrat to speak for the amendment. Three other Black Caucus members denounced it as "a cruel hoax" and "a politically driven plot [against] unsuspecting public housing tenants."

But with Kemp joining Espy to lobby off the House floor, they got 66 Democrats to join virtually all Republicans in overruling the Appropriations Committee and giving Kemp the funds to try to move 6,500 public housing families into home-ownership. Two other Black Caucus members -- both young newcomers -- joined the ad hoc coalition and a follow-up breakfast Kemp hosted for Espy to celebrate the victory.

Their districts are likely sites for some of the pilot projects, but both Kemp and Espy said in interviews that the opportunities they see for future cooperation are based on shared ideas as much as on mutual interest.

As Espy said in his speech to the HUD employees, "Empowerment is not a Republican philosophy or a Democratic philosophy; it is an American policy goal. I am a practical Democrat, and I know that some of the programs that emanated from President Roosevelt have not worked. Programs that help people subsist don't really help people out of poverty.

"To escape poverty, people need assets. That is why Project HOPE is so important. On the cotton plantations of the Mississippi Delta, experience taught us that whoever controls your home controls your life. Project HOPE is about helping people who are stuck in public housing attain the assets that will give them self-sufficiency."

Whatever happens to the Thomas nomination, it becomes clearer every day that black leadership is no longer monolithic in its thoughts. And that portends an enormous shift in American politics -- especially if other Republicans become as ready as Jack Kemp to build new coalitions.

TYPE: OPINION EDITORIAL

SUBJECT: BLACKS; POLITICS

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May 23, 1991, Thursday, Final Edition

SECTION: EDITORIAL; PAGE A23

LENGTH: 1200 words

HEADLINE: Democrats All

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: Mike Espy

BODY:

Robbie Rabun knows who her real friends are. As a Mississippi mother on Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Robbie Rabun received \$ 411 each month last year, hardly enough to raise three growing boys. This year, due to a model micro-enterprise program that provided seed capital, technical assistance and self-esteem, Robbie was encouraged to enter the ranks of small-business owners. She now earns \$ 1,800 each month and is off welfare and food stamps. She's independent, proud, productive and has something to leave her children. She is on her way to achieving her small piece of the American dream. Some would even say Robbie is poised to enter the "mainstream."

Criticized as a meeting for "white men in coats," the recent Democratic Leadership Council conference in Cleveland offered an agenda that it characterizes as one of "new choices" -- ideas that would appealingly turn the heads of disaffected Democrats and help the Democratic Party become competitive again in national elections by championing the interests of middle America. The micro-enterprise program that gave Robbie Rabun her boost fits perfectly into this "new choice" agenda.

Proponents of the DLC argue that the political salvation of the party lies in reclaiming the great American mainstream. Critics believe that by reaching out to middle America, the DLC shuns the cause of the core Democratic constituencies that were not in the meeting room. They believe that reaching out to reclaim one group causes the other to fall from historical embrace.

I don't believe this is true. The two are not mutually exclusive, and this is not a zero-sum game. By focusing on the goals that unite us -- rather than those that divide us -- we can forge a renewed effort that draws support from the economic bottom and middle and adherence from the political left and center. We can earn the loyalty and trust of the mainstream by pulling more Robbie Rabuns into it from the fertile river bottom.

There were mostly "white men in coats" in Cleveland -- because that's who could afford to be there. Clearly, to assemble a more diverse group of Democrats, the DLC will have to reach out with its wallet as well as its ideas. Its effort to organize state chapters among rank-and-file Democrats has been highly successful and constitutes the real laboratory acid test of the marketability of the new choice agenda. These new DLC Dems are making themselves heard throughout the nation. They just weren't in Cleveland.

The Washington Post, May 23, 1991

The truth is, however, that whether it's within Jesse Jackson's "rainbow" or the DLC's "mainstream," both want to bring Robbie Rabun in from the cold. Both advocate meaningful welfare reform, micro-enterprise programs, a boost in the earned income tax credit for working parents and steadfast promotion of HR1, the Civil Rights Act of 1991. Both agree on a multitude of other ideas as well. If they would talk to each other rather than about each other, the points of unity would become more readily apparent.

But like sibling rivalry, the attempt to establish hegemony within a family unit is both understood and accepted. Within the Democratic National Committee family, arguments abound. Intraparty squabbles are nothing new. However, it is clear to me that the similarities outweigh the differences and that although under different tents, they both reside well within our national Democratic house.

Leaders of the DLC made a mistake by excluding Jesse Jackson from the list of potential presidential contenders who were invited to address the Cleveland conference. That's taking sibling rivalry too far. Democratic National Committee Chairman Ron Brown had the appropriate response when he told the convention he refused to let anyone divide him from other Democrats. Like a wise father, the chairman knows that the party needs to be united to win.

What Democrats, and the nation, do not need is another irrelevant, divisive debate between "liberals" and "conservatives" -- either within the party or between Democrats and Republicans. I am convinced that labels such as "liberal," "conservative" and even "moderate" often obstruct rather than enlighten the political debate. They obscure discussion about practical, common-sense solutions to our problems.

These labels ignore the grim realities facing middle-income and working-class Americans: a recession that has thrown almost 2 million Americans into the ranks of the unemployed, a health care system that leaves 33 million Americans uncovered and vulnerable, an educational system that leaves our children hopelessly behind those of other industrialized nations, growing numbers of hungry children, inner cities and rural areas plagued by crime and violence, a tax system that has steadily increased the burden on lower- and middle-income Americans while lowering that of the wealthy, and serious doubts as to whether they are doing relatively better than their parents.

The DLC has an important role to play as it tries to make inroads to reclaim middle America. But the DLC and other Democratic organizations must be careful not to allow our own skepticism to move beyond healthy debate into divisive discourse. Especially now, as the costs of 12 years of Republican-led excesses are becoming clear, the American people are looking for leadership skilled in problem solving, not sloganeering.

The Republicans offer division and diversion. The use of the false quota issue to divide black, brown and white workers, men and women, in the debate over the civil rights bill is political sleight of hand. This technique diverts attention from real solutions and at its ugliest fosters intolerance, hatred and violence.

In Cleveland, the DLC set itself firmly against quotas. That caused concern among some Democrats who believe the quota issue plays into the Republicans' grand strategy. Perhaps that is so. But the real debate is not whether

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Democrats favor quotas. They do not. The debate should be over how to reverse economic decline and promote a growing economic pie rather than pitting people against one another. By torpedoing the negotiations between the business community and the civil rights leadership, the president may have kept the quota issue alive, but that will do nothing to restore economic competitiveness, which is the key to expanding job opportunities for the American people.

That brings to mind one final point about the DLC conference. Some have pointed out that representatives of corporate America were very visible in Cleveland. Perhaps the critics haven't noticed, but American business also suffers under the massive budget and trade deficits, historically high real estate interest rates, consumer apprehension and recession. They tremble under a shaky financial system spawned by a decade of speculation and neglect of the real investment needs of our society. Restoring our nation's economic competitiveness must be a central element of any aggressive Democratic program to regain the White House. That will be good for corporate America, middle America and Robbie Rabun.

The writer, a Democratic representative from Mississippi, is chairman of that state's chapter of the Democratic Leadership Council.

GRAPHIC: ILLUSTRATION, JEFF MACNELLY FOR CHICAGO TRIBUNE

TYPE: OPINION EDITORIAL

SUBJECT: POLITICAL PARTIES

ORGANIZATION: DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP COUNCIL; DEMOCRATIC PARTY

NAMED-PERSONS: ROBBIE RABUN; RON BROWN

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August 26, 1990, Sunday, Final Edition

SECTION: FIRST SECTION; PAGE A1

LENGTH: 2419 words

HEADLINE: Nation's Crop of Black Farmers Is Dying Out

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: Guy Gugliotta, Washington Post Staff Writer

DATELINE: TCHULA, Miss.

BODY:

Rodaltion Hart, a 39-year-old graduate of Jackson State University, has 2,000 acres planted in cotton, corn, soybeans and sorghum. He runs cattle as a sideline, and has a lease with option to buy on 1,500 acres of prime Mississippi Delta river bottom.

He owns his equipment: plows, harrows, tractors, combines, cotton pickers, planters -- you name it. He keeps a two-way radio in his mother's house, and has a pickup with a car phone. He is an authentic hardhead: tough, resourceful, smart, certainly one of the most successful farmers in Holmes County, Miss. He is also black.

Hart realized a long time ago that "the system" discriminates against small farmers no matter what color they are. The lion's share of federal subsidies goes to big farmers; those who produce more get more money. And loans are easier for big farmers to get; those with more property have more collateral. The solution is to grow or die: "Getting bigger," Hart said, "is the only way to survive."

But size alone will not ensure success. Hart is bucking the system and making it work, but history suggests he is playing a losing hand. Black farming in the United States, by almost any measure, is a dying business.

In 1920, the United States had more than 900,000 black farmers, one-seventh of the national total, but by 1978 there were only 57,271. In the last agricultural census in 1987, there were 22,954, a drop of 60 percent in nine years. Black farmers today comprise 0.1 percent of all farmers in the United States.

Gone forever is the stereotypical black sharecropper, working in near peonage on white-owned land to provide the cheap labor that used to be performed by slaves. Mechanization after World War II made such labor obsolete, and sharecropping all but disappeared by 1960. There may be only a few black farmers left today, but they are independent.

The U.S. Civil Rights Commission predicted in 1982 that "there will be virtually no blacks operating farms in this country" by the end of the century. There is no reason to doubt this assertion; blacks are leaving farming three

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times faster than whites.

"You don't have anyone who understands farming anymore. Farmers are disappearing, and there's nobody replacing them," Hart said. "I couldn't encourage my son to go into farming; the system is geared up to get me -- he won't even have a chance."

This year Rep. Mike Espy (D), Mississippi's first black congressman since Reconstruction, succeeded in getting \$ 10 million in minority technical and educational assistance written into the 1990 farm bill -- outreach to save a dying trade: "I don't believe it's too late, but almost," Espy said. "We are going to have to work very hard to arrest the slide."

It is a battle worthy of Sisyphus, for even the best black farmers in Holmes County, about 75 miles north of Jackson, have to struggle with a system that is exasperating on its best days, infuriating for much of the rest of the time.

Discrimination in the modern South is a vicious circle. Because of racism and lack of opportunity, blacks traditionally have farmed the worst land with the worst tools with the smallest investment. They could not and did not call on the white power structure for help.

Today white-owned banks are less likely to lend money to blacks because blacks have the worst land, the worst tools and the fewest assets. By any measure, the banks say, many black farmers are poor credit risks. Black farmers call it racism.

"Blacks don't have proper land, and if you get an opportunity to get land, they [whites] charge more," said Jimmy Lee Lacy. "A black farmer can even have the money and they'll still deny him, especially if it's a white landowner."

Lacy, at 57, has farmed near Tchula in Holmes County for 40 years, starting with cotton, corn, hogs and a mule-drawn plow. Like Hart he is an anomaly, a success amid myriad failures. He has 640 acres planted in cotton and soybeans, almost all of it leased land. He is something of a local legend, known for his ability to make things grow -- and pay -- where nobody else can. "I'll do fair this year," is all he would say. "I always do fair."

To escape the trap that history has sprung on them, black farmers turn to federal programs designed to circumvent the worst of society's biases.

But Lacy and many other black farmers in Holmes County complain about farm programs, especially those of the Farmers Home Administration, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's lead agency in granting or guaranteeing crop loans to the poor farmers of the Mississippi Delta.

Some of the complaints may be traditional farmer belly-aching. "Farmers Home never gives enough" is a frequent gripe, as is the widely held belief that the agency is staffed by incompetents.

But blacks also charge that Farmers Home systematically and deliberately drowns them in red tape, stalls on loans or responds late to their requests. The agency has an office in every agricultural county in the country, and most counties are staffed by local people.

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"I have talked about buying a plot of land from Farmers Home," Lacy said. "The guy I want to talk to is in the office until he finds out I'm black, then he's out of the office all the time."

Lacy said he would like to see "justice in loans" from Farmers Home. What he wants are quick decisions: "A man needs his money on time," Lacy said. "If I apply in February, I want to know in March. I don't want to have to wait until May."

It is a complaint heard throughout the Delta. Loans are agriculture's lifeblood, and Farmers Home is the lender of last resort, vitally important to Holmes County and hundreds of other poor counties in the rural South. A decision by Farmers Home on whether to grant or deny a loan will often determine whether a black farmer can farm.

"As long as we have enough money to meet the needs of the community, we'll spend it," said Holmes County Farmers Home supervisor James L. "Larry" Bowen. "There's a place for the FHA, especially in a county like this. There are a lot of good farmers here, and they haven't got anywhere else to go."

Bowen, a bluff, affable middle-aged white man, is universally liked and respected by the black farmers of Holmes County: "He'll do anything he can for you," Hart said. "The problem is in other counties and in regional and state offices."

Statistics provided by the equal opportunity staff at Farmers Home in Washington showed that blacks received 15 percent of all Farmers Home farm loans in Mississippi in the first quarter of 1990, but only 8 percent of the loan monies. The 1987 agricultural census showed that blacks owned 13.7 percent of all farmland in the state.

These percentages improved dramatically in Holmes County, however, bearing out the view of Lacy, Hart and others that Bowen's office will perhaps go further than others in helping blacks: One-third of all loans in Holmes County, where black land ownership approximates that of the state as a whole, went to black farmers in the first three months of 1990, as did 30 percent of the money.

Since 1988, when department investigators found that Farmers Home was ignoring or violating equal rights laws in hiring practices, housing policies and loan preferences, the agency has tried to make a number of changes in Mississippi. It has given civil rights training to all managers in the state and has conducted 100 civil rights compliance reviews at local offices. A loan program for socially disadvantaged farmers has been started, and the agency has entered into a contract to provide outreach to black farmers with help from Alcorn State College, a black land-grant school.

Specific instances of racial discrimination remain difficult to document, as do charges of deliberate foot-dragging or obstructionism on loans. For many black farmers, however, racism is there, even if they cannot prove it.

"Any young white guy, he has no problem, he goes in there with his father and gets exactly what he wants," said Joshua Davis, 33, a beginning farmer with 162 acres near Tchula planted in cotton and soybeans. "It doesn't work for us. Me and my dad go down there and apply for a loan, and they keep us waiting all day long."

The Washington Post, August 26, 1990

Farmers Home early this year denied Davis's loan application, saying he had no "cash flow," a local euphemism meaning he could show no profit at the end of his crop year. He appealed the ruling, and eventually won, but he still has not seen any money: "Seems like the way they have the system set up, they don't want a young black farmer to get started."

Unlike Hart or Lacy, Davis has struggled ever since he first tried to plant a crop in 1982. One year he got a loan, but could not repay it because rain delayed his harvest and reduced his cotton yield. Another year his son got sick, costing him a lot of money and forcing him to take a town job.

He acknowledged that "I haven't ever made any money farming," but said, "I hold the faith, and I'm hoping to bounce back." With cotton prices close to 70 cents a pound, it begins to look like he might finally succeed. "But there's a lot of time between now and going to gin."

Davis, an easygoing, gentle man who once dreamed of playing professional basketball, takes his inspiration from his father, Shadrach Davis, 68, a stern, imposing, career farmer who marched in Mississippi with the civil rights movement in the 1960s.

Shadrach Davis inherited 300 acres of land south of Tchula from his father and an aunt, and he has raised cotton on it since 1943. This year he got \$ 56,000 in loans, \$ 30,000 of it guaranteed by Farmers Home. But, he said, "I asked for it in February and got it in May. I had to borrow from friends to get seed and plant my cotton."

Shadrach Davis eventually would like to have Joshua take over the family farm, and in the meantime is helping Joshua with money and know-how. Without the boost, Joshua said, "I wouldn't have made it. He took care of himself and me."

More than anything else, Joshua said, he and other young farmers need some sort of a "pool" of federal money "set it aside so that if a young farmer has a bad year the government will stay with them, help them to be successful."

Shadrach agrees, but is not hopeful: "If the little farmer could get some money and help he could do all right. My daddy made a good living on five to eight acres," Shadrach said. "But they're trying to run Josh out of here, take the land. I'll tell you, though, no sucker in the world is going to take my land."

Educational and technical assistance -- from community organizations and colleges -- is the key element in Espy's minority farmers' rights legislation.

"First of all, it will make the USDA and specifically Farmers Home more sensitive to minority farmers," Espy said. "It will also create some allies -- now we have a promotional component for minority farmers just as we have in the farm program in general."

They are small steps to reverse a decline and collapse that have been going on for most of the 20th century, the product of rural poverty in the South and urban promise in the North.

"By the end of the '30s you already had a lot of black farmers shaken loose from the system," said Pete Daniel, a curator in the Smithsonian Institution's

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Division of Agriculture and Natural Resources. "Then World War II attracted a lot of blacks to industrial jobs, and when they saw how much money they could make, they never wanted to go home."

The Mississippi Delta started to empty out, as the emigrants headed for northern cities and menial jobs in factories and service industries. Shadrach Davis was 20 in 1942 when his four brothers and sister moved to Detroit and Chicago, leaving him alone on the farm. "I never wanted to go north," he said. "My parents were getting old, and somebody had to stay on the farm, so I did."

After the war, the exodus got a further boost from the widespread introduction of big machinery in southern agriculture, especially automatic cotton pickers. "With wholesale mechanization, landowners could abandon sharecropping and tenant farming. They didn't need the labor," said Agriculture Department demographer Calvin Beale. "And by the end of the 1950s, a landowner couldn't go back to the old ways even if he wanted to. There weren't enough people left."

The last jolt to black farming occurred at the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the '80s. President Jimmy Carter encouraged farming and at the beginning of his term, loans were easy to get, even for farmers, who, Rodalton Hart said, "maybe shouldn't have been farming."

But interest rates started to rise, slowly at first, then alarmingly. Farmers defaulted on their loans, and then farms began to fail by the thousands.

The poorest and smallest farmers suffered the most, and blacks took a heavy hit. And as the Reagan years wore on, Farmers Home, badly burned by liberal loan policies, became stingier. Loans were harder to get, and black farmers again were disproportionately hurt.

Holmes County was a microcosm of this process. In 1930 it had 40,000 people and 6,604 farms, of which 5,660 were operated by blacks, many of them sharecroppers. In 1987 it had barely half as many people as it had 57 years earlier, and there were 420 farms and 104 black farmers and no sharecroppers.

Holmes County today is one of the poorest in the nation, with per capita annual income estimated at \$ 3,400 and 70 percent to 80 percent of its inhabitants living below the poverty line. Unemployment is 15.3 percent, the highest in Mississippi. Lexington and Tchula, its two largest towns, are half empty, their streets lined with boarded-up buildings and used furniture stores running fire sales.

Out in the country, the roads are dirt or gravel, flanked by long, skinny clapboard "shotgun houses," so named because a single shotgun blast could rip through them from end to end. Most shotgun houses are tumbledown derelicts today, their porches engulfed by creeper, their sides washed gray by a thousand rainstorms.

Joshua Davis is hanging on, with his father's help.

"Farmers Home wouldn't give me a loan because I didn't have cash flow, but I had assets. I had a tractor, a planter, a cultivator, a harrow and a 40-foot cotton trailer," Davis said. "It cost me \$ 25,000 just for planting expenses, chemicals and poison. I had to get it from dad."

The Washington Post, August 26, 1990

As a young farmer, Davis is a rarity. As a young, black farmer he is even more of a rarity. And as a young, black, small farmer he is truly an endangered species, perhaps soon to be extinct.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, RODALTON HART, WHO HAS 2,000 MISSISSIPPI ACRES, SAYS, "GETTING BIGGER IS THE ONLY WAY TO SURVIVE.", DAYNA SMITH

TYPE: NATIONAL NEWS

SUBJECT: BLACK; FARMERS; FARM SUBSIDIES; CROP PRODUCTION

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March 20, 1990, Tuesday, Final Edition

NAME: GROVER CONNELL

SECTION: FIRST SECTION; PAGE A1

LENGTH: 1753 words

HEADLINE: The Corporate King of Honoraria;
New Jersey Company Gets 'All the Nuances' When Lawmakers Visit

SERIES: Occasional

BYLINE: Charles R. Babcock, Washington Post Staff Writer

LEAD: Grover Connell has no Washington office, no full-time lobbyist and no political action committee. He doesn't hold fund-raisers for candidates and doesn't like to schmooze at political events. But the New Jersey businessman, who runs a \$ 1 billion export and leasing company, still has been able to make friends in Washington.

BODY:

Grover Connell has no Washington office, no full-time lobbyist and no political action committee. He doesn't hold fund-raisers for candidates and doesn't like to schmooze at political events. But the New Jersey businessman, who runs a \$ 1 billion export and leasing company, still has been able to make friends in Washington.

At least once a week, Connell invites a member of Congress to his company's headquarters in Westfield, meeting the guest with a limousine at Newark Airport, 20 minutes away. Over a buffet lunch, the lawmaker gives company executives an overview of what Congress is doing and answers questions, then takes home a \$ 2,000 speaking fee. Last year, the Connell Co. gave more honoraria to members of Congress than any other company in the nation -- about \$ 100,000 worth.

Occasionally, Connell invites his congressional speaker and spouse to spend a weekend in nearby New York City at his firm's expense. They stay at a top hotel such as the Plaza or the Helmsley Palace and Connell takes them to dinner, too. "We get to spend more time with them, get to know them better," said Connell, who is nearly 72, but looks years younger. "We think it's worthwhile and it's within the House rules."

What does he get for his money? According to Connell, he gets information essential to his business interests, such as how a planned investment might be affected by changes in a government program. He gets access to members of Congress when he needs it. And he has the ability to call on members to attend a reception for the head of a foreign country where he does business.

"If we spend \$ 100,000 a year on honoraria, that's nothing compared with the cost of having a Washington office or hiring a lobbyist. And we think we do better," Connell said.

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Connell says he cannot understand why more of corporate America doesn't do the same. "The government is an enormous player in its effect on our business," Connell said in an interview at his office. "We think it's worthwhile to know which directions we are headed in."

Connell's net worth has been estimated at \$ 350 million and his company is one of the larger private firms in the nation, yet little is known about either.

The firm has sold rice and sugar for years, and since the 1970s has diversified into such areas as importing processed foods from the Orient, arranging leasing deals for railroads, airlines and utilities, and building commercial developments.

A company booklet notes that its sales are more than \$ 1 billion a year and includes pictures of many of its products and projects, but not of its chief executive. Connell said he doesn't seek publicity. And his style belies his wealth. For instance, he shares his office with his son, Ted, and another executive.

But Connell isn't shy about his political giving. He and his wife, Pat, each make the maximum \$ 25,000 a year in personal political donations to federal campaigns, he said. He also gave \$ 200,000 in corporate funds -- over a four-year period -- to help build a media center for the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee when it was headed by his friend, then-Rep. Tony Coelho of California.

Connell said he doesn't ask his speakers for special legislative favors. It's enough, he said, to get a sense of "the current direction of the country" in the agricultural, trade and tax policy fields that affect his company. And he gets it delivered in person, "with all the nuances," he said. "We think this gives us a perspective others don't have."

At times, Connell has used his extensive contacts on Capitol Hill in ways that bolster his business interests. He was especially close to the late Rep. Otto Passman (D-La.), for years the chairman of the House Appropriations subcommittee that controls the foreign aid budget. In the 1970s, Passman pressured foreign governments on Connell's behalf. More recently, Connell has invited members of Congress to receptions that he has sponsored for the controversial president of Zaire, Mobutu Sese Seko.

U.S. foreign aid to Zaire, which has rich mineral resources but one of the smallest per capita incomes in the world, has been limited because of congressional concerns about human rights abuses and corruption. For instance, Rep. Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Africa, said at a hearing last year he had seen evidence "that literally hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars have vanished into the hands of the president [Mobutu] and his collaborators."

Connell's firm has sold rice to Zaire for many years and a few years ago solicited a contract to supply equipment for Zaire's state-run mining company, Gecamines. "I consider Mobutu a personal friend and I admire a lot of what he's done," Connell said. "He created a nation . . . I don't think Zaire has a severe human rights problem. I think he's being falsely accused. And corruption is a problem everywhere in the Third World."

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Connell said introducing members of Congress to the African leader "creates goodwill certainly" with Mobutu. But he said his motive wasn't to help cement his business ties. "We were trying to do something that would give members of Congress a better understanding of what he [Mobutu] was actually like."

"I went because Grover asked me," said Rep. Robert T. Matsui (D-Calif.) in a comment echoed by other lawmakers who attended the receptions. "I didn't go to meet the prime minister or president of Zaire. I didn't even know who he was."

Connell said he became active in Washington in the early 1970s. His firm was named Connell Rice & Sugar Co. at the time and it dominated the government-supported Food for Peace market in rice. His first donations and speech payments were directed mostly to members from the rice-growing districts of California, Arkansas and Louisiana. One of his early honoraria payments, for example, was \$ 1,000 to Passman for a July 24, 1975, visit to Westfield.

Connell's relationship with Passman was laid out in a House investigation of South Korean influence-buying in Congress in the late 1970s.

The final report said Passman pressed Connell's business interests in several countries. Passman, who was defeated in 1976 and acquitted of criminal charges in the scandal, told a federal investigator that he forced the Koreans to hire a Connell shipping company by threatening to cut off foreign aid if they refused.

Connell said he has never been as close to a member of Congress as he was to Passman. "He was the most unique personality I ever met in my life and eccentric to the extreme. . . . He did speak for us. There's no question about that."

Connell's sales of rice to South Korea provided millions of dollars in commissions for Korean agent Tongsun Park, who gave some of the money back to members of Congress, including Passman, in cash.

Connell was indicted on fraud, racketeering and perjury charges alleging that he agreed to pay Park \$ 600,000 in commissions and then covered up the secret agreement by sending the payments to the offshore bank account of a Korean company. Connell denied that he knew the payments were going to Park.

The charges were dropped when Park, who was a key witness in the case, changed his testimony, the Justice Department said at the time. Connell said recently, as he did after the indictment, that he was unjustly accused.

In 1982, a State Department official told Congress that Connell had threatened to use his influence in Congress to cut off foreign aid to South Korea if the Koreans didn't buy his rice. Connell says he never made any such claim.

During the past decade, world rice markets have softened and Connell has diversified his business into leasing and real estate development. He expanded his list of honoraria speakers as well.

In 1981, his firm gave out \$ 11,000 in speaking fees to 11 members of Congress. By 1985, the amount had increased to \$ 60,000 for 30 members. By 1987, the figure had grown to \$ 84,000.

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Two of Connell's close friends in the House, Coelho and Rep. Bill Alexander (D-Ark.), helped Connell build up his speakers list by suggesting other House members as speakers, according to invitation letters that Connell sent to several members in 1985. The letters referred to the program as "The Congress" seminars and asked members to talk about "ongoing legislative activities of primary interest to us such as those affecting agriculture, foreign trade, taxes and the economy."

The most frequent guests at the Connell honoraria program over the years have been Alexander, who represents a major rice-growing district, with at least nine visits, and Reps. Matthew J. Rinaldo (R-N.J.) and Rep. Julian C. Dixon (D-Calif.), with eight appearances each. Connell's headquarters is in Rinaldo's district, while Dixon served for years on a key Appropriations panel.

Dixon said in an interview that his speeches at Connell's company usually deal with what Congress is doing, as well as the outlook for foreign aid because he served on that Appropriations subcommittee. "A lot of members enjoy Grover's program because he's not lobbying you on any particular issue," Dixon said.

In addition to the receptions that he has hosted for Mobutu, Connell recently arranged for four House members to visit Zaire. The four -- Reps. Robert G. Torricelli (D-N.J.), Robert J. Mrazek (D-N.Y.), Mike Espy (D-Miss.) and Bill Lowery (R-Calif.) -- have appeared at his honoraria program, and Connell also has made campaign contributions to the three Democrats.

Congress paid for the air travel to Zaire, with Mobutu's government paying for travel and lodging within the country. The visit included a private luncheon with Mobutu aboard his riverboat. Mrazek said the congressmen raised their concerns about reports of human rights violations and corruption in the African nation. Connell, but not the U.S. ambassador, was at the luncheon, Mrazek said.

Torricelli said that Connell "offered assistance for getting access to Mobutu and the region." He said he knew Connell had "a close personal relationship" with Mobutu but didn't know the details. "The activities of one businessman are not my concern," he said.

Although the House has voted to bar its members from keeping honoraria after this year, Connell said he will continue inviting members to Westfield to speak and will offer to donate the \$ 2,000 fee to charity. "What their reaction will be, we'll just have to wait and see," he said.

Staff researcher Lucy Shackelford contributed to this report.

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, GROVER CONNELL.; CHART, TWP

TYPE: NATIONAL NEWS, BIOGRAPHY

SUBJECT: LOBBYING; NEW JERSEY; CONGRESSMEN; CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS AND FUNDS; ETHICS; U.S. CONGRESS

ORGANIZATION: CONNELL CO.

NAMED-PERSONS: GROVER CONNELL; TONY COELHO; ROBERT G. TORRICELLI

206TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1989

July 28, 1989, Friday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Mississippi

LENGTH: 469 words

DATELINE: JACKSON, Miss.

KEYWORD: Fludprojects

BODY:

The U.S. Corps of Engineers has agreed to a request by Gov. Ray Mabus to temporarily halt work on two environmentally sensitive flood control projects in the agricultural rich Mississippi Delta.

Mabus said the corps' Vicksburg District agreed to stop dredging work on Black Bayou and the Tallahatchie River in the Upper Yazoo Basin until a review and possibly redesign of the projects can be made. The study is expected to take about two years.

"I think this is a situation where everybody wins," Mabus said. "It's a victory that allows other projects to go forward and at the same time protect the environment to the maximum extent possible."

Environmentalists have charged that the projects would destroy some of the few remaining wetlands in the Delta, damaging waterfowl, fish and wildlife.

In a letter to Mabus, Col. Frank Skidmore said plans will be drawn up to protect the natural areas of the Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge and Leroy Percy State Park along Black Bayou.

Attorney General Mike Moore had already filed suit to halt parts of the Tallahatchie River project and a similar project on the Yalobusha River.

Mabus said he has appointed an eight-member committee to work with the corps on the basin project. He said Mike Goff, gubernatorial assistant for natural resources, to head the committee.

Earlier this year, another committee chosen by Mabus recommended the governor ask the corps to stop construction on environmentally-sensitive projects in the basin. The committee also asked for an economic and environmental impact study.

Flood prone Delta residents, however, were highly critical of the committee's recommendation and accused Mabus of stacking the committee with members environmentalists and hunters with camps in the area. They pointed out all five members of the committee who live in the Delta opposed the recommendations.

Meantime, Rep. Mike Espy, D-Miss. has urged Congress to accelerate funding for flood control projects in the state's agricultural rich Delta. Espy, who represents the 2nd District, particularly cited the Upper Yazoo Basin project, the Sunflower River Basin project and the backwater pumping project in Warren

Proprietary to the United Press International, July 28, 1989

County.

Espy charged that debate by environmentalists, the Corps of Engineers, and state officials has stalled completion of the projects.

'As debate continue, hundreds of homes flood, sewers back up causing health threats, and just this summer, more than 190,000 acres of Delta farmland have been flooded by heavy rains,' he said. 'While others debate, I and all local, elected public entities support the flood control projects.'

In a July 19 letter to Mabus, Espy expressed concern for the environmental and wildlife habitat. 'Ultimately, however, the ongoing construction is imperative,' the congressman told the governor.

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February 21, 1989, Tuesday, Final Edition

SECTION: EDITORIAL; PAGE A22; LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LENGTH: 395 words

HEADLINE: Yes, Mike Espy Is the NRA

BODY:

In a Feb. 10 letter Samuel Purchase raises the question "Is Mike Espy Really the NRA?" I say the answer is a resounding "Yes." I am a D.C. resident and life member of the NRA who is proud of Rep. Mike Espy (D-Miss.) and his support for the NRA. In that letter Mr. Purchase identifies himself as "black" and "ashamed." I am black and proud. We need more legislators in Washington at the local as well as the federal level who recognize what freedom is really about and are willing to stand up for law-abiding citizens who want to protect themselves and their families from violent criminals. Crime rages out of control in the District of Columbia, and law-abiding citizens have been deprived of their right to self-defense by the government -- a government that does little but blame inanimate objects and other people for its failure to put violent drug dealers, who wage war in our streets, in jail where they belong.

Mike Espy is the first black to represent the Deep South since Reconstruction. He has an independent and open mind. He is willing to shed those views that some of the so-called black leaders espouse. He is willing to take a stand for what he really believes to be the rights of all American citizens.

Mr. Purchase reveals his own racist mentality when he describes the NRA as a "redneck, gun-rack-in-the-window organization." Mr. Purchase should be "ashamed" of the appalling ignorance he reveals when he questions whether Mike Espy supports "waiting periods and a ban on plastic guns and armor-piercing ammunition."

1) Several states, including Maryland and California where the recent tragedies occurred, already have waiting periods. Such waiting periods impede only persons sufficiently law-abiding to heed them. Criminals don't wait -- they buy guns immediately in the criminal black market.

2) There is no such thing as an all-plastic gun. Any metal detector that is plugged in can detect quantities of metal far less than that found in any pistol.

3) The NRA's initial opposition to "armor-piercing" ammunition was due to a definition that described most ammunition. After negotiating with Congress, a bill with an acceptable definition was drafted. The NRA supported that bill.

As a law-abiding citizen of the District of Columbia, I believe we need more Mike Espys in Congress -- not fewer.

RICHARD R. ATKINSON, JR.

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February 10, 1989, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: EDITORIAL; PAGE A26; LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LENGTH: 266 words

HEADLINE: Is Mike Espy Really the NRA?

BODY:

I have just read about Rep. Mike Espy (D-Miss.) being the first federal lawmaker to appear in a National Rifle Association ad [Jan. 29], and I must say, I find it absolutely appalling. The NRA has opposed every possible legal control over the sale and use of guns and ammunition. The organization's displeasure with any restriction, no matter how prudent or innocuous, is damaging, because it will ultimately result in greater restrictions.

The NRA's (and Mr. Espy's) position on gun control have even alienated sportsmen such as myself, policemen and individuals who formerly thought the NRA had something to offer. It now carries the image of a redneck, gun rack-in-the-window organization, and I cannot imagine why Mr. Espy is promoting the group.

Does he really not support a waiting period for a handgun purchase? A ban on plastic guns? A ban on armor-piercing ammunition? These bans are so clearly in the public interest that opposition to them is eroding the reputation of the NRA and its cheerleaders, such as Mr. Espy. I hope and pray that Rep. Espy's motivation was not what it appears to be: an effort to get some of the white Mississippi votes.

I am black, and I am ashamed. As a gun owner and sportsman I disassociate myself from the NRA and all it stands for. Responsible gun owners and collectors have much more to fear from the NRA and people like Mr. Espy than they ever will from a Sarah Brady or a Ted Kennedy. Being on the sensible side of issues will make it much easier to prevent restrictions on the use of handguns in the future.

SAMUEL PURCHASE Falls Church

TYPE: LETTER

225TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1989

February 1, 1989, Wednesday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Mississippi

LENGTH: 225 words

DATELINE: JACKSON, Miss.

KEYWORD: Lxnexpense

BODY:

Democratic Congressman Mike Espy easily won re-election to a second term last November, but he may need the proposed 50 percent federal payraise to pay off campaign debts.

Espy, according to campaign financial reports filed with the Secretary of State's office, showed outstanding debts of \$89,278 in his successful race against Republican Jack Coleman of Madison.

During 1988, Espy reported campaign contributions of \$670,680 and expenditures of \$748,847. Debits include \$31,000 Espy loaned to his campaign.

Former Democratic Congressman Wayne Dowdy of McComb also reported debts of \$60,826 in his unsuccessful campaign against Republican Congressman Trent Lott in their race for the U.S. Senate seat vacated by the retirement of John C. Stennis.

Dowdy reported receipts of \$1.98 million and expenditures of \$2.1 million. Reports show Dowdy, reportedly a millionaire broadcast executive, contributed \$50,000 to his campaign.

Other reports filed Tuesday showed 1st District Congressman Jamie Whitten, 3rd District Congressman G.V. Montgomery and new 5th District Congressman Larkin Smith ended their campaigns in the black.

Smith, a former Harrison County Sheriff, reported a campaign surplus of \$18,723.

Whitten and Montgomery, who had only token opposition, wound up their campaigns with surpluses of \$350,000 and \$130,311 respectively.

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Copyright 1989 The Washington Post
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January 29, 1989, Sunday, Final Edition

SECTION: FIRST SECTION; PAGE A21; POLITICS

LENGTH: 372 words

HEADLINE: Rep. Espy Fires A Round for NRA In Advertisement

BYLINE: Maralee Schwartz

BODY:

"Unlike most kids from Mississippi, I didn't grow up hunting. . . . But I understand that freedom to own a firearm -- for recreation or self-protection -- is a constitutional issue. And when government tries to infringe upon a constitutional right, we must be extremely wary and cautious."

Who is this advocate of the rights of gun owners? Rep. Mike Espy (D-Miss.), the first federal lawmaker to appear in the National Rifle Association's "I'm the NRA" advertising series.

Espy, who appears in a full-page color magazine ad holding a shotgun, said in an interview that he has been an NRA member since 1974, when he became interested in competitive shooting at Howard University. Espy described appearing in the ad, for which he says he was not paid, as "a statement of my independence" and "one that was easy for me."

Espy, the only member of the Congressional Black Caucus who represents a rural district, said politicians "have to be sensitive to regional issues and concerns." He said there are 37,000 NRA members in Mississippi. "Down here, people protect their right to hunt and use weapons recreationally," Espy said. "They really care a lot and pay attention to public officials on these issues."

Espy, who last session voted against an amendment to require a waiting period before the purchase of a handgun, said, "People tend to see all black congressmen as liberals with an urban twist: They're all for gun control and against the death penalty. It's not true, and it shouldn't be true. Our communities are different. Don't look to me to support urban mass transit. There are no subways in my district." *

Espy said the decision to appear in the ad was made "thoughtfully" after he was approached by Rep. John D. Dingell (D-Mich.), who is on the NRA board.

Espy, who just won his second term, said he insisted that the ad appear after the election so it could not be interpreted as "an attempt to get the white vote."

Espy said he has received about a dozen letters from contributors in California and the Northeast expressing disappointment. Some have withdrawn their financial support. But he said he has no regrets: "It solidifies my position with voters here. I gain more locally than I lose nationally."

GRAPHIC: PHOTO, REP. MIKE ESPY, IN NRA AD, SAYS HE GREW INTERESTED IN COMPETITIVE SHOOTING IN COLLEGE.

236TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

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November 11, 1988, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: FIRST SECTION; PAGE A9

LENGTH: 707 words

HEADLINE: Pathfinder Turns Up a Landslide;
Rep. Espy Overcame Voter 'Apprehension'

BYLINE: Tom Kenworthy, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

Two years ago, when Democrat Mike Espy defeated the incumbent from Mississippi's 2nd Congressional District by just 5,000 votes and became the first black to be elected to Congress from his state since Reconstruction, newspapers across the country hailed the achievement.

This week, Espy was reelected by almost a 2-to-1 ratio, collecting 40 percent of the white vote in the process.

"The big story here is there's no story," Espy said yesterday in a phone interview from Yazoo City.

"For any black politician to be considered not as a black politician but as a politician, not as Mike Espy the first black congressman from Mississippi but as Mike Espy the congressman from District 2, that is an important step."

In consolidating his hold on a district that has a slight black majority and a segregationist history as strong as anywhere in the nation -- the delta was home to former senator James O. Eastland, a symbol of civil rights defiance -- Espy has written a text on creating a safe seat.

In Congress, Espy concentrated on bread-and-butter issues important to his economically distressed district.

In his campaign at home, he assiduously courted the white vote and built what was by Mississippi standards a huge field organization with 750 precinct captains, 1,500 block captains and biracial cochairmanships in all 22 counties in the district.

On Election Day, when George Bush carried Mississippi with 60 percent of the vote and Republican Trent Lott was elected to the Senate, Espy defeated Republican lawyer Jack Coleman with 65 percent of the vote.

"That really is incredible," said Merle Black, a political scientist at the University of North Carolina. "It's a sign that he received all of the black vote and such a substantial portion of the white vote that the district would seem to be safe for years to come."

"It was a remarkable achievement," agreed Bill Minor, a syndicated political columnist from Mississippi who has been covering the state's politics for four decades. "Most whites, at least most Republicans, did not think he would be able to get anything like that."

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Espy said the key difference between his two election margins was his ability to "overcome the apprehension" during his first two years in Congress.

"You have to get in to serve so they recognize that with a black congressman the sun will come up tomorrow just like it did yesterday," Espy said.

On Capitol Hill, Espy has served on the Agriculture and Budget committees, assignments that have allowed him to protect the critical farm interests of his district.

With commercial catfish farming an increasingly important industry -- 90 percent of the catfish in the country comes from the delta and the industry employs 17,000 people in his district -- Espy persuaded the Army to increase its purchases of the fish by almost 400,000 pounds and obtained Community Development Block Grants for two new processing facilities.

Espy also formed an agricultural advisory commission to guide him, and every two months the 65,000 farmers in his district got a letter from their congressman.

Such efforts, along with his role in passing legislation to create a Mississippi Delta Commission patterned on the Appalachian Regional Commission, helped solidify Espy's hold on the district, said Steve Patterson, former chair of the Mississippi Democratic Party.

"There is a sense that Mike is on the side of the farmer," Patterson said.

Patterson said Espy's huge reelection margin and ability to win white votes "is symbolic of the change in attitudes taking place in Mississippi."

But he and other Mississippians were more cautious in predicting that other black politicians would soon be able to follow Espy's lead.

"I think it shows that a black who is very capable and well-organized and reaches out to bring whites into his operation and makes certain he is not representing one race has possibilities," Minor said. "But I still think Mississippi is not ready to elect a black to statewide office."

Espy characterized it in the same kind of practical way that has marked his first two years in Congress: "I've always said there was a Catch-22," he said. "You have to get in there to produce and in order to produce you have to get in."

TYPE: NATIONAL NEWS, BIOGRAPHY

SUBJECT: CONGRESSMEN; ELECTION RESULTS; BLACK; MISSISSIPPI

NAMED-PERSONS: MIKE ESPY

252ND STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1988

October 24, 1988, Monday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Mississippi

LENGTH: 208 words

DATELINE: VICKSBURG, Miss.

KEYWORD: Espy

BODY:

The National Rifle Association has endorsed the re-election bid of Rep. Mike Espy, D-Miss., it was announced today.

The NRA, according to a statement released by the congressman's campaign headquarters, mailed letters to its membership throughout the 2nd District urging sportsmen "to keep one of your strongest allies in Washington, D.C., as a U.S. Representative."

The mailing, according to the statement, included a "Sportsmen for Espy" bumper sticker.

"Rep. Espy recently stood up for your rights in one of the toughest and most important rights we've faced. When anti-handgun forces in Congress pushed a nationwide waiting period-handgun check-regulation amendment onto an anti-drug bill, Rep. Espy voted to preserve your right by taking the gun control amendment out of the bill," the NRA statement said.

Espy, who faces Republican Jack Coleman and independent Dorothy Benford in the Nov. 8 elections, said he welcomed the endorsement from the NRA.

"I believe in the right of an individual to own a gun to protect his family and property and for recreational purposes," Espy said. "I do not believe the federal government should hinder those basic rights."

A rifle instructor in college, Espy said he is a member of the NRA.

255TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1988

September 30, 1988, Friday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Mississippi

LENGTH: 299 words

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

KEYWORD: Espy

BODY:

Rep. Mike Espy, D-Miss. has refused to debate his two opponents in the 2nd Congressional District race saying to do so would 'give credence to the desperate and corrupt tactics which they have introduced into the public dialogue.'

In a letter to Bob Ghetti, news director at WABG-TV in Greenwood, Espy said he would be unable to appear at scheduled tapings Sept. 29 and Oct. 26 because of critical votes in Washington and earlier campaign commitments.

The state's first black congressman since Reconstruction joined House colleagues Thursday in approving \$2 million in funding for the the Lower Mississippi River Delta Development Act. He was a co-sponsor of the bill.

On Oct. 26, Espy told Ghetti that he would be campaigning in the district with Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga.

Despite his prior commitments, Espy was critical of campaign tactics being used by Republican Jack Coleman and independent Dorothy Benford.

Coleman has repeatedly accused Espy, who represents the state's agricultural district, of voting against bills that would assist financially-strapped farmers. Earlier this week, Coleman hinted that Espy's staff may have been involved in vandalism at the congressman's home to gain sympathy.

'Ad hominem attacks, distortions, and plain, old fashioned lies are not a part of any process that I will condone,' said Espy. 'I have been advised by my colleagues in Congress and within the Mississippi delegation, and my friends and supporters in our district, not to dignify my opponents' tactics and their motives by standing for their continued insults and misrepresentations of my record,' Espy said. 'For these reasons, I will not cancel any congressional or campaign meetings in order to debate.'

'I will take my record straight to the people,' the congressman said.

256TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1988

September 27, 1988, Tuesday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Mississippi

LENGTH: 198 words

DATELINE: JACKSON, Miss.

KEYWORD: Vandalism

BODY:

Republican 2nd Congressional District candidate Jack Coleman Monday suggested racial slurs carved at the home of U.S. Rep. Mike Espy may have been staged to generate sympathy for the state's first black Congressional since Reconstruction.

'I'm not accusing him of anything,' Coleman said. 'I don't have any information to say that at all.'

But Coleman said more than half the people he has talked to in the district believe he (Espy) may have been involved. 'Personally, I don't think Mike Espy would do it but I think there are folks in his campaign who might,' Coleman said.

Vandals attacked Espy's home Sept. 21, scrawling the word 'nigger' on two garage doors, spattered paint on an entryway and uprooted plants.

Madison Police Chief Jimmy Dukes said his investigation was continuing but he has no reason to believe either Espy or his campaign was involved. The FBI is also investigating the incident.

Espy said he was disappointed by Coleman's speculation, and denied either he or his campaign was involved.

'I just think that this is another in a series of irresponsible statements,' said Espy. 'I continue to be disappointed by his conduct and his rhetoric.'

260TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1988

September 16, 1988, Friday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Mississippi

LENGTH: 208 words

HEADLINE: Coleman says Espy should fire his brother

DATELINE: JACKSON, Miss.

KEYWORD: S- Espy

BODY:

Republican Jack Coleman who is trying to oust U.S. Rep. Mike Espy from the 2nd Congressional District is calling today on Espy to fire his brother as a campaign consultant.

Coleman has distributed copies of court records relating to Tom Espy's conviction in 1984 on federal charges of making false statements on a loan application.

Tom Espy is on probation, but works on his brother's campaign and according to campaign records has been paid \$71,000 to date for his services.

Mike Espy called Coleman's latest salvo in the battle to win the November election the actions of "a desperate candidate."

"Since the beginning of this campaign he's done nothing except distort my record in an effort to mislead the public," Espy said. "So now he has turned his attacks on my family. I guess my wife and kids are next."

But Coleman said that in hiring his brother, Espy had "once again shown us the same lack of good judgment as when he voted to raise his pay in the U.S. Congress to over \$92,000 and accepted more than \$28,000 in speaker's fees last year."

278TH STORY of Level 2 printed in FULL format.

Proprietary to the United Press International 1988

June 6, 1988, Monday, BC cycle

SECTION: Regional News

DISTRIBUTION: Alabama, Mississippi

LENGTH: 486 words

DATELINE: WASHINGTON

KEYWORD: Probe

BODY:

U.S. Rep. Mike Espy, D-Miss. has called for a federal investigation into a Farm Credit Administration's decision to appoint a receiver for the Federal Land Bank in Jackson.

The bank was closed May 20 after it was disclosed that 40 percent of its \$1.9 billion in outstanding loans were in trouble. It reopened the following Monday under the supervision of a court-appointed receiver.

The Jackson bank's district encompasses Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama.

Espy, a member of the House Agriculture Committee, said Reps. Jerry Huckabay, D-La., and Rep. Claude Harris, D-Ala., are also calling for the review.

'We need to ensure that farmers who have loans with the bank are treated fairly and that they receive the full benefits of the borrower rights provision of the Agricultural Credit Act,' Espy said in a prepared statement.

Ronald E. Watkins of Tulsa, Okla. was appointed receiver. He will wind down activities of the bank, place its loan portfolio with other lenders and work to establish permanent lending service for Jackson clients.

Last week, the bank began repaying \$5 million to borrowers whose 'stock' was frozen six months ago. Borrowers buy stock as a condition to obtaining their loans.

Chief Federal regulator Frank Mayor said farmers in the three states will be able to get farm real estate loans from banks in Columbia, S.C., and Austin, Texas.

Espy, Huckabay and Harris have asked the General Accounting Office, an investigative unit of Congress, to determine:

-- Whether the bank should have been given financial assistance to make it viable instead of being closed?

-- Whether the benefits, costs and risks of appointing a receiver were considered?

-- Why was the bank closed when steps had been taken to develop a new assistance plan?

John Lundy, Espy's legislative assistant for agriculture, said the congressman was not questioning whether the final decision should have been made. "We just felt we should have known about it before," he said.

Eric Thor, chief edxecutive officer of the Farm Credit System Assistance Baord, had told the Senate Agricultural Credit subcommittee that keeping the bank in business would have cost at least \$600 million, including higher interest rates on farmers' loans.

"Their liabilities far exceed their assets and it was going to be a terrible expensive process to go any other way," Thor said. He said keeping the bank open would have cost at least \$600 million and "would have been open-ended."

Thor said management of the Jackson bank had raised its operating expenses by 2 times while its financial base declined by 50 percent.

He said the bank made an initial request for a federal bailout of \$410 million to \$610 million with little information to justify the request or to plan for the future.

"In the opinion of the assistance board, no comprehensive, coherent financial and business plan was ever presented," he said.