

## Turner opposes HISD bond referendum

HOUSTON- St. Representative Sylvester Turner has announced he will oppose the Houston Independent School District's \$805 million bond proposal. "I have always fought for public school education and I have always supported bond elections, always," Turner said. "But when you start taking the public for granted and when you assume they're just going to vote for it regardless of how you spend your money, then you are seriously mistaken. And that's why I'm not supporting this one, I'm not going to do it. I can't."

Turner made the comments August 24 as he, HISD officials and the media toured M.C. Williams Middle School. Williams is undergoing \$11 million worth of renovation funded by HISD's last bond program. However, Turner is dismayed that when school started this week, the auditorium, gymnasium, library and 20 classrooms were not available for student use.

Williams' auditorium does not have seats installed. The gym will not be ready until October. The school's old furniture will be put back in the rehabbed classrooms. And, worst of all to Turner, the library has been renovated, but the district wants to return the old books to the new shelves.

"Please, do not bring back those books that are old, dilapidated and worn out," Turner warned HISD spokesperson Terry Abbot.

"It's kind of ironic," Turner continued. "If you get a whole new school, you get new furniture and new books. If you have a building that's been around since 1962 that's been rehabbed, you get the old furniture and the old books. Terry, don't bring those old books back here. I'm already against the bond proposal. Do not bring those books to kids in Acres Home, do not bring those books back to this school. That's totally unacceptable. And then expect them to academically excel? Don't turn people into

voucher supporters."

HISD officials say all work will be completed by November 1, 2007. They were quick to point out the new science classrooms, an improved cafeteria and landscaping outside the main entrance. Indeed, workers were bustling around the flowers and shrubs as Turner, the media and HISD officials gathered for the tour. Turner said he had not seen this much action when he first toured Williams two weeks ago.

"If you want parents to buy in, to be proud of the school, to keep bringing their kids to this school, the first day is the day you're going to look around and this is what they see. If they go to the library and there are no books, if they go to the auditorium and they see the construction, for those parents who have the means and the ability to go someplace else, then they'd be inclined to do that."

Pastor F.N. Williams, a member of the Acres Homes Coalition for Educational Excellence, is a graduate of M.C. Williams, a school named for his grandfather.

"We have the same concerns as the state representative," Williams said. "We just want the very best for the students who come through these doors, to better prepare them for a world they can compete in without disadvantages."

Turner said he has always been supportive of public education but he believes HISD should wait another year before putting this bond proposal in front of the voters.

"It's premature, the community was not included in the process," Turner pointed out. "That's problem number one that I have with it—you cannot ask for \$800 million and not include the community and taxpayers in the initial equation. You can't say 'This is what we want, this is what we're going to give you' and then on the back end expect the community to come right

along. And then you show them a library, a gymnasium and an auditorium that are not complete. It should not work this way.

The state representative also expressed concern about HISD's plan to close Osborne Elementary and send its students to Holland Heights and about the \$1.6 million worth of renovations planned for Booker T. Washington High School, which he says is woefully inadequate.

Turner will host a town hall meeting for the Acres Home community at 7 p.m. on Monday, September 10, 2007 at the Acres Home Multi-Service Center, 6719 W. Montgomery. HISD Superintendent Abe Saavedra has committed to attend.

"People deserve more, they deserve better," Turner said. "Until you get it right, people should not be supportive of the bond proposal. I'm not saying I will not support something in the future; if it's done right, I will. But just because you put it on the table, don't expect me to eat it. I'm going to push this bond proposal away from the table. Not at this time, I'm just not hungry enough for it." ★



State Representative Sylvester Turner says, "I'm just not hungry enough for it."

## Jackson Lee to lead congressional delegation to Sudan

WASHINGTONDC-Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee leads an important Congressional Delegation (CODEL) to Sudan. In addition to meeting with top government officials in Khartoum, this will be the first CODEL to visit the troubled Darfur region since the United Nations authorized a 26,000-strong peace keeping force for the troubled Western Sudanese region.

"I am happy to be joined by my two distinguished colleagues, Congressman Steve Chabot (OH) and Congressman Adrian Smith (NE) on a bi-partisan mission to examine legislative responses to the political, social, economic, and security concerns in these regions, especially addressing the ongoing conflict in Darfur," stated Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee.

The CODEL will be briefed by U.N. officials and will attend a meeting with the African Union force commander to discuss the ongoing conflict in the region. The delegation will also visit the Abu Shouk Internally Displaced Persons camp, as well as meet key government officials including Sudan's Foreign Minister Dr. Mustafa Osman Ismail.

"We look forward to engage top government officials on address-

ing issues such as regional security, conflict resolution, and political reform, particularly examining the current conditions of the many internally displaced persons living inside Sudan," said Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. "Sudan's western region of Darfur has been embroiled in violent conflict since 2003, which has brought a weighty death toll and displaced over 2 million people. As Chair of the Congressional Children's Caucus, I am particularly concerned about the displaced children who suffer due to the lack of nutrition and access to clean water. Additionally, child mortality remains a significant problem throughout the region.

"We must not allow the foreign policy blunders of the current U.S. administration to distract us from the violence that is still occurring in Darfur and the critical human rights and political reforms necessary in many parts of Africa and the Middle East. We also look forward to meeting with key officials in Ethiopia, Tunisia, Algeria, and UAE to assess our counterterrorism efforts with our allies as well as opportunities for political reform and human rights improvements in these regions," stated Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee. ★

## Congressman Jarvis Johnson chairs Black United Fund's 20th anniversary

HOUSTON- On Sunday, October 21, 2007, Houston City Council Member Jarvis Johnson-District B is chairing the 20th Anniversary for Black United Fund of Texas and their 18th Evening of African American Excellence Fundraising Charity Gala. This red carpet event will be held at the George R. Brown Convention Center located at 1001 Avenida de Americas in Houston, Texas. The event will begin at 5 p.m. with a VIP Reception Extraordinaire.

The Dinner Dance Gala will follow at 6 p.m. This year's theme is "Achieving Against the Odds; Overcoming Obstacles through Self-help and Self Determination." Tickets cost \$125 per person.

This Gala will benefit 30 small fledging organizations that serve low-income youth and families. These organizations are African Center of Well Being, Bennett House, Better Way Youth, Buffalo Soldiers National Museum, Community Outreach Partnership, George "Mickey" Leland Library & Museum of African History, Culture and Social Change, Phoenix Outreach Youth Center and the Sarcoidosis Foundation to name a few. Also, this event will allow 30 men and boys from a wood craving village in Kenya to design and produce all the awards and centerpieces for the tables. Thus, these Kenyan families will feed their families for up to six months.

The gala will also recognize persons who have achieved against the odds and in various ways have worked to help strengthen Black United Fund of Texas. They have helped raised funds, performed great services for the world community and have contributed to making this country a better place to live.

Some of the honorees are: Shawna Thomas, a native Houstonian and the newest Political Journalist for NBC in New York. Andres Ortiz is also an honoree. He is

a postal employee who has dedicated his life to serving the community through his involvement as former President of LULAC #42. He is also a member of the National Association of Postal Employees, Precinct Judge, Pct 234 and the highlight of his life is being a retired member of the United State Marines-Vietnam era. Scott Gertner, world renowned entertainer and manager and owner of the Skybar; where some of the greatest entertainers' careers have been launched. Jeannine B. Scott, senior vice president of Africare, has spent her life serving, as far back as her college days, to help feed and educate people across Africa. Actor Isaiah Washington, who has demonstrated that one can overcome calamities and travesties. Some others are Houston Rocket's Robert Reid, Channel 2's Jerome Gray, Playwright Je'Caryous Johnson and American Postal Workers Union Secretary Treasurer Terry Stapleton.

Council Member Jarvis Johnson stated: "I am very much an advocate to help small fledging community based organizations that promote self-help. These organizations provide services, education and opportunities that would not otherwise exist if they were not providing them. They deserve my support and the support of everyone else I can get involved."

Some of the co-chairs for the event are Honorary Chair Actor Charles Robinson, Mayor Bill White and other city council members, State Representatives Sylvester Turner and Boris Miles; Congressman Al Green, Kase Lawal, John Quincy Moaning, Al Bell of Stax Records and Charles Bush.

The entertainment for the evening will be provided by Cuba Gooding, Sr., of The Main Ingredient and Comedian Rodney Yarbrough. Isiah Carey will serve as Master of Ceremony.

For more information, call (713)222-0745 or buftx@buftx.org.★

## Disaster aid available for qualified workers

AUSTIN- According to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), individuals who worked in Atascosa, Liberty, Refugio, San Patricio, Taylor and Upshur counties who lost work or earnings due to severe storms, tornadoes and flooding between June 16, 2007, and August 3, 2007, have until Monday, September 26, 2007, to apply for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) under Presidential Disaster Declaration FEMA-1709-DR. Individuals who worked in the following counties may apply for DUA: Atascosa, Liberty, Refugio, San Patricio, Taylor and Upshur counties

**Deadline:** September 26, 2007  
Guadalupe, Henderson, Nueces, Van Zandt, Walker, Zavala counties

**Deadline:** September 10, 2007  
Bee and Medina counties

**Deadline:** August 31, 2007  
Brown, Cherokee, Comanche, Hamilton, Llano, Runnels, Smith, Travis counties

**Deadline:** August 27, 2007

To be eligible for help under Presidential Disaster Declaration

FEMA-1709-DR, you must:

- Have worked or been scheduled to work in the disaster area, but because of the disaster no longer have a job or a place to work in the area, or you could not get to your place of work because of disaster damage;

- Have been prevented from working by an injury or illness as a direct result of the disaster; or

- Have become the head of the household and need employment because the head of the household died as a result of the disaster.

To claim DUA, affected individuals' unemployment must be a direct result of one of the following:

- The physical damage or destruction of the place of employment;

- The physical inaccessibility of the place of employment due to its closure by the federal, state or local government in immediate response to the disaster; or

- Lack of work, or loss of revenues, if, prior to the disaster, the employer or self-employed business received at least a majority of its revenue or income from an entity in the major disaster area that was damaged or destroyed in the disaster or an entity in the major disaster area closed

by the federal, state or local government.

Often, business owners who are self-employed are not aware of potential benefits to which they may be entitled. If you are self-employed, but have lost all or part of your livelihood as a result of severe storms, tornadoes and flooding, you may well be eligible for benefits. You must provide federal income tax forms (Schedules SE and Schedule C or Schedule F) to receive disaster unemployment benefits.

Each claim is considered individually, therefore if you believe you may be eligible for assistance, please call the TWC Tele-Center network at one of the numbers listed below Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time, to talk with a representative or file a claim. For more information, call **Austin** local: (512) 340-4300; **Houston** local: (281) 983-1100; **Dallas** local: (214) 252-1200; **McAllen** local: (956) 984-4700; **El Paso** local: (915) 832-6400; **San Antonio** local: (210) 258-6600; **Fort Worth** local: (817) 420-1600. Others may call toll free: (800) 939-6631.★

profiteers have corrupted the U.S. Congress and those of the petroleum industry have corrupted our City Council. From top to bottom its time we took our Democracy back."★



Alfred Molison

## McKinney lends hand to Molison

HOUSTON- Former Georgia Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney attended a fundraiser hosted by the Alfred Molison for Houston City Council campaign at the Shrine of the Black Madonna, and raised contributions to benefit the debt retirement effort for her 2006 Congressional campaign, as well as Molison's 2007 City Council bid.

"Its vital that we remove corporate influence from public policy making and that we have a transparent election process," said Molison. He has advocated public financing of political campaigns and has campaigned for paper ballots to restore transparency and integrity to the election process. "The campaign contributions of war

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