



NATIONAL BAR ASSOCIATION

www.nationalbar.org

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LEGISLATIVE LAWYERS DIVISION

Newsletter

July 2006

The National Bar Association Legislative Lawyers Division was organized in 1998 by State Representative Pinkie Wilkerson (Grambling, LA). Pinkie was a fighter for the weakest and most vulnerable among us. She loved the National Bar Association. The Division and the NBA lost a dear friend with her death in 2000. Our executive committee has worked hard to build upon the foundation she and successive chairs created.



I must thank Nichole Francis, Juan Thomas and Karl Connor, who upon being drafted, have worked diligently to ensure that the division was able to record successes this year. We sponsored a CLE at the Mid-Year Meeting in Memphis and are actively working on several events for the annual convention in Detroit.

If you are receiving this newsletter, it is because you are a member or a potential member of the division. To those of you who have joined the division, thank you for your support and we encourage you to join a committee or consider running for an office in Detroit. If you are concerned and engaged in the legislative and political process, I encourage you to join the Legislative Lawyers Division. Dues are \$100 in addition to your regular National Bar Association dues. To join, go to www.nationalbar.org.

I look forward to seeing you at the convention in Detroit!

Sincerely,

Cheryl A. Gray

2005-06 Executive Committee

Cheryl A. Gray
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Board Member at Large
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DID YOU KNOW?

- Lobbying and Lobbyists have been around since America's first Congress, when New York merchants offered lawmakers treats and dinners in an attempt to delay passage of a tariff bill.
- President Ulysses S. Grant is often credited with creating the term "lobbyist." Not allowed to smoke in the White House by his wife, Grant enjoyed his cigars in the lobby of the nearby Willard Hotel. Having been spotted there often, politicians and others wanting political favors began to frequent him during his time of repose. Grant often referred to those waiting in the lobby as "those damn lobbyists."

THE COVENANT WITH BLACK AMERICA: WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE NBA?

BY JUAN R. THOMAS

The NBA Legislative Division sponsored a powerful and informative seminar during the NBA 26th Annual Mid-Year Conference titled, "*The Legal & Legislative Implications of the Covenant With Black America.*" **The Covenant with Black America** was organized by talk show host Tavis Smiley and authored by several leading opinion makers within the African-American community, including David Satcher, Marian Wright Edelman, Wade Henderson, and Marc Morial.

The purpose of **The Covenant with Black America** is to offer an agenda and action items for the African-American community around issues of health care, education, technology, economic opportunities, and policing. In all, **The Covenant with Black America** sets forth ten issues areas that we need to address and develop strategies and solutions.

A distinguished and lively panel offered insights and information on the role the NBA can and should play in achieving the objectives and purpose of **The Covenant**

with Black America. The panel included NBA Legislative Division Chair and Louisiana State Representative Cheryl Gray, Hon. D'Army Bailey, Circuit Court Judge in Shelby County, TN, Veronica Coleman, President & CEO of National Institute for Law and Equity, Rev. Jerry Maynard, Deputy Chairman of the Tennessee Democratic Party, and Gary Flowers, Vice President for Public Policy Rainbow PUSH Coalition.

Out of the panel came a set of action items that the Division will be requesting that the NBA Board of Governors take action on over the next several months and beyond. Please join our Division in adopting and assisting in these action items. We need your energy, resources, and commitment to strengthen our Association and our community. As Terry Tempest Williams said, "*For the eyes of the future are looking back at us and they are praying for us to see beyond our own time.*"

*The purpose of **The Covenant with Black America** is to offer an agenda and action items for the African-American community around issues of health care, education, technology, economic opportunities, and community policing.*

ACTION ITEMS FROM COVENANT DISCUSSION

- Consider adoption of resolutions supporting constitutional amendments to guarantee the right to health care and public education of equal high quality to all U.S. citizens.
- The National Bar Association should aggressively and diligently work to raise money for the NBA Political Action Committee in order to contribute to federal candidates who support the mission and purpose of the NBA.
- That the NBA should hire or retain a federal legislative lobbyist to monitor federal legislation and inform the members of the Association on relevant issue pertaining to the Association or the African American community.
- The NBA should assist each affiliate chapter to institute a mechanism to monitor state/local legislation and inform the members of the affiliate chapter on relevant issues pertaining to the affiliate chapter or the African American community.

CONVENTION ACTIVITIES

The Division will be hosting the following activities during the National Bar Association Convention in Detroit. Activities will be held on Wednesday, August 9th and Thursday, August 10th. Please refer to the convention program for room assignments:

Wednesday, August 9th

3PM—5PM

"EXPERIENCES IN NATURAL DISASTER RESPONSE: HURRICANE KATRINA "

Objective: To provide information regarding federal, state and local natural disaster response experience and advice to the legal community with a focus on Hurricane Katrina.

Thursday, August 10th

11:30AM - 1PM

DIVISION MEETING AND AWARDS RECEPTION

Presentation of Federal and State Outstanding Legislator of the Year Awards

Sponsored by: Marathon Oil Company

Thursday, August 10th

1PM—3PM

"TIPS FOR ETHICAL AND EFFECTIVE LOBBYING"

Objective: To review state and federal ethic laws and regulations, including new trends, regarding the ethical behavior in lobbying. To also discuss strategies for effective lobbying.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT PASSED IN HOUSE

On July 13, 2006, after several delays in Congress, the Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks and Coretta Scott King Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006, S. 2703, was passed by a vote of 390 to 33 in the House of Representatives. The fate of the Act was in question when Southern lawmakers successfully delayed the renewing of the 1965 Voting Rights Act before the July 4th recess. Mostly Southern lawmakers objected to the preclearance and the bilingual assistance provisions of the Act. Both provisions were set to expire in 2007. Before the recess began, Rep. Clifford Stearns, R-Fla, attempted to eliminate funding for the bilingual assistance to voters which was defeated 254-167. "Passage of the bill with such a resounding margin is especially gratifying, because it now creates momentum for passage in the Senate. We will know turn our efforts to getting the bills passed in the Senate and feel confident that it will signed by the President," said Congressional Black Caucus Chair, Rep. Mel Watt.

MARATHON OIL TO SPONSOR AWARDS RECEPTION

The Division is pleased to announce that Marathon Oil Company will sponsor the Legislative Lawyers Award Reception during the annual convention. The Awards Reception is the premier event for the division, as awards will be given to the John Conyers Outstanding Federal Legislator and the Pinkie Wilkerson Outstanding State Legislator

of the Year. The Division will hold its membership meeting immediately prior to the reception (11:30am).

The Division is grateful to Tramaine Chargois and Marathon for their support. "This sponsorship will ensure that the Division finishes this bar year on a high note," Division Chair Cheryl Gray said.

Marathon Oil is the fourth-largest U.S. based fully integrated international energy company engaged in exploration and production; integrated gas and refining, marketing and transportation operations. Marathon serves the Midwest and Southeast as a petroleum products marketer.



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NBA Chapter Affiliation _____ Member of National Bar _____

If not, use the membership application found at www.nationalbar.org

I would like to join the following committee(s):

_____ Program _____ Publications _____ Membership _____ Finance

If you are currently a member of the National Bar Association, please fill out this form and mail it to Cheryl A. Gray , 1100 Poydras Street, Suite 2621, New Orleans, Louisiana 70163 or fax it to 504-588-2179. Send your division dues in the amount of \$100 to the National Bar Association office at 1225 11th St, NW, Washington, D.C. 20001.

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