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Race Redistricting, and the Congressional Black Caucus--Who Needs Em'!?: Gauging the Essentiality of African American Congresspersons

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**Race Redistricting, and the Congressional Black Caucus -
Who Needs Em'!?: Gauging the Essentiality of
African American Congresspersons
Tara N. Gillespie
Spring 1996
Southern Illinois University at Carbondale**

Abstract

In light of the recent controversy surrounding the validity of race conscious redistricting, the practice of creating congressional districts with an African American or Hispanic majority population, an important question arises; are the votes of African American congresspersons even critical to the passage of policy issues salient to the African American populace. This study seeks to prove that the votes of African American congresspersons are crucial to the passage of House policy issues salient to the African American community. To prove this hypothesis this study analyzed the voting cohesion and pivotal voting bloc influence of each Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) member of both the 102nd and 103rd Congress on policy issues deemed salient to the black community per the CBC' "Black Agenda". The object is to determine whether the votes of the 102nd and 103rd Caucuses, played an essential role in the passage of policy issues salient to African Americans. Non-CBC Democrat cohesion was also examined pertaining to these issue in order to ascertain the level of support non-CBC Democrats gave in the House passage of the corresponding issues. The finding demonstrate not only are the votes of CBC members necessary, but more African American Congresspersons, who are sensitive to black issues and who are willing to vote cohesively with the CBC, are needed to seriously promote and preserve policy issues of most importance to African Americans.

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**Race Redistricting and the Congressional Black Caucus -
Who needs em'!: Gauging the Essentiality of African
American Congresspersons**

The year was 1993, twelve southern blacks settled into their newly elected congressional seats, raising the number of seats held by African Americans Democrats from 26 of 269 Democrats in the House in the 102nd Congress to 38 of 258 in the 103rd U.S. Congress. For almost a century African Americans were absent from the southern congressional delegations of North Carolina, Alabama, Florida, South Carolina and Virginia; they were absent from Louisiana's congressional delegations until 1991, Mississippi until 1987, Tennessee until 1975, and Georgia and Texas until 1973 (Higginbotham, Clarick, & David, 1994). Race redistricting, the practice of creating congressional districts with an African American or Hispanic majority population (Cohen, 1995), has made it possible for African Americans, particularly in the South, to elect representatives of their choice, which in turn has given a political voice to the historically voiceless. It has made it possible for African American Representatives to swell the minority ranks of the U.S. Congress; which in turn signaled the gneiss of a revitalized and influential Congressional Black Caucus (CBC).

Historically, African American members of Congress, have not only represented their district, but shouldered the hopes, needs, and desires of the entire African American community (Franklin & Moss, 1994; Lusane, 1994). This political tradition started more than a century ago by the first black congressmen, Senator Hiram R. Revels of Mississippi and Representative Joseph H. Rainey of South Carolina, and is still being perpetuated by more than 10,000 black elected officials throughout the United States (Terkilden, 1993; Christopher, 1976).

Black representation in the current 104th Congressional Black Caucus totals forty-one members, with seventeen Representatives from the southern United States, one Republican Representative, a delegate from the District of Columbia and one, Carol Mosely Braun of Illinois, in the Senate. Although an all-time high, this is proportionately a modest

number for the countries largest minority of nearly 34 million (Census Bureau, 1996; Mills, 1990).

Prior to the 1990 round of redistricting, many argued that in order for black policy concerns to be nationally addressed, it was imperative to have black legislators to seriously promote these interests (Hatchett, 1986). For generations African Americans were systematically ignored or depreciated in the arena of politics; minority majority districts were to remedy this past discrimination. Based on the premise that white voters are reluctant to vote for black political candidates, black majority districts were created to give African Americans an equally weighed vote in electing a representative of their choice (Terkildsen, 1993; Canon, 1995). It was assumed that in drawing these race conscious districts, blacks would chose someone who looked like them, on the premise that they would in accordance, preserve and promote public policy issues that would have a positive impact on the African American community.

Blacks representing blacks became a common theme that ran through the process of the 1990 redistricting efforts. Due to the CBC' acquired image as national black leaders of the African American community, it was only natural for the majority of blacks to welcome additional advocates of black concerns to the Caucus. However, many found this codependency disturbing. The majority opinion in *Reno v. Shaw* (1993) articulated by Justice O'Connor summed up the concerns of many outside of majority minority districts looking in when she declared "when a district obviously is created solely to effectuate the perceived common interests of one racial group, elected officials are more likely to believe that their primary obligation is to represent only the members of that group, rather than their constituency"(113 S. ct 2816, 1993). Many Americans agree with Justice O' Connor's opinion and have engaged in Fierce debate and litigation in expousing their sentiments (Fein, 1993).

The invalidation of the new minority majority district could possibly return the CBC' membership votes to its prior status. Many African Americans have expresses their outrage at the thought of losing any of the minority majority district representatives; contending that the

successful passage of legislation salient to African Americans is dependent upon the voice of the CBC, and a reduction in numbers could prove devastating to the black populous (Lusane, 1994). However one critic finds it a racist assumption that race determines a voter's concern for a particular political issue and that blacks are ideologically monolithic on a number of issues (Cohadas, 1994). That same author contend that "what some call 'black' issues such as AIDS, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, crime, welfare, health care, education or affirmative action", are not concerns that can only be addressed by African Americans (Cohadas, 1994). The 104th U.S. Congress' Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich has recently dealt a serious blow to the ability of the CBC and other subgroups to promote the interests of their particular constituencies. Gingrich achieved this by cutting budget appropriations for these caucuses in an effort to eliminate the divisive and pivotal influences these alliances may have in the House (Swain, 1996).

In light of recent develops that threaten the survival of the CBC, the important question becomes, are the votes of African American congresspersons even essential to the passage of policy issues salient to the African American populous. To answer this question, this study examines the level of voting cohesion and pivotal voting bloc influence of each U.S. House Caucus and non-Caucus Democrat of both the 102nd and 103rd Congress on particular issues deemed salient to the Black community per the CBC' "Black Agenda" (Clay, 1992; CBC, 1975). The object is to determine whether the votes of the 102nd and 103rd CBC members, play an essential (pivotal) role in the passage of policy issues salient to African Americans. Non-CBC Democrat cohesion of U.S. House members is also examined pertaining to these issue in order to ascertain the level of support non-CBC Democrats give in the passage of policy issues of particular concern to Black Americans. These two Congresses were chosen because of the dramatic effect minority majority redistricting practices have had on CBC membership from the 102nd to the 103rd congress. In order to explore this area successfully, this study begins with a discussion of the constitutional and congressional provisions pertaining to the African American electorate and then moves

to U.S. Supreme Court decisions on redistricting. A literature review pertaining to the voting cohesion and pivotal voting bloc influence of the CBC in general, is followed by this study's analysis of the CBC and non-CBC House Democrat's voting cohesion and pivotal voting bloc influence on policy issues salient to the African American community. This paper concludes with suggestions for future research pertaining to congressional redistricting and minority representation .

Constitutional and Congressional Provisions

Constitutional Amendments

African American political participation began after the Civil War. Four million African Americans emerged from the shadows of slavery, invigorated with the possibility of freedom and justice (Franklin & Moss, 1994). In the years just after the Civil War, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, with the help of federal legislation enforcing them, opened the ballot box to recently freed African Americans. For a few years African Americans in the South, under the protection of the United States government, enjoyed the rights and privileges of democracy in approximately the same way as whites did. However, in the wake of the 1870s Post-Reconstruction era whites revolted against the new found power of the black electorate. Whites moved to limit and finally abolish the democratic rights of African Americans. Mass chaos and terror were elected upon African Americans throughout the South after the government withdrew its protections of African Americans. Starting in the 1870s and continuing into the middle of this century, southern whites deployed a variety of tactics including violence, ballot-box fraud, poll taxes, literacy tests, appointed offices and the white primary to disenfranchise African Americans (Baer, 1983). The vast majority of southern African Americans were still denied the right to vote during the first half of this century. The voting barriers began to tumble down with the assistance of the Twenty-Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, ratified in January 1964, outlawing the requirement of poll taxes, long a means of disfranchising blacks in the South (Franklin & Moss, 1993). But African American continued to face Fierce opposition to their enfranchisement.

Civil Rights Acts

African Americans sought relief of the political oppression they were experiencing, through the federal courts. However the court declined to involve itself in the business of the states. After intense pressure from civil rights advocates, violent unrest and fierce congressional debate, the

Civil Rights Act of 1957 was enacted. This legislation opened up the court system to politically oppressed African Americans, by authorizing the federal government to bring civil suits in its name in order to obtain injunctive relief in federal courts, when anyone was denied or threatened in his or her right to vote (Franklin & Moss, 1993). The Civil Rights Act of 1960, strengthened its predecessor, to prevent evasive action by registrars, who failed to register qualified African American voters solely on the bases of race (Franklin & Moss, 1993). The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the most far reaching of the Acts in support of racial equality ever enacted by Congress. It gave the attorney general additional power to protect citizens against discrimination and segregation in voting, education, and use of public facilities (Franklin & Moss, 1993). The three Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964 were enacted to curb the sundry practices of the Southern political system, but for the most part they proved unsuccessful (Grofman & Davidson, 1992). Although there was a notable decline in voter discrimination, the period following the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was marked by strong resistance to its enforcement and considerable violence in some places.

The Voting Rights Act of 1965

On August 6, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 was signed into law (Grofman & Davidson, 1992). Its initial purpose was to do what the Civil Rights Acts of 1957, 1960, and 1964 could not effectively do, remove obstacles to voting. The main provisions of the Voting Rights Act of 1965, as amended, include Section 4, outlawing educational requirements for voting in states or counties where less than 50 percent of the voting age population had registered to vote as of November 1, 1964, or had voted in the 1964 presidential election (Foster, 1985). Section 6 and 7 of the Act give the Attorney General authority to assign federal registrars to enroll voters (Foster, 1985). Section 2 creates a federal right of action to challenge vote dilution (Foster, 1985). Section 5 requires the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia or the Attorney General to approve or

'preclear' all changes in voting practices in jurisdictions with a history of discrimination (Foster, 1985). The preclearance requirement of section 5 has covered all or part of twenty-two states over the past 30 years (Foster, 1985). Seven of the eleven states of the confederacy have been continuously covered by the acts provisions: Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana, South Carolina, Virginia, and about half of the counties in North Carolina (Foster 1985).

In response to the *City of Mobile v. Boldern* 446 U.S. 55 (1980) decision, Congress passed the critically important 1982 amendment to Section 2 prohibiting the drawing of electoral boundaries or the use of other electoral devices that "result in a denial or abridgment of the rights.... to vote on account of race or color." The 1982 amendment also extended this element of the Voting Rights Act to all jurisdictions in the country (Foster, 1985).

The impact of the amended Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act on the redistricting process was not intensely felt until the 1986 *Thornburg v. Gingles* (478 U.S. 30, 1986) decision of the U.S. Supreme Court, which established the precedence for proving a Section 2 violation in federal court (Weber, 1995). The essence of a Section 2 claim, centered on the Court's opinion on dilution. The Court concluded that "unlawful dilution of the voting strength of racial minorities may be caused by the dispersal of blacks into districts in which they constitute an ineffective minority of voters or from the concentration of blacks into districts where they constitute an excessive majority" (*Thornburg v. Gingles* 478 U.S. 30, 1986). This was seen by many in the political community as a warning to states to create minority districts when ever possible. On the heels of the Supreme Courts interpretation in *Gingles* of the legal meaning of Section 2, the Department of Justice (DOJ) arguable interpreted the *Gingles* precedence as a signal for the DOJ to mandate more minority majority districts by relating amended Section 2 to extended Section 5 (Weber, 1995). The result was the 1987 revised set of DOJ regulations governing covered Section 5 jurisdictions, mandating the drawing of a minority majority district in a covered state whenever voter dilution was in question (Weber, 1995). This interpretation of the post *Gingles* amended

Section 2 became the legal guideline used by the DOJ when it reviewed congressional and state legislative plans submitted for the 1990s round of redistricting (Weber, 1995).

Landmark U.S. Supreme Court Rulings

Redistricting

While the federal judiciary has in recent years become a prominent, player in the congressional redistricting process, for most of the nation's history the courts were content to be spectators, letting Congress set the ground rules. In the words of Justice Felix Frankfurter, congressional redistricting was a "political thicket" (*Colegrove v. Green*, 358 U.S. 1 (1946)) that the courts should avoid. The Supreme Court by in large ignored the issue of redistricting. It was not until the early 1960s that large population disparities and a change in the ideology of the court, did the Court hesitantly entered the realms of the "political Thicket", and thus began the judicial journey towards ensuring that the African American vote would have about the same impact as white votes.

Colegrove v. Green

The Court had not serious entertained a redistricting suit since it ruled in 1932 invalidating a Mississippi legislative map, with lines drawn of unequal population (Cain & Butler, 1991). However, in the case of *Colegrove v. Green*, 358 U.S. 1 (1946) a challenge to the unequal population of Illinois districts was made and the Supreme Court undertook the challenge. But the Supreme Court reaffirmed its laissez faire attitude towards redistricting by dismissing the case. Justice Frankfurter warned that redistricting is a "political thicket" that courts should avoid.

Gomillion v. Lightfoot

White Americans in the Old Confederate states were genuinely fearful of flying under Black rule. In 1957 the white officials Tuskegee, Alabama attempted a drastic change in electoral form to protect themselves from a possible African American majority. They gerrymandered the town's boundaries to remove all but 12 of its 400 African American voters. In the case *Gomillion v. Lightfoot* 364 U.S. 339 (1960), the African American citizens of Tuskegee argued that the gerrymander had the effect of disenfranchising them. The supreme Court struck down

the gerrymandered district which began to lay the ground work for the Supreme Courts change of heart in entertaining the issue of redistricting.

Baker v. Carr

The Court's involvement in the 1962 *Baker v. Carr* 369 U.S. 186 (1962) decision declared that the Federal branch does have jurisdiction over the issue of malapportionment.

Baker called for one person, one vote and equality of the opportunity to vote. This ruling is "responsible for the presence of blacks in every state courthouse and in positions of power throughout the land especially the South," according to former Supreme Court Justice Brown (Texas Lawyer, 1990). The *Baker v. Carr* decision held that the claim of gross malapportionment of Tennessee's general assembly denied equal protection due to vote dilution, presented a justifiable issue and, if discrimination is sufficiently shown, setting the precedent that each persons vote must count the same as his neighbor in every American election (Graham, 1972).

Gray v. Sanders

The developing jurisprudence of *Baker v. Carr* found its most clear pronouncement in *Gray v. Sanders* 372 U.S. 368 (1963). The ruling in this Georgia case spells out in detail the one person, one vote doctrine. Justice Douglas stated, "The conception of political equality from the declaration of Independence, to Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, to the Fifteenth, Seventeenth and Nineteenth Amendments can mean only one thing -- one person, one vote" (372 U.S. 368 (1963)).

Wesberry v. Sanders

One year later involving another Georgia case , the Supreme Court of the United States, in *Wesberry v. Sanders* 376 U.S. 1 (1964) was asked to determine whether the one person, one vote doctrine pertaining to malapportionment in state legislatures also applied to the Congress of the United States as well. The lower court in Georgia had dismissed the claim by Wesberry that population disparities among Georgia congressional districts deprived voters of a equally weighed vote. However Justice Black, writing for the Supreme Court majority held that Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution commands that as nearly as practicable, one person's vote in a congressional election is to be worth as much as another's. The court threw out the Georgia map that had not been changed since 1931.

Reynolds v. Sims

That same year in *Reynolds v. Sims* 377 U.S. 533 (1964) the principle of one person one vote was extended to congressional constituencies. A U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the Alabama case rejected the argument that state senate districts, like the U.S. Senate, need not be

apportioned on the basis of population. The decision required both upper and lower houses of American state legislatures to be apportioned on the basis of population. The Supreme Court held that even a popular referendum favoring unequal populations in electoral districts could not supersede the individual voter's right to enjoy the constitutional one man, one vote principle.

David v. Bandemer

In the case of *David v. Bandemer* 478 U.S. 109 (1986) the highest court in the land declared for the first time that partisan gerrymanders are subject to legal challenge. But, the Court decides that the specific case before it, involving a GOP drawn legislative map in Indiana, did not constitute a partisan gerrymander.

Shaw v. Reno

The stream of progress that began to flow in the 1960s towards a just democracy for African Americans seems to have diverted. In the case *Shaw v. Reno* 113 S. Ct. 2816 (1993), the Supreme Court ruled that the white plaintiffs had standing to challenge the North Carolina congressional plan, as a violation of their Fourteenth Amendment Right, and remanded the case back to the lower court for trial. In announcing its decision in *Shaw*, a five to four majority of the Court declared that a "plan, which contains district boundary lines of dramatic irregular shape, constitute an unconstitutional racial gerrymander" 113 S. Ct. at 2817 (1993). On remand, a three-judge federal district court panel ruled that the plan was a racial gerrymander, but that North Carolina had a compelling state interest in complying with the Voting Rights Act and remedying a history of past discrimination in voting, and that the state had narrowly tailored a plan to fulfill those state interests (*Shaw v Hunt*, 861 F Supp 408, ED. NC., 1994). In other cases raising a *Shaw* claim, a three-judge panel in California upheld the congressional plan as well as the state Senate and House plans drawn by the state Supreme Court as not constituting illegal racial gerrymanders (*Dewitt v Wilson*, 856 F. Supp. 1409, ED. Ca., 1994), while congressional districts in Louisiana, Texas and Georgia were invalidated by a three judge federal court using *Shaw* criteria.

In the *Hays v. Louisiana* (839 S. Ct. 2816, 1993), *Vera v. Richards* (861 F. Supp. 1304, S.D. Tex., 1994) and *Johnson v. Miller* (864 F. Supp. 1354, S.D. Ga., 1994) cases, the three-judge panels agreed with *Shaw* that the equal protection claims were justifiable under the 14th Amendment and that the burden of proof shifts to the state defendants to show that racial gerrymandered plans were narrowly tailored to meet a compelling state interest. The states of Louisiana, Texas, and Georgia were unable to demonstrate their plans were narrowly tailored to meet a compelling state interest. Thus, courts voided the plans, and ordered the three

state legislatures to come up with revised plans. All three states appealed the decisions to the U.S. Supreme Court, with the *Miller v. Johnson* case being the first U.S. Supreme Court casualty of the post *Shaw* era.

Miller v. Johnson

The case of *Miller v. Johnson* U.S. 115 S. ct. 2475 (1995) was used by the Supreme Court to clarify its stand on racial gerrymandering set forth in *Reno v. Shaw* . In this case, the Supreme Court upheld the verdict of the lower court of Georgia, ruling that redistricting lines could not be drawn solely on the basis of race.

The *Shaw* and *Miller* precedence and the increased judicial activism of the courts may lead to increased congressional and state legislative plan challenges throughout the remainder of the 1990s. The *Shaw* and *Miller* decision broke down the standing barrier for white persons so that any oddly shaped district configuration and race based redistricting plans are likely to be challenged in federal court under the 14th Amendment.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The Review of the Literature discusses briefly the historical background of the Congressional Black Caucus. Previous research on the cohesive tendencies of the CBC' roll call vote behavior is included as background into the CBC' voting agreement on legislation salient to all Americans. Finally, previous research is provided pertaining to the CBC' pivotal voting bloc influence.

In the past, studies have focused on the voting cohesion of the Caucus in general. This study seeks to examine the CBC voting cohesiveness and pivotal voting bloc influence on policy issues pertaining particularly to the African American populace, to assess whether African American congresspersons are essential to the passage of policy issues of particular concern to African Americans during these 102nd and 103rd Congresses.

Congressional Black Caucus

For a majority of the CBC' life, it existed as a peripheral entity within the U.S. House. The CBC, originally entitled the Democratic Select Committee, was later renamed the Congressional Black Caucus (Hatchett, 1986). It was formed by Michigan Representative Charles Diggs and twelve other congresspersons in 1969 (Hatchett, 1986). These thirteen individuals were compelled to operate as national spokes persons for more than 25 million disgruntled African American citizens (Clay, 1992). The committee's purpose was to facilitate communication between black members of the House and the chamber's leadership and to help fill the void left by the assassination of Dr. Martian Luther King Jr. (Hatchett, 1986). The CBC was conceived in the height of the civil rights movement of the 1960s. The battle against racism and discrimination did not end at the capital steps, instead it continued into the halls of Congress as the CBC took on the self proclaimed role as the "conscious of the institution" (Canon, 1995). At a time of the

"us against them" philosophy, African American congresspersons banned together in their war on discrimination. The Caucus produced a "Black Agenda" during this time that was used as a legislative resource by the Caucus members as to the concerns of the black community (Clay, 1992; CBC, 1975). The Black Agenda was described by Amiri Baraka (1972), who sat on the CBC foundation's board of directors, as an "attempt to define some of the essential changes which must take place in this land as we and our children move to self-determination and true independence... The American system does not work for the masses of our people, and it cannot be made to work without radical fundamental change... Both parties have betrayed us whenever their interests conflicted with ours, which was most of the time" (Clay, 1992; p.203). This manifesto tackled the issues of federal and domestic assistance programs; full employment; tax reform; the budget and appropriations; universal voter registration; general revenue sharing; health care; social insurance; education; and individual legislative initiatives (CBC, 1975). Over the years the Caucus gradually integrated itself into the Washington political circuit and by the 1980s established itself as the most relentless supporter of the rights of minorities and the poor (Hatchet, 1986). Due to the 1990s round of redistricting, the CBC has reached a critical mass; unprecedented challenges face the CBC. They must contend with the political and ideological views of the vastly expanded membership and the possibility of internal and external Caucus conflicts of interest (Lusane, 1994; Clay, 1992). With this potential conflict comes greater pressure for the members to vote along racial lines in order to obtain a high level of cohesion.

Voting Cohesion

The membership of the CBC increased dramatically from the 102nd to the 103rd Congress; however, as mentioned previously, this was still a proportionately modest number for the country's largest minority of nearly 34 million (Census Bureau, 1996). Although the Caucuses may have been small in proportion, their presence as a cohesive unified voting bloc

traditionally has been used to compensate for their lack of numbers (Gile & Jones, 1995; Bositis, 1994; Jones, 1987). Author Susan Hammond (1983) notes that race is a pivotal factor in black congressional solidarity due in part to the historical oppression experienced by African American citizens. Lucius Baker (1980), suggest that this common bond of the black experience is the catalyst for the high levels of cohesion exhibited by the CBC. These assessments are a logical explanation for the highly cohesive voting behavior of the CBC through the years. However, political scientist Charles Jones (1987) emphasis that the racial bond of blackness alone is not the single factor of cohesion, citing party affiliation; the similarity of the constituency characteristics; and the ideology predisposition of group members, as additional factors. Jones' mention of party affiliation was found to be a dominate factor in this study.

Following the 1992 elections and the start of the 103rd Congress, there was much speculation in the media and among Washington politicians as to whether Caucus members would vote collectively as before, or whether the large influx of freshmen, women, and southern members might create dissension in the Caucus as a voting bloc (Gile & Jones, 1995). Research has found that the CBC has continued to vote cohesively over the last few years (Canon, 1995; Gile & Jones, 1995; Bositis, 1994). Voting cohesion research on the CBC is relatively new in comparison to the CBC' years of existence. The CBC, for a majority of its existence, was written off as weak and ineffective, existing as only a peripheral entity within the House, and therefore generated little interest to a majority of researchers (Swain, 1993). The increase in membership that the late 1970s and 1980s signaled a shift in the CBC' visibility (Loomis, 1981). There were an average of 15 CBC' members in the House through the 1970s and 21 through the 1980, with the 1990s being its largest membership to date (Canon, 1995). Prior research of the CBC' cohesive voting patterns of its formative years by researchers Levy & Stoudinger (1976) revealed that although a high degree of solidarity was demonstrated amongst the 92nd Caucus, in terms of substantive accomplishments, the Caucus was essentially ineffective. However, many

sought to examine the continuity of the Caucus' allegiance over a longer period of time.

A CBC voting cohesion study conducted by Charles Jones (1987), examined the extent to which the CBC exhibited voting cohesion from the 94th Congress through the 96th, by examining the voting patterns of the CBC across five different issue areas. Jones sought to prove that the CBC would exhibit higher levels of cohesion than other informal organizations in the House of Representatives. The findings concluded that the CBC was overwhelmingly cohesive in its voting behavior, and that cohesiveness was critical to their ability to operate as an effective force in the U.S. congressional arena. A more exhaustive study by political scientists Gile and Jones (1995) offers an examination of the CBC' voting cohesion beginning with the formative years of 1971 through 1990. Roll call votes over ten Congresses were examined. The results suggested that the CBC voted as a cohesive voting unit, with the exception of only one occasion (Gile & Jones, 1995). The study further concluded that the overwhelming voting cohesion demonstrated by the CBC in its early years has continued (Gile & Jones, 1995). Researcher David Canon (1995) explored the new found power of the CBC. He examined the impact of the new black minority majority CBC members on the power of the CBC; and the nature of black representation in those districts. He concluded that the new size of the cohesive CBC has substantially increased its political clout while simultaneously pushing it into the political mainstream; and that newly elected African Americans in Congress are more likely to promote the politics of commonalty than the politics of difference (Canon, 1995). His conclusions were based on an examination of the CBC' role in passing legislation, their patterns of roll call voting, committee assignments, and participation in the Democratic party leadership (Canon, 1995). Canon's research on CBC cohesion was consistent with previous research pertaining to CBC cohesion.

Researchers are becoming increasingly interested in the increased voting power of the CBC in its post *Thornburg* era. Researcher David Bositis (1994) examined the legislative voting records of the Caucus

members during the first session of the 103rd Congress, using interest group ratings and other devices. Caucus voting in 1993 was compared with Caucus voting in 1992, as well as with the voting patterns of House Democrats. Bositis concluded that in 1992 there was a remarkable level of cohesion among Caucus members, except Republican Gary Frank (Bositis, 1994). On Presidential support, support for the conservative coalition, and party unity, CBC members generally voted together, with no differentiation between northern and southern voting behavior (Bositis, 1994).

Bositis (1994) found a high degree of continuity evident in the Caucus' voting records between the 102nd and the 103rd Congresses. On presidential support, support for the conservative coalition, and on party unity, CBC members generally voted together (Bositis, 1994). Bositis also made reference to the evaluative results conducted by various interest groups pertaining to the voting records of CBC members. The political interest group's study found that the voting records of CBC members in 1993 were similar to those in 1992, though a slight shift in a more liberal direction may have developed (Bositis, 1994). The ratings of members on economic, social, and foreign policy measures found the Caucus slightly less liberal than in 1992, though still substantially liberal in its voting, with the exception of Franks (Bositis, 1994). The most intriguing change from 1992 to 1993 was in party unity, with Democrats as a group voting in a more cohesive bloc in 1993 than 1992 in the second session of the 102nd Congress, the average Democrat supported the party on 79 percent of all votes, Caucus Democrats averaged slightly higher with 83 percent (Bositis, 1994). In 1993, party unity voting among all House Democrats averaged 85 percent, and Caucus Democrats averaging 90 percent (Bositis, 1994). A roll call analysis of 87 key House votes from the first session of the 103rd Congress revealed that for certain types of legislation the Caucus was extremely cohesive with the CBC voting unanimously on 22 of these votes (i.e. family planning, HUD) (Bositis, 1994). The Bositis study reinforces the previous research in the CBC' cohesion and party allegiance.

Pivotal Bloc Voting

As mentioned previously there has been limited hard statistical research pertaining to the voting behavior of the CBC. In the 1990s (particularly the 103rd CBC) the CBC has become a serious political voice, and they are becoming an organization that must be increasingly dealt with, due to their ability to influence legislation through their cohesive voting bloc potential. Substantive data on the use of the CBC' cohesion as a pivotal voting bloc is also limited. Only since the seating of the 103rd Congress has there been much interest in assessing the CBC' direct influence over the passage or rejection of House legislation. Research has shown that the 103rd Congress has had some success in using its numbers to bloc and pass key legislation (Swain, 1996; Canon, 1995). At one time the House's attitude towards the CBC seemed to be: "Let them talk so we can get back to business" (Hatchett, 1986; p. 19), viewing the Caucus only as a paper lion. With the CBC' incremental rise in numbers, came a new and forced respect for the opinion of the African American congresspersons. The words of former Caucus leader Kweisi Mfume are indicative of the caucuses new no-nonsense approach; "No longer are we going to be looked at as an addendum to the democratic agenda. We are going to be taken seriously. Anything short of partnership could prompt us to respond in kind. If that means killing an important piece of legislation, then that will be the case" (Lusane, 1994; p. 20), and they have done just that.

The 103rd CBC has played a pivotal role in shaping and then passing House legislation on the budget, the space station, crime, and campaign finance reform, making tough demands on behalf of their African American constituents (Swain, 1996, Canon, 1995). According to researcher David Canon (1995) the 1993 budget was of particular salience to the CBC, unanimously threatening the survival of the legislation unless key revisions were made (Canon, 1995). They demanded increased funding for inner cities, the earned- income tax credit, food stamps, and mandatory immunization for poor children (Canon, 1995). Though the budget proposal was not amended to include all of the CBC' demands, they considered the

final budget concessions as a major victory for African Americans (Canon, 1995). The Caucus dealt a critical blow to President Clinton's crime bill, when they, along with Republicans and conservative Democrats voted down the rule needed to bring the crime bill to the House floor, however after tough negotiations on the sentencing provisions, they were instrumental to its passage (Canon, 1995). The CBC was pivotal to the successful passage of the space station, the nation's highest priced science project, which survived by a single vote in 1993, and used its votes to protect PAC contributions in the House's November 1993 campaign finance reform, which are critical to a black political candidate's ability to construct a serious campaign (Canon, 1995). The CBC is also helping promote legislation on banking issues, welfare reform, and environmental justice (dumping toxic waste in poor, black areas) (Canon, 1995). Now able to seriously influence legislation, the CBC is a force to be respected.

As Canon demonstrates, the ability to deliver a bloc of votes enhances the bargaining leverage of the CBC (Darden, 1984). Alan Fiellin (1984) notes that "Votes are a common medium of exchange in political bargaining and the ability to deliver a large block of votes may contribute heavily in bringing negotiations to a successful conclusion (Darden, 1984). As such, the CBC demonstrated its ability to negotiate through its stalling of the 1993 Budget as mentioned previously. There are a number of ways bloc voting can be construed as pivotal. One definition Canon (1995) cites is when the CBC would have "altered the outcome by switching their votes"; under this definition the CBC could have altered the outcome on 186 of the 822 roll calls between January 5, 1993 and June 30, 1994 (p. 165), Another definition of Canon's (1995) is when "the outcome of the vote would have changed if the member of the CBC would have abstained, rather than voting in favor"; under this definition, the CBC played a pivotal role on 56 of the 822 votes Canon examined (p. 165). However, for the purpose of this paper a third and most restrictive definition is employed.

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study's hypothesis is: the votes of African American Congresspersons are more likely to be essential to the House passage of policy issues salient to the African American populace, based on previous evidence. It is expected that both the 102nd and the 103rd CBC will be found to be a distinct voting bloc whose degree of cohesion is high. However, over all, their votes and high level of cohesion will have only a minimal effect on the passage of policy issues salient to the black community, due to a high level of voting cohesion exhibited by both the 102nd and 103rd non-caucus House Democrats in the promotion of the corresponding issues. To determine the CBC' operational success, the level of cohesion manifested by the Caucus on salient black issues and the occasions where CBC votes were essential (pivotal) to the outcome of the issues will be used as a gauge of the CBC' essentiality. CBC roll call votes serve as the independent variable. A measure of cohesion and pivotal influence concerning issues salient to the Black community serve as dependent variables. According to Jones (1987) CBC voting cohesion is defined as "the extent to which members of a group vote in agreement with one another" (p. 29). Canon (1995) defines CBC voting as pivotal if "the outcome would have been reversed if their votes in favor of the winning side were subtracted and replaced with the average position of the non-Black Democrats who voted on the winning side of the bill" (p. 167). These definitions will also apply in this study. To assess the level of voting cohesion and the pivotal voting bloc potential of the 102nd and 103rd Democratic Congress, an analysis of their voting behavior will be based upon patterns in roll call votes selected from the *Congressional Quarterly Report* . Where previous studies have focused on the over all level of cohesion of the CBC members concerning all roll call legislation over a given period of time, this study charts a new and narrower course by choosing roll call votes of the Democratic Congresses that pertain to issues of concern to Black America in particular, as deemed so by the CBC' self proclaimed "Black Agenda" and determining if those votes were pivotal to the passage of the particular legislation (Clay, 1992; CBC, 1975). The operational rules employed to select the roll call votes were:

1. Only the roll call votes involved the passage of Amendments, committee reports and legislation salient to the African American populous are to be examined.
2. Since voting agreement is being determined, usually unanimous votes are not considered because the level of agreement cannot be effectively determined in the absence of disagreement (Gile & Jones, 1995). However, for this study unanimous votes will be considered because this study seeks to examine the CBC's pivotal voting bloc potential, which most likely will require the unanimous vote of the CBC.
3. The roll call votes of House Republican and CBC member Gary Franks will not be considered in accessing CBC cohesion or pivotal voting of either Caucuses, because Franks is an atypical member. For, the CBC never votes with a majority of the Republicans on pivotal issues (Canon, 1995).

A total of 6153 House Democratic roll call votes were considered and were categorized into three major issue areas and covered votes on the following policy dimensions (similar to Gile & Jones, 1985, Levey & Stroudinger, 1976, and to Jones, 1987, each of whom used four or five):

General : District of Columbia, motor voter, foreign affairs

Social : civil rights and liberties, education, benefits, law and order issues

Monetary : appropriations (not specifically related to another issue area) and other monetary or fiscal issues

Because different policy issues might expectantly produce different voting patterns of cohesion, selected roll call votes were categorized into the three issue areas. This categorization will prove useful in this study because references to a particular group's overall cohesion in certain policy areas will be made.

Scores for group cohesion were calculated according to the Rice Index of Cohesion (Rice, 1969). The index has a range of 0 to 100 based on the following formula:

$$\frac{(\text{"yes" votes} - \text{"no" votes})}{\text{Total number of votes}}$$

Total number of votes

A measure of cohesion is defined as "the degree of departure from the most probable chance distribution of votes (i.e. 50-50, which yields a score of zero); hence maximum cohesion (100) is attained whenever the group is in total agreement or total disagreement" (Rice, 1969; P. 208). A high level of agreement is defined as a cohesion score between 75 and 100; a low level was defined as less than 50 (Gile & Jones, 1995). The average cohesion for each issue was calculated (for each Caucus) by summing the individual roll calls and dividing the number of votes per issue. A comprehensive average score per issue area will be calculated by summing the individual roll calls (of each Caucus) in a given issue area and dividing the number of votes per issue area.

Cohesion scores for the non-Caucus House Democrats were also calculated and used to gauge the extent of support to which the non-CBC members gave the corresponding legislation salient to African Americans using the above method.

The objective of this study is not to make sweeping empirical conclusions about the Caucus' ability to legislate on behalf of African Americans. In light of the recent controversy surrounding the new minority majority districts, this study seeks only make a limited assessment of the two Congresses directly involved in the race redistricting debate, to determining whether the votes of the African American congresspersons are even necessary to pass House issues salient to the African American community.

Table 1
Cohesion Scores: all Issue Areas

Congress	Issue Area	Issues	N	CBC Mean	N	Non-Democrats Mean
102nd (1991-1992)						
	Social	HR 3371	18	66.6	239	41.4
		HR 1	24	100.	241	87.5
		HR 3040	24	100.	228	84.2
		HR 3033	23	100.	239	100.
		HR 2	24	83.3	238	96.6
		HR 7	24	91.6.	163	91.4
	Monetary	HR 4210	24	50.0	241	66.8
		HCR 121	22	90.9	235	70.2
		HR 2100	17	100	215	.8
		HR 2519	24	83.3	228	7.8
		HR 1281	23	100	233	76.9
	General	HR 3844	24	100	208	67.3
		HR 2508	24	100	131	57.2

Table 1 (con't)
Cohesion Scores: all Issue Areas

Congress	Issue Area	Issues	N	CBC Mean	N	Non-Democrats Mean
103rd (1993-1994)						
	Social	HR 920	37	100	209	80.8
		HR 3351	36	100	213	92.6
		HR 670	37	89.1	212	75.4
		HR 1025	37	94.5	216	37.0
		HR 1	36	100	217	73.2
		HR 1804	37	100	218	99.0
103rd (1993-1994)						
	Monetary	HR 2264	37	100	221	62.6
		HR 3400	37	100	221	48.4
	General	HR 4	33	51.5	209	69.3
		HR 51	37	100	219	41.0
		HR 2	37	100	215	91.1
		SJR 45	36	100	212	91.5

Table 2**Social****102nd**

HR 3371. the Fairness in Death and Sentencing Act. This amendment sought to replace the Fairness in Death Sentencing Act, which allows minorities to challenge a death sentence as discriminatory if statistics show a disproportionate number of their race being condemned to die, with the Equal Justice Act, which prohibits the consideration of race in determining a defendant's sentence and the use of statistics to invalidate a sentence. The substitution was adopted 223-191.

HR 1. Civil Rights Act of 1991/Passage. This bill sought to reverse or modify a series of Supreme Court rulings that narrowed the reach and remedies of job discrimination laws and two authorize compensatory and punitive for victims of discrimination based on sex, religion or disability. The bill passed 273-158.

HR 3040. Unemployment Benefits Extension/Passage. This bill sought to permanently extend unemployment benefits to long-term unemployed workers for up to 20 additional weeks. It passed 283-125.

HR 3033. Job Training Partnership act/Passage. This bill is aimed at retraining economically disadvantaged individuals who are unprepared to compete in the job market. It passed 420-6.

HR 2. Family and Medical Leave Act/Rule. This bill sought adoption of the rule (H Res 275) to provide for House consideration of the bill to require workers with more than 50 employees to provide up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave a year for serious illness, to care for a new child, to care for a seriously ill child, spouse or parent. It was adopted 269-156.

HR 7. Handgun Waiting Period/Passage. This bill requires a seven day waiting period for gun purchases, allowing local law enforcement authorities to check the background of prospective buyers to determine whether they have a criminal record. It passed. 239-186.

103rd

HR 920. Unemployment Benefits Extension/Passage. A bill to provide \$5.7 billion to allow for the processing of claims from March 6 through Oct. 2 for federal extended emergency unemployment benefits. It passed 254-161.

HR 3351. Youth Offenders alternative Punishment/Passage. This bill authorizes \$200 million per year for fiscal year 1994-96 in grants to states for alternative punishment programs, it passed 336-82.

HR 670. Family Planning Amendments/Passage. This bill codifies the Clinton administration's lifting of the "gag rule" that prohibited staff at federally funded clinics from discussing abortion. It passed 273-149.

HR 1025. Brady Bill/Passage. Passage of this bill requires a five-business-day waiting period before an individual could purchase a handgun to allow official to run a background check. It passed 238-189.

HR 1. Family and Medical Leave/Passage. This bill requires employers of more than 50 employees to provide twelve weeks of unpaid leave for illness or to care for a new child or sick family member. It passed 265-163.

HR 1804. School Improvement/Substitute. This substitution amendment would allow local communities to define "school choice" to include private schools; require 25 percent of federal funds to be spent on school choice programs by school districts and add provisions to strengthen parental control of education. It was rejected 130-300.

Monetary

102nd

HR 4210. 1992 Tax Bill/passage. This bill sought to increase taxes on the rich, while lowering taxes for the poor by giving workers a temporary tax credit worth up to \$400.00 per couple and \$200.00 for individuals a year. It passed 221-209.

H Con Res 121. Fiscal 1992 Budget Resolution/Education Increases. This amendment sought to increase the budget authority target for education, training, employment and social services by \$400 million and the outlay target by \$200 million, permitting additional funding for Head Start, chapter 1 Compensatory Education, student financial aid, vocational and adult education and job corp. It was adopted 261-158.

HR 2100. Fiscal 1992 Defense Authorization/SDI. This amendment sought to terminate the Strategic Defense Initiative program and permit only a basic SDI research program funded at \$1.1 billion. It was rejected 118-266.

HR 2519. Fiscal 1992 HUD Appropriations/Restore Space station Funding. This amendment sought to provide \$1.9 billion for the space station Freedom and to cut \$217 million from public housing operating subsidies. It was adopted 240-173.

HR 1281. Fiscal 1991 Supplemental Appropriations/Housing. This amendment sought to provide \$500 million for the HOME program (Home Investment Partnership), and \$165 million for Hope (Home ownership and Opportunity for people everywhere). It was rejected 177-240.

103rd

HR 2264. Fiscal 1993 Budget Reconciliation/Passage. The bill sought to reduce the deficit by an estimated \$496 billion over five years through almost \$242 billion in additional taxes and \$225 billion in spending cuts. It was passed 219-213.

HR 3400. Reinventing Government and Spending Cuts/ Penny-Kasich Amendment. an amendment to cut federal spending by \$90 billion over five years through various proposals, including Medicare and other entitlement programs. It was rejected 213-219.

General

102nd

HR 3844. Haitian Refugee Protection legislation suspends for six months the reparation of Haitians who were in the custody of the united states before Feb. 5, 1992. The bill passed 217-165.

HR 2508. Fiscal 1992-93 Foreign Aid Authorization/South Africa. This substitute amendment prohibits aid to South African Communist Party and to any organization or association affiliated with a communist party and to require the president to ensure that recipients of aid have democratic processes in place for selecting leaders and do not have a record of human rights abuses. It was adopted 279-134.

103rd

HR 4. National Institutes of Health Reauthorization/Instruct Conferees. A motion to instruct the House conferees to agree to the senate amendment to prevent the permanent immigration of persons infected with the HIV virus, namely Haitians. It passed 356-58.

HR 51. DC. Statehood/Passage. This bill would admit the District of Columbia into the union as the state of New Columbia. It was rejected 153-277.

HR 2 National motor -Voter Registration/Conference Report. The adoption of the conference report on the bill to require states to allow citizens to register to vote when they are applying for a driver's license, at any agency providing public assistance, and through the mail. It was adopted 259-164.

S J Res 45. Somalia Troop Authorization/Passage. Passage of the bill to authorize under War Powers Resolution the previous deployment of U.S. Troops in Somalia and to authorize for one year after enactment the continued U.S. participation in a U.N. led peacekeeping mission in Somalia. It passed 243-179.

FINDINGS

*See Tables 1 & 2 for group cohesion scores and a description of the issues

SOCIAL

102nd

The **fairness in Death and Sentencing Act** was adopted 223-191. This issue is extremely controversial because a disproportionate number of defendants sentenced to death are African Americans (Barkan, 1994). However, there appears to be a considerable amount of disagreement among the Caucus members present in the roll call votes. The CBC with a cohesion score of 66.6, did not satisfy the minimum criterion (75-100) designating a high level of voting cohesion. Non-Caucus Democrats, with a voting cohesion score of 41.4, exhibit an surprisingly low level of agreement on this issue. The lack of cohesion by both the CBC and non-CBC Democrats contribute to the adoption of this legislation. The CBC would not have played a pivotal role in the passage of this issue regardless of its ability to exhibit a cohesion score of 66.6 or even a perfect score of 100.

The CBC' cohesion score for the **Civil Rights Act of 1991**, is 100., which is consistent with their self-proclaimed fight for additional African American civil rights (Hatchett, 1993). The non-CBC Democrats also exhibit a high level of voting agreement with a score of 87.5. The Amendment passed 273-158. The cohesion level of the CBC has no direct bearing on the passage of this issue, for it would have passed with or without any of the CBC members voting in favor of it.

Unemployment is a big concerns of the CBC members and their constituents, for a disproportionate number of the unemployed are African American (Jenson, 1994)). The **Unemployment benefits Extension Passage** bill passed 283-125, with unanimous support from the CBC. This legislation was also salient amongst non-CBC Democrats, with a cohesion score of 84.2. The unanimous bloc of CBC votes are not pivotal to the passage of this legislation, due to the non-CBC' high level of cohesion.

As mentioned previously, unemployment is extremely salient to CBC members and their constituents. The **Job Training Partnership Act/Passage** sailed through the House with a vote of 420-6. The CBC and non-CBC Democrats both exhibit a cohesion score of 100. This high level of cohesion emphasizes the Democratic parties commitment to the unemployed or unemployable. Because of the Houses unanimous agreement on this issue, the cohesive voting bloc of the CBC is not pivotal to the passage of this issue.

African Americans have become the fastest growing population in the United States (Census Bureau, 1996). With the growth of the Black family the CBC has continuously voiced its commitment to the upliftment of the Black family. Therefore, it was surprising to uncover the erratic voting behavior of the Caucus members pertaining to the **Family and Medical Leave Act/Rule**. The rule passed 269-156, but not without opposition from CBC members. Though they exhibit a high level of voting cohesion with a score of 83.3. This study had expected to uncover a unanimous bloc of votes. The non-CBC Democrats championed the cause superbly with a score of 96.6. With the high level of voting cohesion demonstrated by the non-CBC Democrats, the votes of the CBC, regardless of the level of cohesion, are not pivotal to the passage of the issue.

Gun violence has reached epidemic proportions in the African American community (Henderson, 1993). African American constituents are demanding that their congresspersons take action against the violence that rages in their communities. Therefore, it was no surprise that the CBC placed considerable value in the **Hand Gun Waiting Period/Passage**, by exhibiting a cohesion score of 91.6. The bill passed by a vote of 239-186, with little opposition from House Democrats, who also reached a high level of agreement with a score of 91.4. Because of the high level of voting cohesion exhibited by non-caucus Democrats, the votes of the CBC are again not pivotal to the passage of the legislation.

103rd

Employment issues were also salient to the Democratic House members of the 103rd Congress. The **Unemployment Benefits**

Extension/Passage was passed 254-161. The CBC members voted unanimously in favor of the bills passage; while the non-CBC democrats also exhibit a high level of cohesion with a score of 80.8. No votes of the CBC are pivotal to the passage of this legislation; due in part to the cohesiveness of the non-CBC Democrats.

Youth offenders constitute a majority of criminal offenders in the United States (Duster, 1987). Because a substantial number of criminal offenders are African American (Duster, 1987), the **Youth Offender Alternative Punishment** bill would be very important to the African American populous. The bill passed 336-82 with the CBC exhibiting a perfect score of cohesion. The level of non-CBC democrat cohesion was extremely high with a score of 96.2. Again, the CBC voting bloc is not critical to the outcome of this legislation.

Unexpected pregnancy is a problem prevalent amongst African American teenage women (Jacob, 1994). Therefore, the **Family Planning Amendments/Passage** is important to many in the African American community because it allows physicians to discuss the procedure of abortion as an alternative to carrying a fetus to full term. The bill passed 273-149. The CBC reached a high level of agreement on this issue with a score of 89.1. The non-CBC Democrats also reached a high level of agreement exhibiting a cohesion score of 75.4. The High level of voting cohesion amongst the non-CBC Democrats was sufficient to pass the legislation without any assistance from the Caucus.

The CBC continued its support for gun control in the 103rd Congress with its highly cohesive score of 94.5 pertaining to the **Brady Bill** passage 238-189. The support by non-Caucus Democrats took a sharp dive from that of the 103rd's support for gun control. The non-Caucus Democrats exhibit a cohesion score of 37.0. However, their low level of cohesion was countered by a high level of voting cohesion from House Republicans, so high, that the votes of CBC member are not pivotal to the passage of the bill.

The **Family and medical Leave** bill received full support from the 103rd Caucus contrary to the rule vote of the 102nd, with a cohesion score of 100. The non-Caucus Democrats exhibit a moderate level of

voting agreement with a cohesion score of 72.2. The bill passed 265-163. The votes of the CBC are not pivotal to the passage of this legislation.

The idea of school choice has become a hot issue in the 1990s. The defeat of the **School Improvement /Substitute** was a top priority of the CBC members because of the negative impact it could have on the public school system, where a majority of African American children are taught. The amendment was rejected 130-300, with the CBC voting unanimously and the non-CBC Democrats also exhibiting a high level of cohesion with a score of 99.0 on the issue. The unanimous voting bloc of the CBC are not pivotal to the passage of this issue.

MONETARY

102nd

A large percentage of African Americans are designated as low or low to middle income wage earners (Lusane, 1994). The CBC has always sought to reduce the economic strain African Americans have experience in the U.S. economic system, the **1992 Tax Bill** does just that by lowering the taxes of the indigent. The measure passed 221-209, but surprisingly, not without considerable opposition from CBC members. The CBC exhibits a low level of voting cohesion on this issue with a score of 50.0. The non-CBC Democrats are a bit more cohesive with a score of 66.8, still falling short of the high cohesion designation. Because of the moderate level of support for this issue by non-CBC Democrats, the CBC became pivotal to the passage of this legislation. The bill passed by a vote of 221-209. Democrats supported the measure by a 219-46 margin with the CBC voting in favor (19-5). Therefore, non-CBC Democrats supported the bill by 200-46 margin. If the CBC members would have voted for the bill by a 7-17 margin, the bill would have been defeated 209-221.

Education and training are crucial issue of the CBC' agenda. The CBC has been know to be the champion of educational programs such as the Head Start program and adult education. Therefore the **Fiscal 1992 Budget Resolution/Education Increase** was a top priority of the CBC which is demonstrated by their highly cohesive voting score of 90.9. The non-CBC Democrats place a moderate level of value in the passage of this

amendment with a score of 70.2. The Amendment passed 261-158. Not one of the CBC votes is pivotal to the passage of this legislation.

The CBC has been extremely vocal in its condemnation of excessive defense appropriations. Therefore it is no surprise that they exhibit a perfect score of cohesion in support of the **Fiscal 1992 Defense Authorization/SDI** amendment that would have cut defense spending. The non-CBC members were rigidly set against the possibly of defense cuts, exhibiting an extremely low cohesion score of .8. The Amendment was rejected 118-226, due to the non-Caucus Democrat's lack of support on this issue.

Acquiring affordable housing can be a major problem for many African Americans. Therefore the defeat of the **Fiscal 1992 HUD Appropriations** Amendment, which sought to cut millions in public housing appropriations, was an important issue for many African Americans. The CBC exhibits a high level of voting agreement with a score of 83.3. conversely, the non-CBC Democrats exhibit an extremely low level of voting agreement with a score of 07. The amendment was adopted 240-173, due to the lack of value the non-CBC democrats placed in the passage of the legislation.

The **fiscal 1991 Supplemental Appropriations/housing** amendment was an important issue to African Americans for the same reason listed above. The CBC voted unanimously in favor of the amendment and the non-CBC democrats also exhibit a high level of agreement with a cohesion score of 76.9. However, the legislation was rejected 177-240, in part because of strong Republican opposition.

103rd

The **Fiscal Year 1993 Budget Reconciliation/Passage** sought to enact substantial spending cuts that would have had far reaching affects in the African American community. However, the CBC exhibits a highly cohesive score of 100, supporting the passage of the issue after intense negotiations that revised the bill to be more sensitive to the poor. The non-CBC Democrats demonstrate a moderate level of voting cohesion with a score of 62.6. Because of the non-CBC Democrat's moderate

support, the cohesive CBC became pivotal to the passage of the bill. The issue was adopted 219-213. Democrats supported the bill by a 219-38 margin, with the CBC unanimously in favor (37-0). Therefore non-CBC Democrats supported the bill by a 182-38 margin. If the CBC members would have voted for the bill 31-6, the bill would have been defeated 213-219.

The **Penny-Kasich Amendment**, like the 1993 budget bill sought to cut spending in a way that would have dramatically affected the poor. The CBC mobilized against the amendment exhibiting a perfect score of cohesion. the non-CBC Democrats however, exhibit a low level of agreement with a score of 48.4. The low level of salience the non-CBC Democrats afford this issue, resulted in the cohesive CBC becoming a pivotal player in the defeat of the amendment. The amendment was rejected 213-219. The Democrats supported the issue 57-200 with the CBC unanimously rejecting the Amendment 0-37. Therefore the non-CBC Democrats supported the issue by a 57-163 margin. If the CBC would have voted 6-31 the bill would have survived 219-213.

GENERAL

102nd

The plight of black people out side of North America has always been of concern to the CBC and their constituents. From the plight of Haitian refugees to the economic and social condition of African people, has caused the CBC has lead the way in the protection of the people of these lands (Canon, 1995). The **Haitian refugee Protection** legislation and the **Fiscal 1992-93 Foreign Aid authorization/ South African** amendment, were two issues that were voted on unanimously by the CBC, passing 217-165 and 279-134 respectively. However, the non-CBC Democrats scored considerably lower with a cohesion score of 67.3 for Haitian protections and 57.2 for South African aid. Though the non-CBC level of agreement was low, the voting bloc of the CBC is not pivotal to the outcome of the issues.

103rd

As mentioned previously, the CBC has vowed its commitment to the plight of blacks not only in the United States, but in other countries as well. The **National Institutes of Health Reauthorization/Instruct Conferees** preventing HIV positive immigrants, namely Haitians, from entering the United States, passed 356-58. In spite the CBC' previous support of Haitian matters, it seemed to be divided over the issue exhibiting a moderate to low level cohesion score of 51.5. The non-CBC members were a bit more cohesive than the CBC with a cohesion score of 69.3 The votes of the CBC are not pivotal to the passage of this issue.

The African American population of Washington DC. is now over 65.0% of District's population (Census Bureau, 1996). Having gone its entire existence without voting representation in Congress, the push for DC. statehood has continued to grow just as the black population has. **DC. Statehood** has been an important issue among CBC members and African Americans. Lately the possibility of Jesse Jackson being elected to the Senatorial seat upon the admission of the District of Columbia as a union state, has sparked renewed interest in the status of DC. amongst Blacks (Walker, 1992). The CBC members exhibit a perfect cohesion score of 100. on the issue. However, the non-CBC Democrats exhibit extremely low voting agreement pertaining to the passage with a score of 41.0. The bill was rejected 153-277. The unanimous votes of the CBC are not pivotal to the outcome of the bills passage.

The **National Motor -Voter Registration/Conference Report** was adopted 259-164. This adoption was important to the CBC as a procedural step in the fight to make voter registration more accessible to the African Americans electorate (Dreier, 1994). The CBC voted unanimously in favor of the legislation and the non-CBC Democrats also exhibit a high level of voting agreement with a cohesion score of 91.1. With the high level of non-CBC voting agreement, the voting bloc of the CBC members is not pivotal to the passage of this issue.

As mentioned earlier the social and economic condition of African people are of great concern to CBC members. The **Somalia Troop authorization/Passage** was supported by CBC members unanimously.

The non-CBC members also exhibit a high level of voting agreement with a cohesion score of 91.5. The votes of the CBC members are not essential to the passage of this bill.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study support my expectation that the votes of the African American congresspersons are essential to the House passage of policy issues salient to the African American community. Overall, the 102nd CBC is highly cohesive in the social (75.7) and general (100.) areas; and exhibit a low level of cohesion in the monetary (54.5) area. The 103rd CBC overall is highly cohesive in the monetary (100.) area; but exhibit a moderate level of cohesion in the social (63.6) and general (65.0) areas. The 102nd non-CBC Democrats are highly cohesive in the social (98.3) and monetary (88.5) areas; and exhibit a overall low level of cohesion in the general (63.4) area. The 103rd non-CBC Democrats are highly cohesive in the monetary (97.9) area; and exhibit a low over all level of cohesion in the social (45.6) and general (65.5) areas. These erratic levels of overall cohesion exhibited by the CBC are inconsistent with this study's expectations. The study had expected to find a high level of cohesion in virtually every policy area of black concern. This expectation was based on the conclusions of previous studies demonstrating high levels of cohesion by the CBC members over the years.

This study's assertion that African American congresspersons are essential to the House passage of policy issue salient to the Black community, is supported by the votes of the 102nd CBC members being pivotal to the passage of the Tax Bill; and the votes of the 103rd CBC members being pivotal to the passage of the 1993 Budget and the Penny-Kasich Amendment. However, these three occasions that the CBC' votes were pivotal could be considered by many to be American concerns and not particularly African American concerns.

Though the CBC was pivotal on the previously mentioned occasions, the non-CBC Democrats, functioning at various levels of cohesion, were overwhelmingly responsible for the passage of a majority of the issue salient to African Americans. Undoubtedly because a majority of the African Americans electorate affiliate themselves with the Democratic Party, Democrats have become more willing to support policy issues of

concern to African American populace (Whitby, 1987). This data could lead this study to conclude that though the votes of black congresspersons were pivotal on occasions, they are not essential to ensure House passage of a majority of policy issues salient to the African American community; for non-CBC Democrats do an adequate job of promoting and preserving issues salient to the African American populous.

However, this study also reveals that the 102nd CBC ended up on the losing side of four issues and the numerically inflated 103rd ended up on the losing end on two occasion. Of the six issues that the CBC lost, the Fairness in Sentencing Act, defense cuts, HUD appropriation reductions, housing appropriation, HIV immigrants and DC. statehood, three of the issues are particularly black oriented. The Fairness in Sentencing Act, HIV immigrants and DC. statehood all have a direct affect on black people in particular.

The 103rd CBC was more successful in its promotion of salient black issues than the 102nd CBC, in part because of its increased membership. If the 103rd Caucus had remained at its previous 102nd membership status, the 24 voting members, regardless of their level of cohesion, would not have played a pivotal role in the passage of any of the legislation considered.

Non-CBC Democrats failed to support the CBC on issues that were of greatest concern to black people. Therefore, based on these findings this study concludes that not only are the votes of CBC members necessary, but more African American congresspersons, who are sensitive to black issues and who are willing to vote cohesively with the CBC, are needed to seriously promote and preserve legislation of the most importance to African Americans.

Future research to ascertain the level of voting support, prior to redistricting, Caucasian Representatives of the controversial minority majority districts gave to policy issues salient to the Black community would be beneficial. This research would assist in the determination of whether it is necessary to have African American representatives in order to receive unconditional voting support for policy issues of African American concern.

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