Cities Push Residence Restrictions For Public Jobs

By Pamela Banks

BALTIMORE — As cities become increasingly black and poor, and whites and middle class blacks continue to flock to the suburban areas, the question regarding the pros and cons of city residency for city government jobs emerges as a pertinent issue.

Many large cities now have a requirement that persons holding city government jobs must be residents.

Some of the reasons for this requirement are a better ethnic balance among city workers, lower unemployment among minority groups, a personal stake in the city for its employes, reduced tardiness and absenteeism, and the convenient readiness to employes in case of emergencies.

Recently the state Supreme Court of California upheld these reasons given by Los Angeles in a court test over its employment policy.

Los Angeles gives nonresident employes 18 months to become citizens of the city once on the payroll.

Another reason for the residency requirements is to help offset some of the loss in tax funds due to suburbanites spending elsewhere and paying real estate taxes elsewhere.

Prior to the exodus of the middle classes from the cities, the economic reasons were the impetus for such ordinances. In times of severe job shortages, the ordinances served to weed out applicants. However, in times of prosperity cities have repealed or neglected to enforce the ordinances to have enough applicants.

For example, New York City's residence requirement is closely lined to economics. A residence ordinance was first adopted in 1937 during the depression. It required applicants to have lived in the city at least three years before they applied for a job.

Because jobs were plentiful in private industry during the 1950's, the ordinance became a burden. The city was having trouble finding qualified applicants, therefore the ordinance was repealed in 1962.

With the tightening of the economic situation, in 1971, pressure grew to restore a residence ordinance despite the fact that the state legislature had passed a law forbidding cites from requiring sanitation workers, firemen and policemen to live within the city limits.

Another large city which went through a similar pattern was San Francisco which restored its residence ordinance in 1971. The original ordinance had been abolished in 1966, when, as one city official explained, jobs were plentiful, taxes were low and the city was pressed for qualified applicants.

Maynard Jackson, mayor-elect of Atlanta, has high on his list of goals a requirement that Atlanta's policemen be city residents.

Atlanta's population is now a little more than 50 percent black, but the black percentage on the police force is considerably lower.

A residence ordinance in time could decrease the chances that Atlanta's black population would be policed indefinitely by outside whites who have no personal stake in the city.

Sentiments are stewing in Baltimore to pass an ordinance which requires that at least department heads be from the city.

Councilmen Emerson C. Julian, of the city's predominantly black Fourth Legislative District recently introduced a proposed ordinance that would do just that.

Like Atlanta, Baltimore's population, according to the latest census is between 52 and 54 per cent black — meaning slightly more than half of the population is black.

The city also has a high percentage of poor residents.

Julian said he has been seeking such an ordinance for the past six years. Currently Baltimore has a residence requirement for welfare and voting.

The legal trend in these decisions is not how long a person has been a resident of a city or state, but whether they actually are residents at the time they register to vote, apply for welfare or whatever.

The judge ruled that the St. Louis ordinance might discourage potential residents of the city from living there, since they would have to wait a year in order to obtain the job

The Supreme Court has also ruled in this manner on cases concerning residing between ordinances that made residence in the city a prerequisite for employment and those which require employees to live in the city once given a job.

Julian says he feels the city could benefit from the revenue generated by top government jobs and giving such jobs to city residents will help increase the economic stability of a core city which is largely becoming low income.

"All people who set policy should live in the city of Baltimore," said Julian.

Julian spearheaded the fight for a charter amendment, that requires all board chairmen and commission heads appointed by the mayor on and after Jan. 1, 1973 "shall be residents and voters of the city at the time of their appointment, and shall remain such residents and voters during the entire term of office."

As a result of his efforts, and others who supported the amendment, it was approved by Baltimore voters during last November's election.

Another step in the direction of a possible residence ordinance was the federal court decision in July involving discriminatory charges against the Baltimore Fire Department.

The judge ruled that the fire classes should be composed by giving preference to city residents to assure proper representation of blacks.

As a result of this ruling, the fire board president recently announced that a class of 60 men has been formed which is between 27 and 30 percent black.

In his interest in residency requirements, Councilman Julian has surveyed over 50 cities. He said he got a variety of answers but one factor that remained constant from one city to the other was "all over the country there seems to be quite a fight between those living in the city and those living outside" on the issue.

Residence requirement ordinances vary in terms of when a person is considered for a city position.

Some cities, especially those that have had requirements for several years, require that a person be a resident at least a year before making application.

St. Louis and Little Rock are examples of the cities which have this requirement. However, a federal district court in St. Louis recently ruled that St Louis' ordinance couldn't stand

The federal judge made a clear distinction in his rulolution that requires that the city hire residents on a first priority basis, but it is not as binding as an ordinance.

He said he firmly feels the top city jobs should be filled by residents, but feels flexibility can be allowed for other positions.

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Parents get toy warning

A special warning has been issued by Dr. Jimmie L. Rhyne, assistant commissioner of health for child health services, to parents buying toys for children.

Parents are warned to observe all cautions on toy packaging and to choose toys appropriate for a child's age and development.

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WESTERN DISTRICT—In conjunction with its recent "Special Salute to Baltimore's Finest," honoring the Baltimore City Police and Fire Departments, Bon Secours Hospital's Noreen Rathburn, R.N., and Sister Mary Cabrini share a cake with, left to right, Officer James Rankin, Lt. Calvin Lewis and Sgt. Clarence Hundley. The two emissaries personally delivered cakes to several district police and fire stations in the area.

Park Heights Color Guard Wins Competition

A group of Northwest Baltimore youths between 10-15 years of age competed with 30 other units in the Christ Spirit Parade held in Essex, Dec. 2, by invitation from the Essex - Middle Christ Spirt Inc.

The youths marched under the banner of Upper Park Heights community color guard, which is sponsored by the Baltimore City Bureau of Recreation. This was the units first competition.

The Upper Park Heights community color guard was uniformed in red, black and gold with white boots. The unit made their 1st try a real event by winning 2nd place over 30 other units. They did this without the support of a marching band.

This reward was achieved because of 6 months of hard military drill training on the part of the entire unit.

Many people at the competition noted - this is the first of many trophies to be won by this unit. Their motto is - marching for peace, love and prosperity.

A special thanks to the northwest community businessmen, parents, residents community volunteer group and the Baltimore City Bureau of Recreation for making this color guard a reality.

The active members are John Carter, Karen Wilson, Michelle Hearn Connie Taylor, Norma Jean Carroll, Janet Wilson, Micheal Ainson, Thelma Brown, Randy Jefferson, Moncia Brown, Norma Carroll, III, Pandora White and Dorothy Carroll.

Set By Mr. G. L. Townes

Schools set open houses

Mrs. Thelma B. Cox, superintendent of Region 2 invited parents and public to an Open House at the regional offices corner of Gorsuch and Kennedy Avenues, Dec. 12.

On Monday, Dec. 17, between 3 and 4 p.m., Region 9 will hold its Christmas Open House in the Diggs-Johnson School, 162 501 West Barre St.

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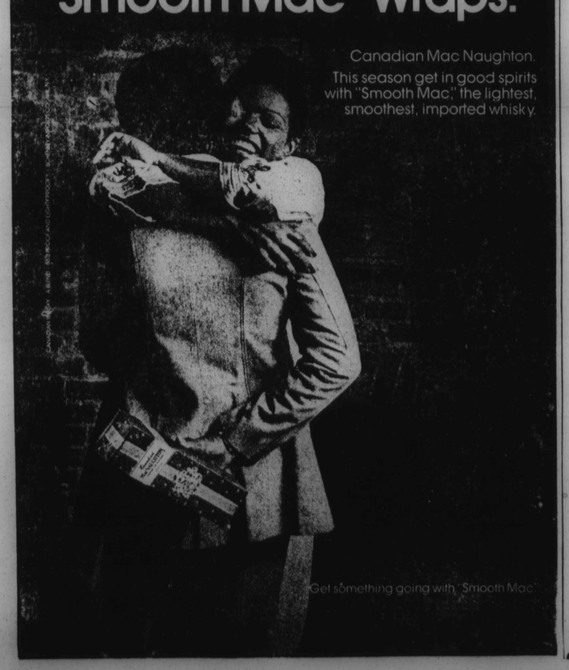

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Holiday Bonus gives you an exciting Second Chance.

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Prize availability based on projected ticket sales. Regular Lottery cash prizes, Scramble prizes and Millionaire Qualifiers apply to Winning Weekly Number only. Merchandise prizes apply to Holiday Bonus Number only and must be claimed by Monday, March 18, 1974.
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AWARDED PINS, and certificates during the fall initiation exercises of Promethean Kappa Tau (freshman-sophomore honor society) at Morgan State College were, left to right, Mare Desimone, 2701 Southern Ave.; Miss Marion Newell, president of the society, 5107 St. Georges Ave; Dean Kenneth F. Jerkins, making awards, and Miss Ngoze Okeke, Enugu, East Africa.

Clay Acts To Help NAPFE Save Post Office Wallop

By John W. Lewis Jr.
AFRO Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — Congressman William Clay D-Mo., has introduced an amendment in the House Committee on Post Office and Civil Service which would allow the union representing black postal employees to continue representing them in grievance procedures.

The amendment to Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 may be critical to the survival of the 60-year-old National Alliance of Postal and Federal Employees if a case now before the U.S. Court of Appeals is decided against the organization.

The Reorganization Act, in which the U.S. postal service was turned into a semi-private corporation, prohibited any non-AFL-CIO union from being able to represent employees in grievances and adverse actions, a provision unsuccessfully fought by the Alliance in District Court here. That case is now before the U.S. Court of Appeals.

* * *

"I sponsored the amendment because I think the action against the Alliance represents a national conspiracy against black institutions," Congressman Clay said. "It is only institutions that can successfully fight racist institutions.

"I think President Nixon allowed the AFL-CIO to force out the black union because he was seeking political support."

Robert L. White, president of the Alliance, said his organization had spent $100,000 in legal fees connected to its fight in the courts. Membership has declined from 30,000 to 24,000.

"Until 1970, we had all of the rights of the other postal unions," said White. "Each of the 8 unions bargained separately."

The other 7 white-controlled unions, which have now become 4 through mergers, are all AFL-CIO craft unions.

"Because we refused to merge they want to eliminate us," White said. "We want to maintain black control. They don't intend for any black union to gain any power.

"Congressman Clay's amendment will allow employees the right to choose their own bargaining agent in grievance procedures. We believe that minorities must have the right to select their own representatives."

* * *

The Alliance, founded in 1906, has a staff of 26, White said, including 5 elected officials and 3 presidential aides.

A budget of $1.5 million dollars comes from $4 a month union dues and payments by members to a union health program.

The union, which now has 143 local chapters in 38 states, was started when whites excluded blacks from postal unions.

"Blacks used to predominate in the chapters in 38 states, was started since the mail car was dangerously located right behind the engine," White said.

"Sparks would fly back and in collisions a lot of people were always hurt. When they switched to metal cars from wood and the wages went up, white people started to come in."

The Alliance had its 60th anniversary this past Oct. 14, returning for special services at Lookout Mountain Tennessee where the union was born.

* * *

Under the Reorganization Act, the Alliance is still allowed to keep its checkoff of union dues, a system in which the government deducts automatically the union dues, from a union member's wage.

Each year, however, White says the membership declines when it comes time for union members to decide whether they want to continue to have their dues "checked off".

They don't see the need, White says, of continuing union membership when the Alliance cannot handle grievance procedures for them.

Congressman Clay's amendment would permit the AFL-CIO to negotiate national contracts and working conditions, but would permit the Alliance to continue to handle grievance procedures, a neccessity the Congressman says, "given the past racist history of the Post Office Department."

White said that the last racial restrictions were not removed from the craft unions until 1960 following historic executive orders from President John F. Kennedy.

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