Councilman Reeves

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Three months into the 1979-1983 Council session, Reeves has been markedly silent on major issues and has introduced no legislation other then "public relations" resolutions congratulating Baltimoreans.

He did appear as a singer recently on a local version of "The Gong Show" — shades of this city's poet-celebrity-comptroller Hyman Pressman?

Even those people who helped him gain his Council seat are bewildered by his muted legislative performance.

Some volunteer campaign workers who stuck with Reeves through three campaigns wonder what he has accomplished.

"Why did I sit up all night addressing envelopes?" one woman asked.

And a key figure in Reeves' victory was asked by the AFRO what Reeves' game plan would be now that he is a councilman.

"That's a good question. I'd like to know myself. Why don't you ask him," the campaign aide said.

The AFRO did ask Reeves what he thinks are problems that should be addressed in the black community, his stand on rent control, why he has not introduced any substantive legislation and if he is being muzzled either by the Schaefer administration or by Poliack, a recurring whisper among some of his constituents.

What does Reeves perceive are major issues in the black community which should be addressed in the City Council?

"Employment and housing are two key issues we should be focussing on," he said.

What is Reeves' position on rent control?

He faulted the rent control referendum passed by city voters in November as too restrictive and said it would frighten potential investors out of Baltimore.

"Why would an investor go through the hassle rent control would create in Baltimore?" he said.

Reeves said he favors compromise legislation on rent control.

Is Reeves opposed to strong rent control because he is a real estate executive?

"I don't think that is an overriding factor. I have looked at a lot of cities that have rent control and those that do have not fared very well. The people who have been hurt are those who can least afford it," he said.

What important legislation has Reeves introduced?

He admitted that the measures he has introduced in the Council have not dealt with weighty issues.

"I can't say I have introduced legislation. But I will be introducing some things soon," Reeves said. "I don't know that legislation, introductions is a yardstick on judging someone's effectiveness."

He defended the lack of bills he has brought to the floor by saying "a great deal is not really done as legislation and passing ordinances.

"It also involves working with agencies and the administration in shifting priorities."

He also pointed out that some of his Council colleagues have worse records and "they have been there for four years and haven't introduced anything important."

Does Reeves need more time to become acclimated to the politics and mechanics of the Council?

"Three months is not a long period of time.

"I think six months is a reasonable amount of time to get my feet wet," Reeves said.

Why has Reeves been reluctant to support his black colleagues on such issues as Mayor William Donald Schaefer's appointments to bboards and commissions?

Two 4th District Councilmen, Kweisi Mfume and Michael Mitchell, vehemently objected to Schaefer's nominations to boards, saying the appointments do not represent the city's majority black population. They both opposed the appointment of Norman Ramsey as head of the Board of Fire Commissioners.

When the vote was taken, Reeves said he felt the black community is under-represented but voted for Ramsey anyway.

Reeves told the AFRO that, prior to the vote, he had talked with Ramsey about the possibility of a black fire chief and said he did not feel he could vote against Ramsey's appointment.

"I did support Kweisi on the principal involved. But I think it is a question of a different type of politics. I'm not there for show or to get my name in the newspapers.

"Besides, I'm not sure disapproving of something on the floor is the effective way to do things," Reeves said.

"No comment."

Is Reeves being controlled either by the Schaefer administration or by the same political forces which so successfully stole the 5th District seat from him in two successive elections?

That question elicited a terse, only-partially-printable response.

"That's horse (deleted)," Reeves said.

Does he think he has been responsive to the needs of his constituents in the first three months of his four year term, despite mumbles to the contrary from community leaders?

"Certainly. Some people are very happy with what I'm doing," Reeves said.

But he would not specify who is happy with his performance.

Hughes

(Continued from page 1)

Reaction to the news stunned residents of both Howard and Anne Arundel County, where it was tentatively located, but East Baltimore residents, where another site for the prison had been discussed for years, were pleased, but cautious.

"Several weeks ago," said Zatella Giles, who led a successful protest against the proposed prison site of a former industrial plant in the 3500 block of East Biddle St. "Gov. Hughes assured us that the prison will not be built on the Continental Can site. Right now we're still apprehensive, because they're still in the talking stage."

Ms. Giles' apprehension proved to be well-founded, as, on March 4, published reports announced that Hughes had reversed himself again, and had proposed a new 500-bed prison to be built near the present Maryland Penitentiary, in East Baltimore.

The new site is located in the East Baltimore neighborhood of Johnston Square, a low - income area. The residents of the neighborhood are already up in arms against what they claim is a lack of sensitivity on the part of the city and state administration to their plight.

The neighborhood is near two community corrections facilities, and the Maryland Penitentiary and the City Jail, plus a new Diagnostic and Reception Center under construction, are also located in the region.

Although many county and rural legislators and citizens applauded the new site, and have taken the stance that, since most of the prisoners in Maryland institutions are from Baltimore's urban community, they ought to be incarcerated in the area, Johnston Square residents have a different attitude.

"Unless they want a prison mall," said Cynthia Parker, head of the Johnston Square Project Area Committee. "Or a prison district in Baltimore, no one neighborhood should have to bear the brunt of the prison population."

Ms. Parker and several other community leaders led a bus ride to the state capitol Tuesday to protest the projected site, and are planning a series of public meetings with elected officials and representatives from Hughes' and Kamka's camps to discuss the issue.

Recently, Hughes commissioned a panel to study the Maryland penal system, and to devise possible solutions to the problems of overcrowding, the ancient, outmoded prison plants, and to ascertain the viablitity of implementing community corrections centers and other alternative means of rehabilitation and imprisonment.

The panel, the Task Force on Prison Overcrowding, consisted of various legal and sociological leaders, including Allen F. Breed, Director, National Institute on Corrections; William T. Durr, Chairperson, Department of Sociology, University of Baltimore; M. Kay Harris, Director, Washington office, National Council on Crime and Delinquency; Pauline H. Menes, State Delegate; Micheal A. Millemann, Chief, Civil Division, Chief General Counsel, Attorney General's office of Maryland; William Nagel, Director, The American Foundation, Inc; Ray Olsen, American Correctional Association; Patricia L. Quann, Vice Chairperson, National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice; Charles H. Smelser, State Senator; Polly D. Smith, Research Associate, The American Foundation, Inc.; Robert B. Watts, Judge, Supreme Bench of Baltimore City; Billy L. Wayson, President of Institute for Economic Aid Policy Studies, Inc.; and James Webster, Federal Bureau of Prisons.

The results of the commission's investigation are startling, especially in light of the fact that Hughes has decided to build the new facility.

The commission, chaired by Judge Watts, states that the building of a new facility would not serve to decrease crime, and its construction costs would be more expensive than implementing alternatives to large-scale prisons such as community corrections facilities.

The report went further to point out that, although Maryland has one of the highest rates of incarceration in the country, the traditional policy of warehousing prisoners has apparently failed.

The report stated that the high rate of incarceration can be partly explained by what it refers to as the "funnel effect" which is evident when blacks are involved in the penal system as victims.

"We noted the following "funnel effect" in Maryland; 79 of Maryland's population is white, 56 percent of her arrests are of white persons, but only 23 percent of her prison population is white. Conversely, 21 percent of Maryland's population is black; this population accounts for 44 of the arrests and 77 of the State's prison population."

Two additional factors in the high rate of incarceration within the state which the report listed were the large proportion of non-violent offenders sent to prison, and the relatively short terms which are handed down.

The report also found that Governor Hughes' second proposal, for an 890-bed facility, was too large, and that, if the current rate of depopulation of both the Maryland House of Correction and the Maryland Penitentiary continued, the state would be able to meet its deadline for easing overcrowding in the facilities by June 1, 1980, which would make the new prison obsolete before a single brick was laid.

The major conclusion of the task force was that there does exist in Maryland alternative means of coping with the problem of where to put criminals.

These include: Community courts, which would serve as local justice centers for the mediation of minor disputes. One local example of this type of program cited in the report was Anne Arundel County's Community Arbitration Project, "which utilizes trained attorneys to arbitrate disputes involving first-time juvenile offenders"; Pre-Trial Programs, in which accused persons were given an opportunity to improve themselves, educationally and vocationally, and also to receive counseling; Sentencing Alternatives such as money fines or retribution by offenders to victims of crimes, well monitored probation, Community rehabilitation centers and, commutation of some sentences by the governor, and better sentencing guidelines for judges.

Almost a year ago, Governor Hughes commissioned a group of persons to examine the state welfare grants system, and make recommendations on how the system could be improved.

Although the commission recommended an increase in the grants for a family of four to $600 per month, Hughes failed to follow their advice, and instead decided to raise the allowance for four - person families by only 11 percent.

One would hope that Hughes will appreciate and implement the suggestions made by his commission on state penal overcrowding, but, judging from his recent endorsement of the proposed 500-bed facility, the chances are bleak that the commission's findings will have any impact on the detoriorating conditions of the Maryland penal system.

Obviously, as the two above examples illustrate, Hughes has chosen to ignore the advice of his own well informed commissions.

Then who does have his ear? Apparently the "law and order" politicians who have lobbied for years to increase the current "warehouse system" of handling the state's prison problems.

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UNINHABITABLE CONDITIONS — AFRO photographer Roman Hankewycz captures the scenes of desolation and ruin at 3306 - 3308 Hilton St., the Hilton Courts Apartments. Garbage is strewn along the courtyard between the two buildings. In the distance are the three dumpsters where residents have to drag their garbage and trash (photo at L). In center photo Benjamin Bishop and Evangeline Diggs stand in front of a graffati - covered entranceway. Note how the door is broken open. Residents claim that transients and hoodlums frequent the building due to the lack of security. In last photo, Ms. Diggs stares apprehensively at the ceiling in her kitchen, which has been haphazardly repaired with a piece of sheetrock. Several residents stated that their ceilings have fallen down on them. Tuesday, the AFRO highlighted the plight of the families in the apartments, whose landlord is facing more than 500 housing code violations. The landlord is Frederick J. Levitan.

Black bar owners support 4 a.m. curfew legislation

By Portia E. Badham
AFRO Staff Writer

One of the city's liquor and beverage associations has come out in support of a bill now before the General Assembly that would extend the operating hours of nightclubs on the "the block" to 4 a.m.

The Maryland United Liquor and Beverage Association which includes most of the black liquor establishments owners in the city, supports the bill even though it would not affect businesses outside the night club area on Baltimore Street.

"The block is a foot in the door," said Wes Ivey, owner of the Preakness Lounge in Park Heights and head of the organization. "We are realistic enough to know that you do things in stages. Later we hope to get this extended to other areas."

Ivey stated that he felt the City Council should adopt a resolution in support of the bill and that a poll he conducted earlier this week indicated that at least 10 members were in favor of the legislation which was introduced by Sen. Joseph Bonvegna, D-46th.

But, Kenny Webster, former House of Delegates member who served from 1971 to 1978, stgonly opposes the bill calling it "discriminatory geographically and racially."

"I'm opposed to the bill in its present form because it's discriminatory to those other establishments in the downtown area like The Ritz that would also attract tourists from the Convention Center."

Webster pointed out that the hours should be extended for bars throughout the entire city so that private citizens like himself could have a choice where they could patronize after 2 a.m.

He added that he would send a letter opposing the bill to the House Economics Committee and said that this would be the first piece of legislation to take him back to Annapolis and speak before a committee since he served in the House.

The Ritz owner, Dave Richeson, whose club is located just two blocks from the Convention Center said, "I can't understand how anyone could possibly pass a bill that only offers the side of Baltimore that's a strip joint.

"It just doesn't make sense. They are supporting this bill because we are now calling Baltimore a convention town? That argument doesn't hold water. This should at least include other businesses in the Convention Center area that offer other kinds of entertainment."

Sen. Clarence Mitchell, D-38th, one of the bill's opponents in the Senate, offered a steady stream of amendments last Wednesday to try to block preliminary approval of the legislation.

He suggested making the special liquor license available to owners of bars on the "the block" for a price of $4,000 and $10,000.

"Since it's obvious the Senate of Maryland wants the block to have a special advantage, I'm sure they'd want the owners to pay for that special advantage," he said.

City officials have supported the bill to make Baltimore more attractive as a convention center city.

However like clockwork, the Senate repeatedly killed the Mitchell amendments and he agreed to offer one last amendment if the Senate would delay action until later in the week. It is expected to come up again in the Senate by today, Friday, March 14.

Baltimore County Line

Ebonie Alexander
AFRO Staff Writer

On Monday March 3, Mel Mintz, Chairman of the Baltimore County Republican Shadow Council, a political club, appeared before the county council to make a statement against subvefsive acts and terrorism.

Mintz went on record with a call for Baltimore County government to make offical condemnation of cross burnings throughout Baltimore County.

He further stated "We just feel that this is, the least Baltimore County government can do. The Shadow Council feels now is the time for the county to go on record against bigotry".

More Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Small Cities Block Grants have become available to Baltimore County for use in Turner Station for neighborhood strategy areas.

The invitation for application has been submitted to the county from HUD. The issue must first be brought before the full council for vote, to determine whether the county will apply.

The council vote on the issue is scheduled for Monday, April 7, at 7:30 p.m. in the council hearing room of the Old County Courthouse, Towson.

Baltimore County has been selected by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation of Princeton, N.J. to participate in a nationwide community services program for the elderly. The $600,000 award will allow the elderly in the community to maintain independent lifestyles for as long as possible.

The three year project will include establishment of a coordinating agency with board of directors responsible for representing the public and private providers of care.

Dr. Matthew Tayback, state director of aging, said Baltimore County was selected on the recommendation of the state advisory committee, as was Tim Fagar, the new project director. Tim Fagar is the current director of the Baltimore County Department of Aging.

Baltimore County Executive Donald P. Hutchinson, when he learned of the award, told the AFRO that the problems of the elderly in Baltimore County are a major concern of his administration and he promised "...to mobilize his departmental resources behind the Foundation effort".

The new program will serve as a model in Maryland and seven other states across America.

Maryland Lottery

The winning numbers in the weekly Maryland lottery drawn on Wednesday night, March 12, were as follows: six - digit, 980026; five - digit, 51465; four - digit, 4795; three - digit, 647; two - digit, 62, and bonus number, 299965.

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