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'Doing it on New Year's Eve
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Mitchell-Cranston amendment — $ billions for minority contractors

The Senate gave final approval Wednesday, Dec. 22, to a bill that includes an amendment which could earmark billions of dollars to minority businesses during the next four years.

The measure, which has been referred to as "the gas tax bill," will use funds generated by a five-cent-per-gallon increase to fund bridge and road construction and aid to mass transportation.

The bill's backers expect the measure to help create 320,000 jobs.

Congressman Parren J. Mitchell D-7th sponsored an amendment to the House version of the gas tax bill. He said the amendment stipulates that 10 percent of the tax revenues be set aside for minority businesses.

The amendment to the Senate version was introduced by California Democrat Senator Alan Cranston.

The bill, the Surface Transit-Gasoline Tax Act of 1982, is expected to generate more than $20 billion during the next four years. Mitchell estimated the bill could net as much as $70 billion in that time span, and could turn over $7 billion to minority businesses.

Mitchell, who described the victory as "the best Christmas present I could have expected," said the bill will provide needed relief to ailing minority businessmen.

"Obviously this will help minority businessmen which have been hit hard in this economic depression we have found ourselves in," Mitchell said.

Mitchell added he believes the package will help alleviate black unemployment by allowing black business firms to increase their hiring. The nationwide black unemployment rate currently is running at 20 percent.

Mitchell said he expects to meet with US Department of Transportation Secretary Drew Lewis to monitor the hammering out of regulations guiding the implementation of the new law. Mitchell said he expects the contract award process to begin in about two months.

The House and Senate versions of the bill were reconciled last week. But although the House passed the compromise measure last week, Senate approval has been held up by conservative opponents. The opposition has claimed that a tax increase would further weaken the already stalled economy and would not result in a net increase in employment.

Local steelworker dismayed to see billions lost for jobs

By Patricia Tatum
AFRO Staff Writer

An unemployed factory worker, who said his jobless benefits recently expired, was one of several union officials and state legislators who expressed dismay at Congress eliminating billions of dollars for jobless aid from an emergency spending bill.

Kwazi Nkrumah, 28, who said he last worked November 1981, told the AFRO that the failure of Congress to include the funds in an emergency spending bill signed earlier this week by President Ronald Reagan reflects that "unemployment isn't really being taken seriously by politicians yet."

Nkrumah is the co-founder and co-chairman of the United Committee of Unemployed People (UCUP) and the chairman of the unemployment committee of Local 14601 of the United Steel Workers Union.

Democratic leaders in the House, apparently influenced by the nation's 10.8 percent unemployment rate, attached a $5.4 billion package of about 40 provisions for public works jobs and other aid for the unemployed.

The Senate's version of the emergency spending bill included $1.2 billion for public works jobs.

However, the provisions were dropped after President Reagan began a public campaign against the provisions and threatened to veto the entire bill if they were included.

Negotiators for Congress are reported as saying they wanted to leave the jobs money in the bill, but faced with the approaching Christmas holidays and the possibility of a shutdown of government, there was no choice but to drop the package from the bill.

Nkrumah said unemployment still is a "political football."

"That they threw it out reflects that they weren't really serious," he said. "Hopefully, the same won't apply in the State of Maryland."

Sen. Troy Brailey, D-40th, told the AFRO he was "very surprised and disappointed" that the House voted to kill the provisions.

"I understand that Maryland would have gotten quite a bit of the money from this jobs bill," he said.

With the high rate of unemployment plaguing the state and

(Continued on page 2)

AFRO Photo by Martin Evans

IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS — Cinese Cauldwell, 6, a first grader at the Mount Royal Intermediate School proudly displays an artwork Christmas tree, while other preparations go on behind her. "I know what I want for Christmas. A Smurf radio. With earphones," Cinese said.

Conflicting views

Driving a city bus 'dangerous'

Driving a city bus is a "dangerous" job, a Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) bus operator told the AFRO on the heels of an incident last week when a 19-year-old man was killed after he and three other passengers allegedly assaulted a MTA driver.

How frequently do such assaults occur was the question put to Keith Rawlinson, a MTA spokesman and also to an official whose union represents MTA employees.

Their assessment of the number of assaults and similar incidents differed. The MTA's Rawlinson said attacks happen, but are rare and the union spokesman, who refused to be named, said they are frequent.

The incident which raised the question occurred Friday, Dec. 17, on a No. 15 bus.

Driver Melvin Bryant told police he shot Samuel Brown, of the 800 block of Edmondson Ave., in self-defense after Brown and three other passengers assaulted him.

After the shooting, Byrant was arrested by police and charged with handgun violations.

As an example, Rawlinson said four assaults were reported against drivers last month and in November 1981, three assaults were reported.

He said when the incidents do happen - not all lead to a physical assault — it usually involves an argument between the driver and a passenger about fare.

"When a swing is taken (it) doesn't always mean there was bodily contact, Rawlinson said.

Robberies of drivers and passengers on buses are rare also. Only two were reported last month, he said.

The MTA is trying to do what it can to prevent such incidents, but they are not a major statistic, he said.

However, the union spokesman told the AFRO "assault cases are frequent."

He said such incidents such as the one on Dec. 17, have happened in the past. The spokesman said he does not know if such incidents can be prevented.

Radios have been installed in every bus as a detriment to assaults, but "they still occur," he said.

An MTA driver, who also refused to be named, also said assaults happen regularly.

"When you deal with the public all kinds of things are going to happen," the driver told the AFRO. "It's a dangerous job."

The driver said weapons such as mace, knives and pistols are not permitted by the company to be carried, but many drivers do carry them for protection.

Byrant told the police his pistol, a .38-caliber handgun, was for his protection.

If a driver is caught with a pistol or other weapon, he or she faces dismissal by the company, the driver said.

"He's not the only one who carries a gun," the driver said. "We're not supposed to assault passengers, even if they're killing you."

Rawlinson told the AFRO there is no comment about Bryant's status with the company. The matter is under internal investigation, he said.

The question remains: who will run school system?

Dugger resigns, denies allegations

With the resignation Thursday of Milton Dugger Jr., the Baltimore City School Board Commissioner accused of interfering with the hiring of a new city school superintendent, the question now is who will be the interim chief of the city's schools?

Dugger had been the center of a storm of controversy since Monday when David Danneker, school board chairman, accused him of improperly contacting the board's choice as new superintendent - Dr. Gene Carter, a Norfolk, Va. school system administrator - and discussing a number of sensitive issues with Carter who suddenly rejected the Baltimore post after first agreeing to take the job.

Dugger announced his resignation, effective Jan. 1, during a 6 p.m. news interview aired on a local television station.

Several scenarios have been projected as to whom will fill in for retiring school superintendent Dr. John L. Crew, who leaves Dec. 31.

One possibility is that Dr. Crew will stay on until a new superintendent has been selected.

Dr. Hilbert Stanley, the Mayor's educational liason officer and former principal of Lake Clifton High School, also is another one of the names mentioned as interim superintendent.

However, Dr. Stanley told the AFRO immediately after news of Dugger's resignation that no one had mentioned the job to him.

"Nobody's even hinted that to me," he said. "I hope they don't" but he did note that being mentioned for the post is a compliment.

Dugger thus far has not given anyone any explanation about why he made the telephone calls to Dr. Carter.

During the newscast he did say that he had not done anything illegal or improper and had not dissuaded Carter from taking the position in Baltimore.

Since Monday, the AFRO repeatedly had tried to contact Dugger for comment at his home and office but was unsuccessful.

The AFRO finally reached Dugger at his home Wednesday night and was told he would call a press conference Thursday afternoon to explain his role in the controversy.

Repeated calls to Dugger's home and office Thursday again were unsuccessful.

When Dugger did surface it was on the local newscast.

City Councilman Kweisi Mfume told the AFRO he also spoke with Dugger Wednesday night.

He said Dugger's resignation took him by surprise because during their lengthy conversation on Wednesday Dugger had indicated he was firm about staying on the school board and had no intention of resigning.

Mfume said Dugger "was hanged" and that Danneker had mishandled the situation and had over-reacted.

"Milton was caught in the middle," he said. "Danneker ought to resign."

Competing Cable TV firms explain their plans

By Johanne Brown
AFRO Staff Writer

Cox PortVision and Caltec, the two bidders for the city's cable television franchise went before the Mayor's Blue Ribbon cable TV evaluation board Wednesday in a public hearing designed to clarify issues in their proposals that were under question by the board.

Questions concerning structure, financial intentions, construction and minority participation in the companies were subjects for the day long hearing.

The city's request for proposal (RFP) requires each company to incorporate suitable minority involvement into their operations. Skeptical board members were concerned about the companies' written commitments and whether or not they would be enacted.

(Continued on page 2)

All Baltimore AFRO offices will be closed Dec. 24 and will reopen Dec. 27, at 8:30 a.m.

City College students Christmas wish list

By Martin Evans
AFRO Staff Writer

"I hope that people less fortunate than me have a good Christmas," Howard McLain, a 10th grader at City College High School, said.

Students at the Eastside high school were asked to express their thoughts, hopes and feelings at the eve of the Christmas season during a Wednesday morning interview in the school's busy cafeteria.

Their answers, a barometer of what is on the minds of the city's future generation as Christmas 1982 approaches were enlightening. They reflected concerns with the future of education, growing crime, and high unemployment.

They also reflected a humanistic concern for their fellow man and wishes for an end to social injustice.

Douglas Redd, a tall 11th grader, pondered only briefly before phrasing his "Christmas message." His thought, although perhaps inspired by apprehension, was filled with hope.

"I hope people would stop killing each other and hurting each other, and that crime would go down," the tall, slender youth said earnestly.

Dwauna Pinder, another 11th grader expressed an equally humanistic idea, although one perhaps more abstractly inspired. Pinder's hopes are for a change in attitudes toward handicapped individuals.

"I wish that people would understand that everyone is human and that they wouldn't treat anyone as inferior," Pinder said.

Robyn Carter, an 11th grader, nudged her way to the front of a knot of students who eagerly waited to relate their Christmas messages. Her concern is for the educational system.

"I think that he (President

(Continued on page 2)

AFRO Photo by Martin Evans

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING — Students at City College High, reflecting the spirit of Christmas which has touched children throughout Baltimore expressed thoughts of kindness and generosity toward their fellow man. Seated in the school cafeteria are Robyn Carter, Douglas Redd, Howard McLain, Richard Johnson, and Dwauna Pinder.